

# Big challenges require smart solutions

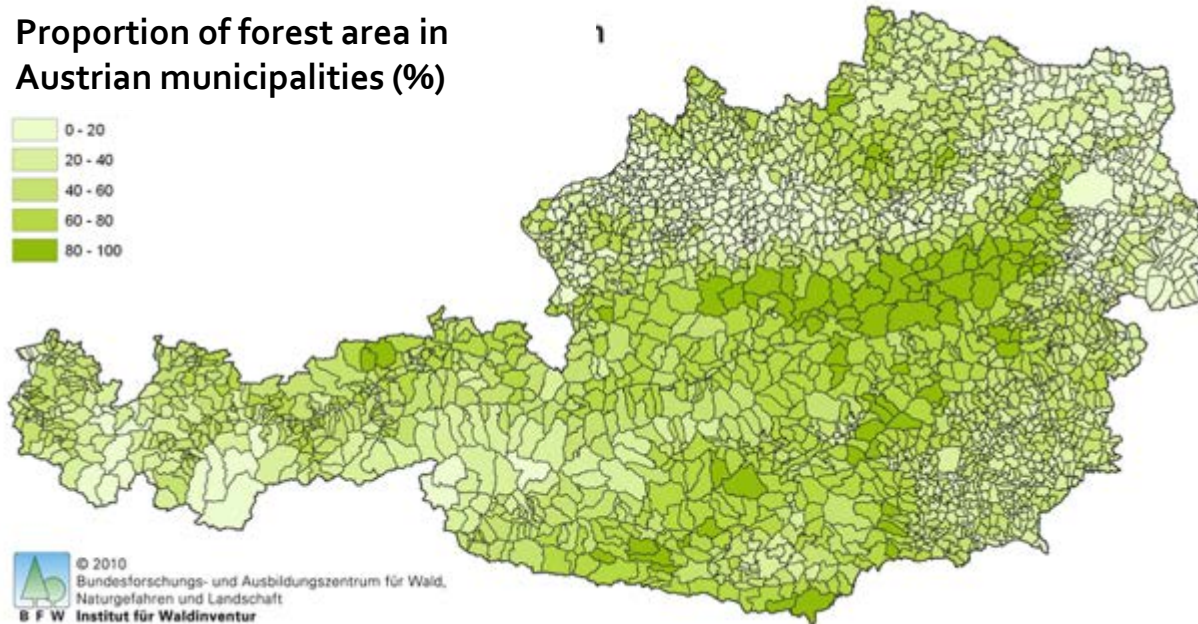
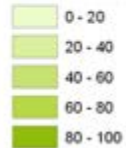
## Sustainable forest management in Austria

Gerfried Gruber  
Directorate III/1 – Forest Policy, Forest  
Economy and Forest Information  
Nitra, May 2023

## Forest Area

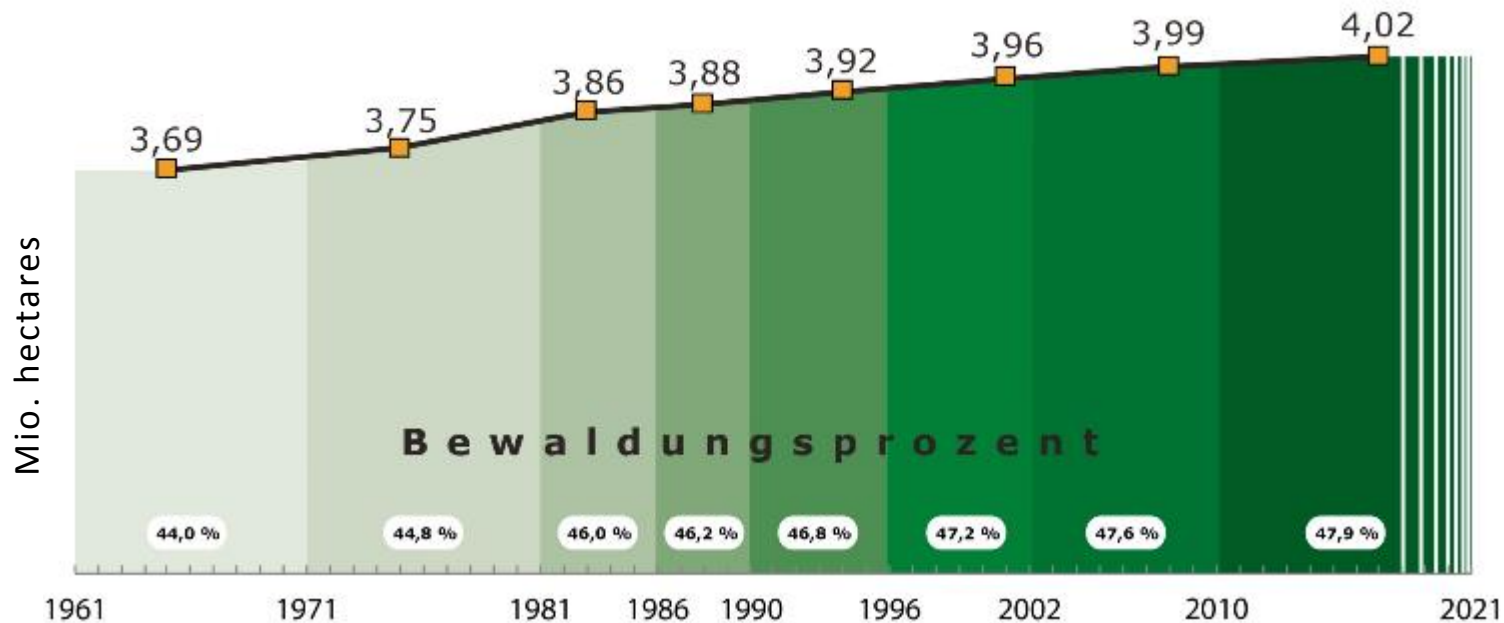
- 4 million hectares
  - thereof 3.4 m ha forest in yield
- 48 % of the total area is forest

