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Environmental Management in Ski Areas Procedure— Requirements— Exemplary Solutions



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Environmental Management in Ski Areas

Procedure—Requirements—Exemplary
Solutions

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Foreword

Many ski areas today advertise with seals of approval, titles and awards. Often, however, it is unclear which institutions and criteria are behind these appraisals. Both skiers and ski areas criticise this practise of ‘greenwashing’, since a cautious use of ecologically and scenically sensitive mountain areas is more important now than ever. An environmental management system that builds on international or European standards ensures ‘real’ improvements and external evaluation. It relies on the personal responsibility of the providers rather than on regulations imposed by authorities.

Applying such instruments is part of the tradition of the Verwaltungs- und Privat-Bank Aktiengesellschaft (VP Bank) in Liechtenstein. The bank has many years of positive experience with environmental management within its own operation. We therefore chose to support the development of an environmental management especially for ski areas with the creation of the pro natura–pro ski foundation.

The present publication is based on the book ‘Auditing in Skigebieten’ by Ulrike Pröbstl, Ralf Roth, Heiner Schlegel and Rudolf Straub (2003), which was supported by the foundation. New insights and experiences in practice as well as a change of the legal situation call for a revised edition. As president of the foundation committee, I am delighted that we were again able to find such a competent team of authors for this new edition. The book will contribute significantly towards a compatible cooperation and a cautious handling of the mountain area in and around ski areas.

Hans Brunhart
Princely Counsel, President of the Foundation
Committee pro natura–pro ski

Acknowledgements

Worldwide, environmental management systems make valuable contributions towards sustainable development. The field of application for the European Eco-Management und Audit Scheme (EMAS) has increased over the past years and now ranges from wood processing over hospitals to protected areas (see footnote¹). With this publication, we would like to contribute to increasing the number of certified ski areas and to raise awareness in general for environmentally friendly and resource sparing management in winter sports areas.

This publication would not have been realised without the support of a number of partners. Particular thanks, in this respect, go to the pro natura–pro ski foundation and to the Austrian provinces of Lower Austria and Salzburg for their financial support. The strategic cooperation between the Environment Agency Austria (Umweltbundesamt) and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, which has greatly benefited both institutions, also made this joint publication possible.

We are grateful to experts of the environmental committee of the International Organisation for Transportation by Rope (O.I.T.A.F.) for their practical approach and consideration of current developments, and to partners with practical experience, such as the Arbeitsgruppe für Landnutzungsplanung (Polling/Bavaria), Naturraum-Management Steinwender (St. Veit im Pongau/Salzburg), DI Fritz Pichler and the consulting firm Klenkhart (Absam/Tyrol), as well as Lloyd's Register (Vienna). Thanks are also due to various ski areas that provided image material as well as exemplary solutions and experiences. With their commitment and leadership, they contribute greatly to spreading the idea.

¹For detailed information on EMAS by the European Commission, see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm.

Special thanks also go to DI Verena Melzer and DI Claudia Hödl for their meticulous collection and preparation of illustrative material and to Benjamin Seaman for the English translation.

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