Proportion of forest area in  
Austrian municipalities (%)

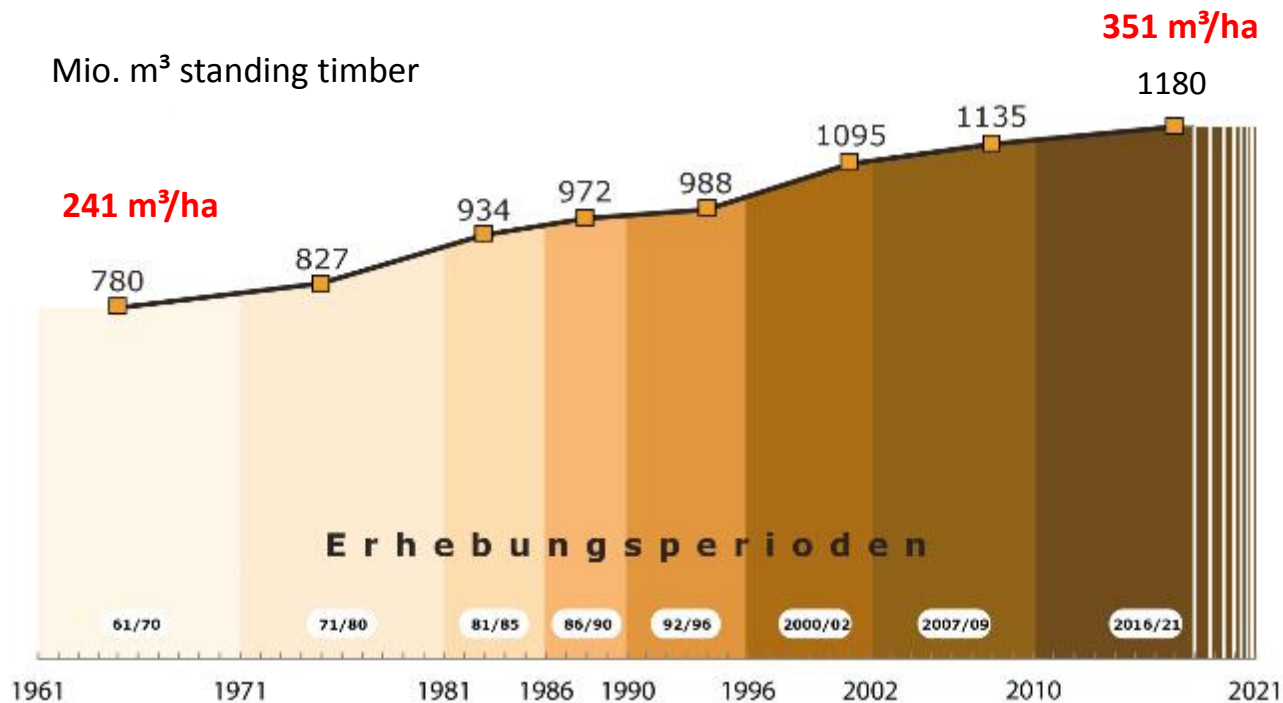


## Forest Area

Increase in forest area: **+ 330.000 ha**



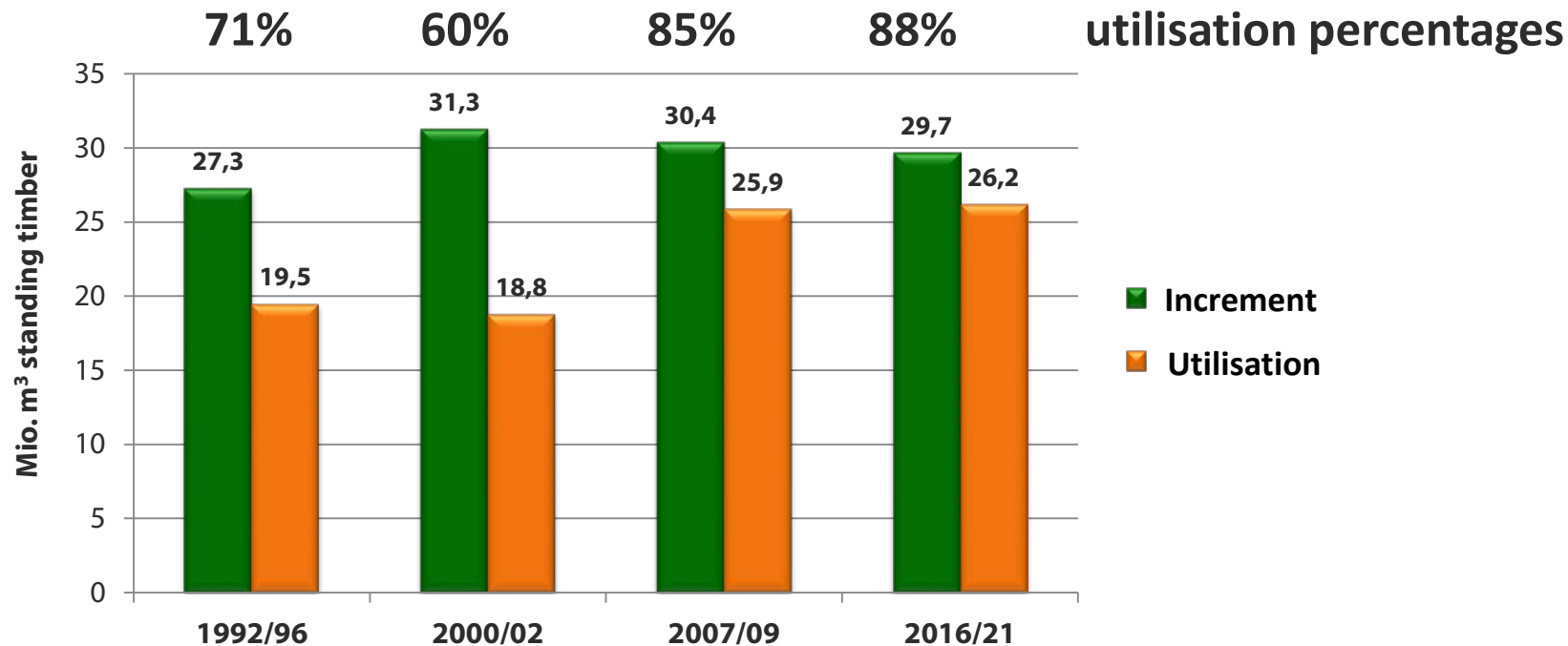
## Growing Stock



Sweden 110 m<sup>3</sup>/ha  
Finland 100 m<sup>3</sup>/ha

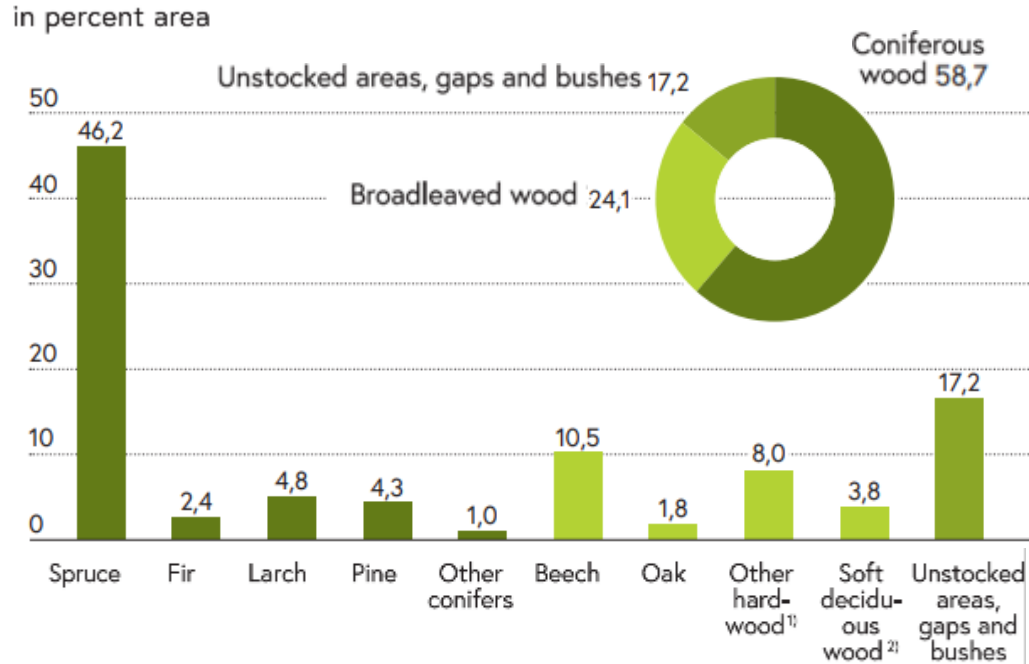
Source: BFW

## Increment and Utilisation



# Tree Species

Coniferous ↓  
Broadleaved ↑



1) Common hornbeam, ash, maple, elm, Spanish chestnut, black locust, etc.

2) Birch, common alder, grey alder, linden, aspen, white, grey, black and hybrid poplar, willow, etc.

Source: Federal Research and Training Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape 2022, Austrian Forest Inventory 2016/18

## Austrian Forests

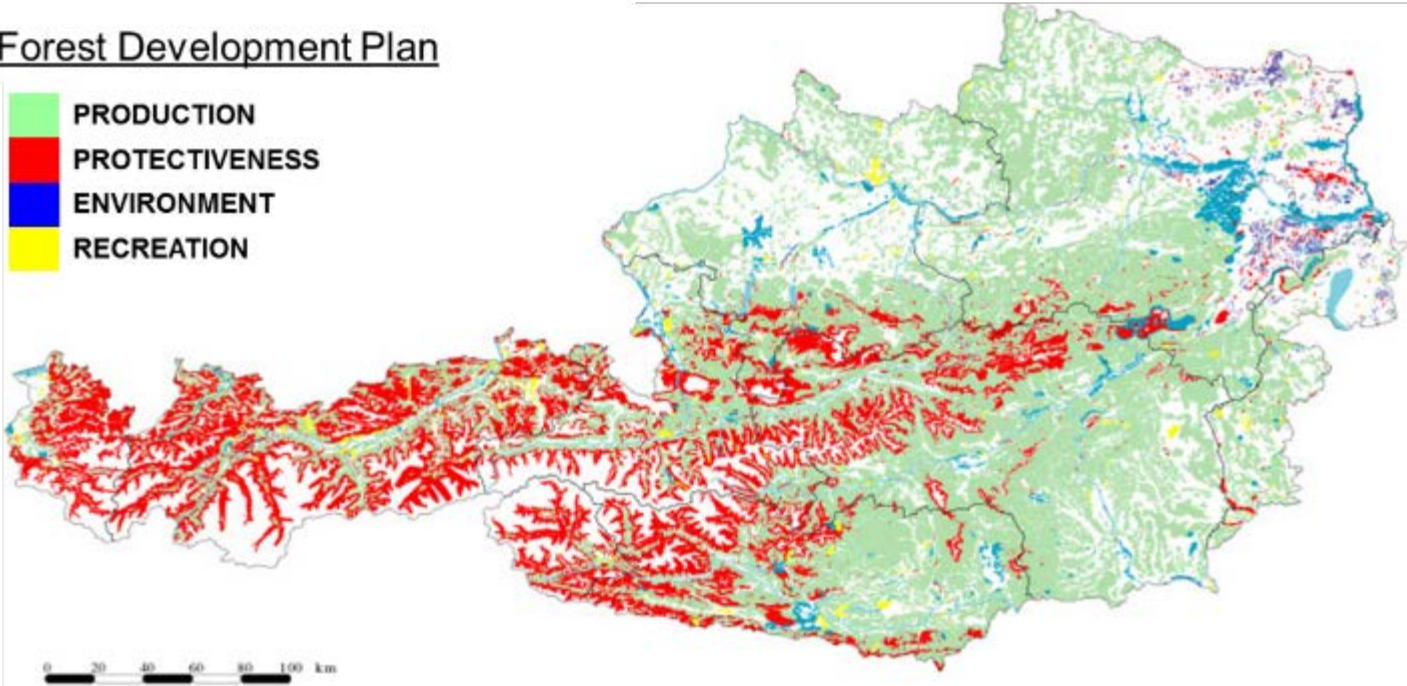


- productive
- protective
- attractive

**multifunctional**

# Priority functions of forests

## Forest Development Plan





## Austrian Forests



**... are productive**

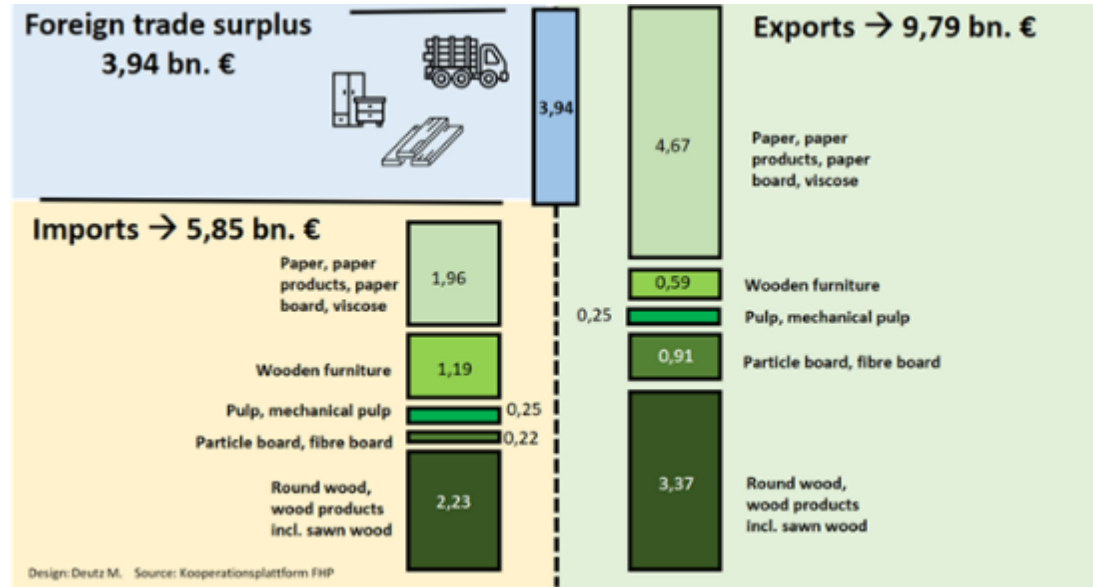
- The forest secures income and creates green jobs.

# Trade

## In Forest based Products

### Foreign Trade Surplus 2020: € 3,94 Billion

- The forestry and timber industry secures around **300,000 jobs**
- **Every 15<sup>th</sup> job** in Austria is attributable to the forestry and timber industry
- The forestry and timber industry generates **every 17<sup>th</sup> Euro of Austria's gross value added**.
- Total value chain (forestry and timber industry) achieves a gross value added of over **20 billion euros**



## Austrian Forests



### ... protect

- Forests protect people and infrastructure from natural hazards.

## Austrian Forests

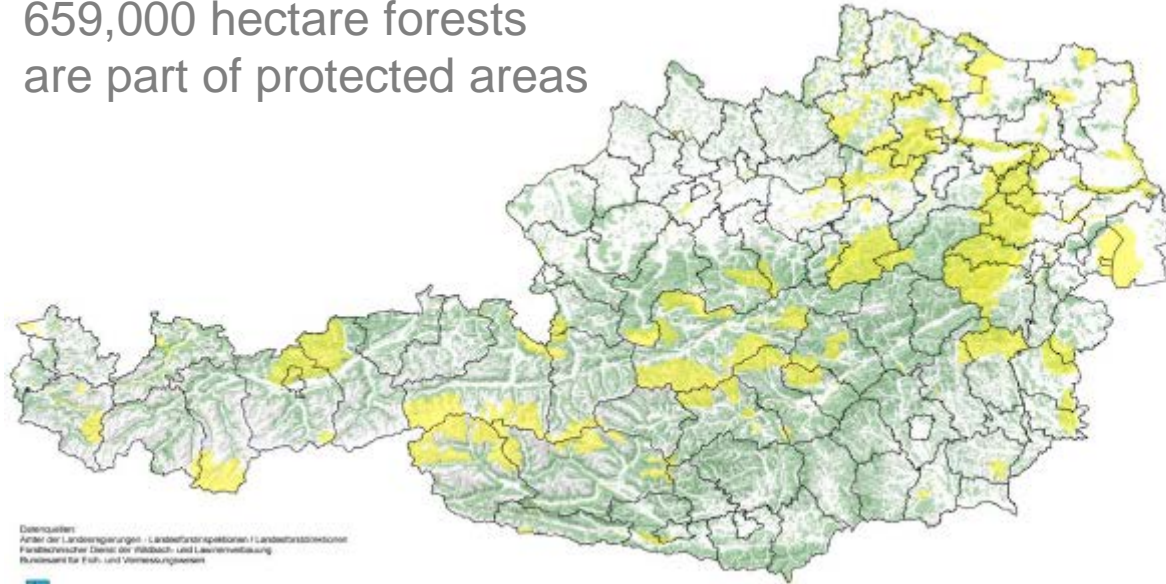


**... are attractive  
for those looking  
for recreation**

## Austrian Forests



659,000 hectare forests  
are part of protected areas



**... are attractive  
due to its  
biodiversity**

## Austrian Forests

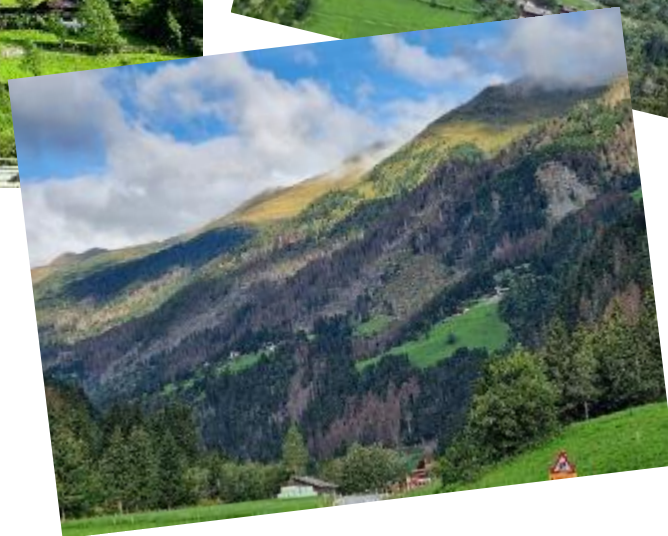


**... are attractive  
as carbon sink  
and storage in  
wood products**

## Challenges



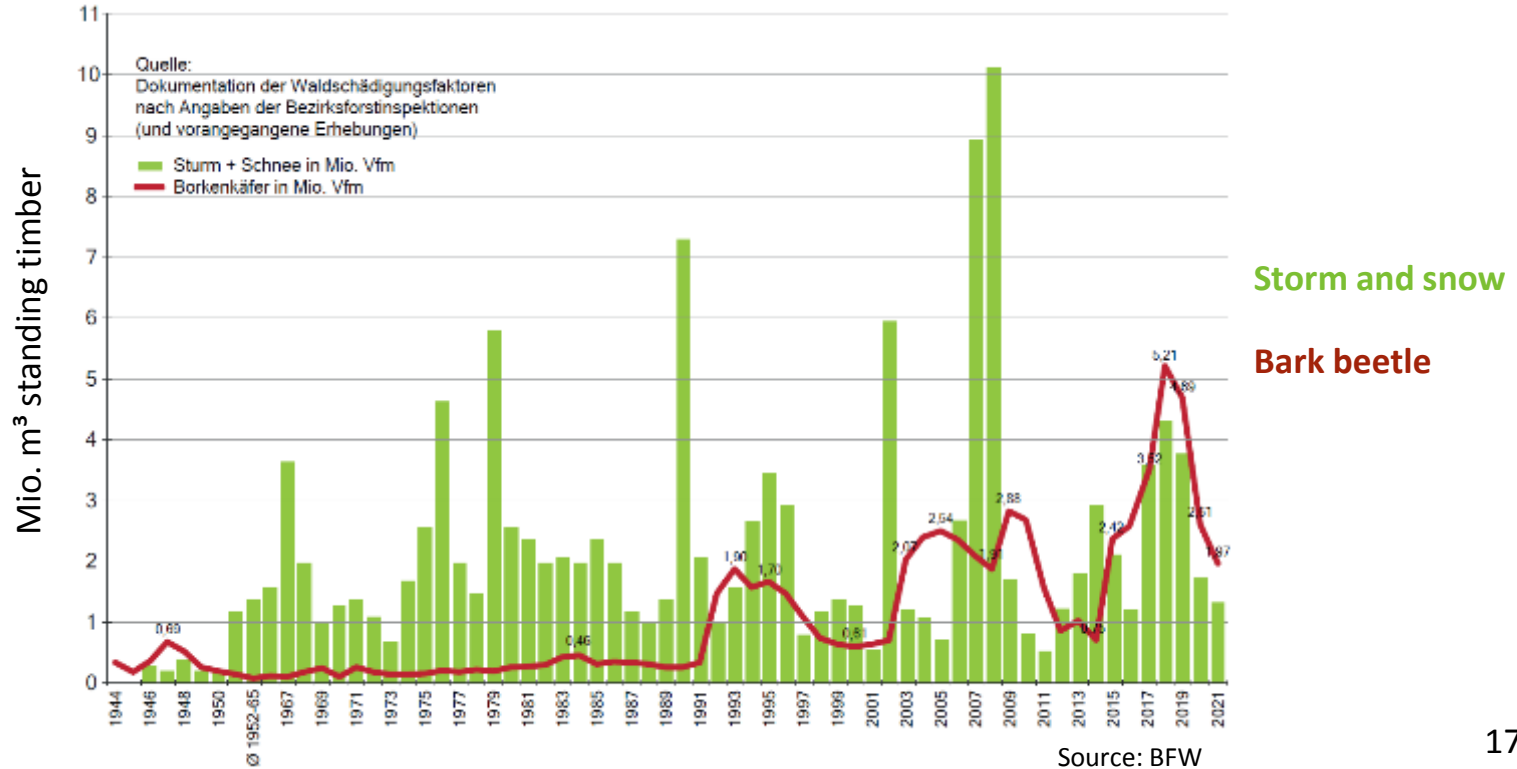
- Climate Change
  - Storms
  - Drought
  - Biotic threats
  - etc.



## **bark beetle calamities 2022**



# Damaged Wood



## Wood Harvest Report 2022

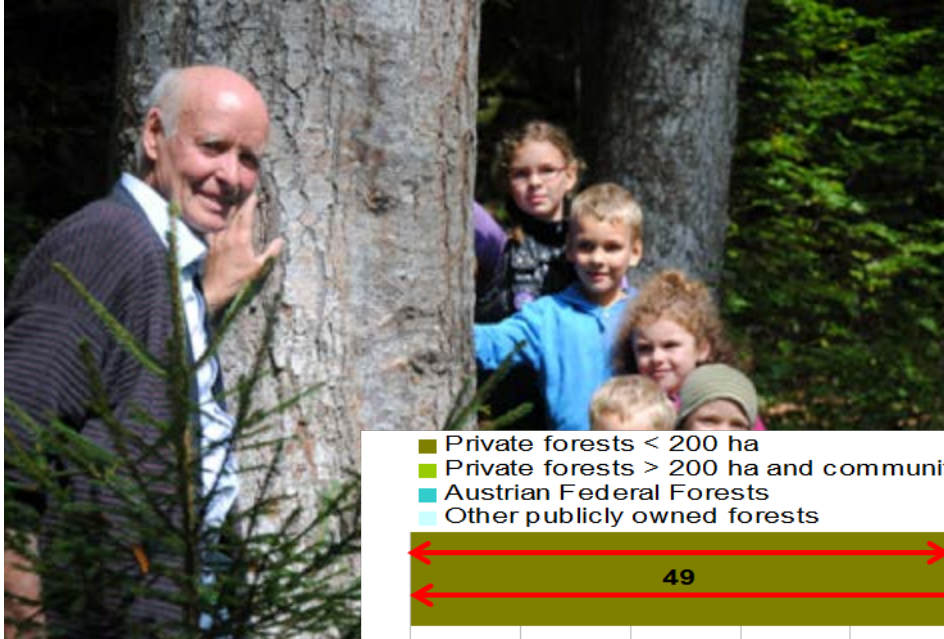
- **Timber Harvest 19,36 Mio. m<sup>3</sup>** (+ 8% to 10-years-average)
  - of which **damaged wood 7,26 Mio. m<sup>3</sup>** or **37,5 %** of total (+ 20 % to 2021)
    - coniferous: 6,51 Mio. m<sup>3</sup> → 3,445 bark beetle & 2,127 storm damages
    - broadleafed: 0,75 Mio. m<sup>3</sup>
- **Sawlog price** per m<sup>3</sup> spruce/fir, category B, media 2b → 112,75 € (+12,2%)

## Challenges



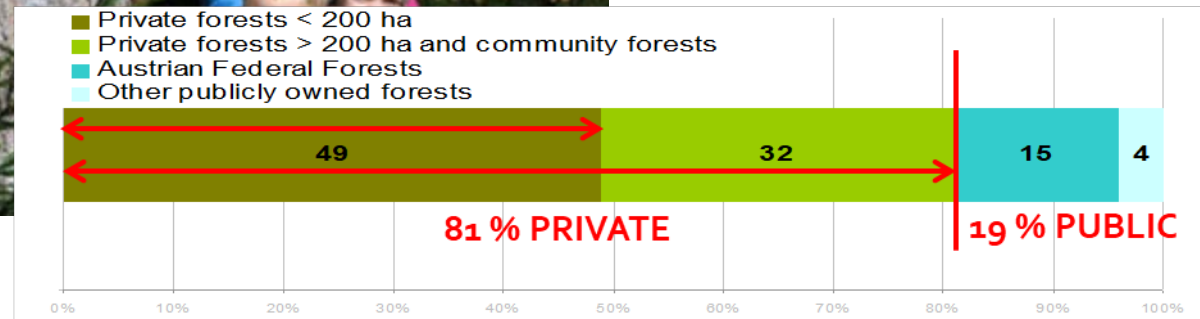
- Mountain Forestry
  - Protective forests
  - Stricter legal rules
  - High logging costs

# Challenges

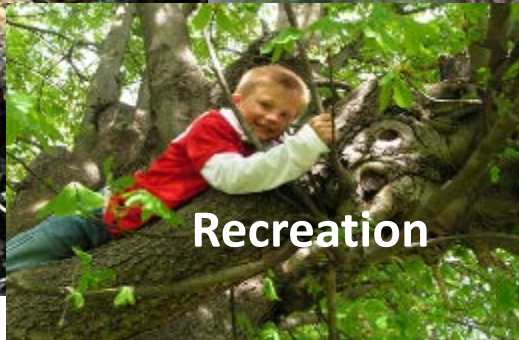


- Forest Ownership Structure

- The proportion of small forest owners who live in cities far from their forests is increasing



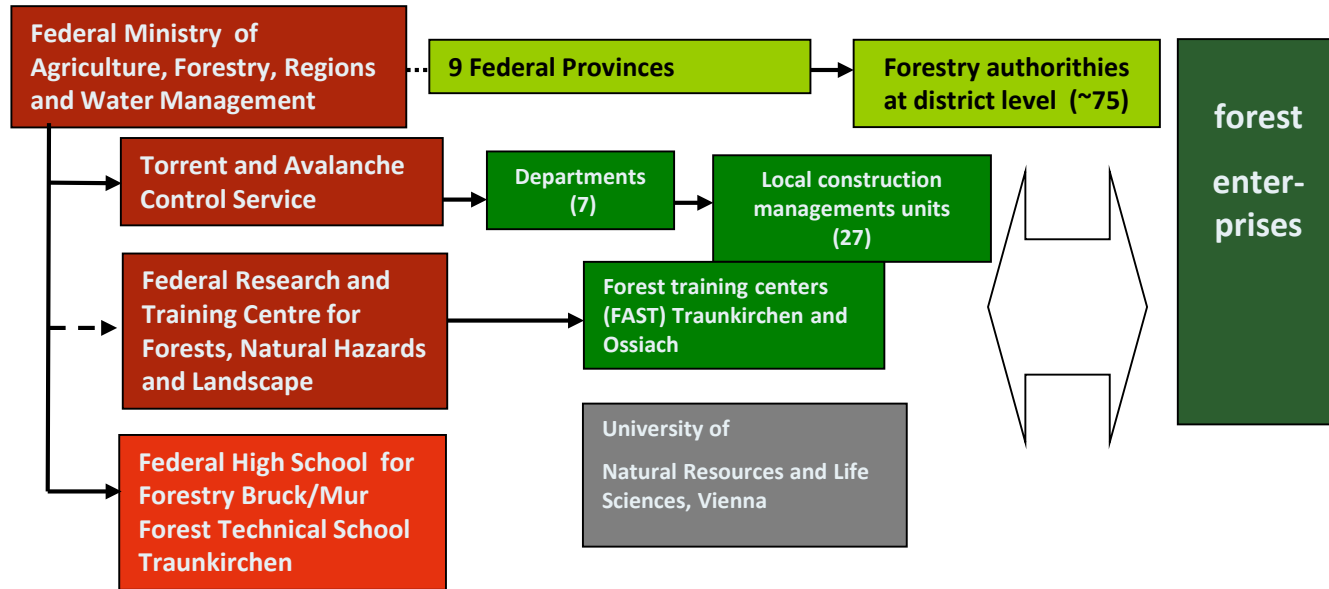
# Challenges



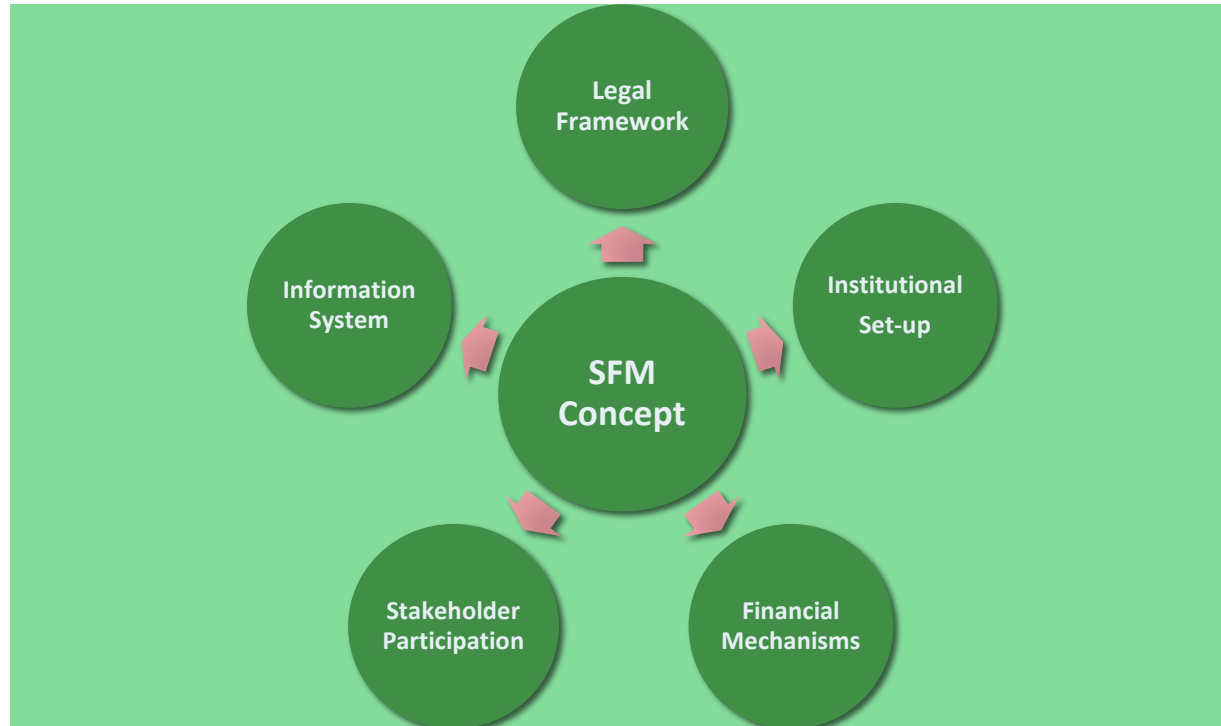
- Multifunctionality  
(basic principle: all forests should cover all functions)
  - Conflicts of interest

# Sustainable Forest Management

## Forest Governance in Austria – Institutional Set-up



## Forest Governance – Conceptual Framework Interconnected Components





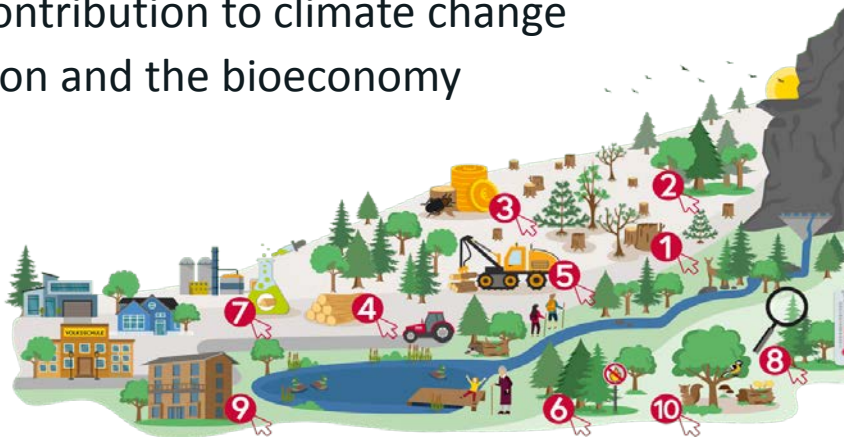
# Sustainable Forest Management in Austria – legal framework

- **Federal Forest Act of 1975** (amended several times)
  - Definitions, principles and objectives (Forests, SFM etc.)
  - General protection of forest land
  - Specific protection of forest ecosystems
  - Rights, limitations and obligations for utilisation
  - Regulation of access to forests
- **Other Federal acts**
  - Implementation of EU FLEGT and Timber Regulation
  - Water Act and others
- **Provincial laws**
  - Nature conservation
  - Hunting and others



## The Austrian Forest Fund

- 350 million euros, 10 measures, 2020-2026
- Fostering the sustainable management of forests and the sustainable use of wood
- Active contribution to climate change adaptation and the bioeconomy



# The Austrian Forest Fund – Measures

1. Re-afforestation after damage events
2. Development of climate-fit forests
3. Compensation for bark beetle damage caused by climate change
4. Establishment of log storage yards for damaged wood
5. Mechanical debarking as a forest protection measure
6. Measures to prevent forest fire
7. **Research priority and research facility for the production of wood gas and biofuels**
8. Research priority “Climate-fit forests”
9. **Wood construction offensive**
10. Strengthening, preserving and promoting biodiversity in forests



**Austrian Wood  
Initiative**

# Thank you for your attention!

Gerfried Gruber  
Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management  
Directorate III/1 – Forest Policy, Forest Economy and Forest Information  
[gerfried.gruber@bml.gv.at](mailto:gerfried.gruber@bml.gv.at)