

SUSTAINABILITY AWARD



2010

Award-winning
Projects



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BM.W.F^a

Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung

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The Austrian Sustainability Award is an integral part of the Austrian Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and puts sustainability on the agenda of all Austrian universities. The Award helps to make sustainability not only part of the mission statement but more importantly, of everyday university life. It adds visibility to already existing projects by ambitious and committed pioneers, it fosters internal networking and coordination of these projects by the university as a whole, thus embedding sustainability more strongly in the overall university culture. Furthermore, it encourages systematic exchange of good practice between the institutions of higher education and makes them aware that sustainability is a core dimension of university development all over the world.



Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry,
Environment and Water Management
DI Niki Berlakovich



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The UN Decade „Education for Sustainable Development“ has many topics and is addressed to a variety of actors. Universities are especially prone to providing new foundations as they are vital driving forces of this decade. They play a central role not only in research and teaching on environmentally relevant knowledge and specific technologies but also in conveying the ideas of sustainability and the social norms and values connected to it. Opening to the geographical regions around the university and connecting with the regional population is an especially important aspect of this endeavour, as exemplified by the successful implementation of the children’s universities.

This brochure documents the projects submitted for the Austrian Sustainability Award 2010. It is proof that in the 6th year of the UN Decade we can be proud of the manifold activities and initiatives. A number of tasks in the field of environmental management and environmental protection have already been tackled successfully: Waste separation, heat and energy saving have become central concerns of private companies as well as of universities.

For the second half of the Decade the challenge is to be more innovative especially regarding the social dimension of sustainable development, e. g. concerning reconciliation of work and family life but also in such mundane areas as guaranteeing a healthy diet by providing high-quality, regional foodstuffs which are in season. A number of projects submitted for the award specifically tackle this social dimension of sustainability in various ways. These measures also contribute to a better and more tangible understanding of sustainable development.

Environmental protection has become a highly important part of the labour market. In Austria, there are currently 185.000 people working in so-called “green jobs”. These include organic farmers, solar fitters and plumbers but also university graduates who implement innovative ideas in the field of environmental technology or teachers who motivate children to treat our environment responsibly. The more ideas and creativity are channelled into this sector, the stronger it can develop in the future. This provides important economic possibilities and guarantees an environment worth living in.

I thank all participants of the Austrian Sustainability Award for their commitment, their perseverance and their creativity!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Berlakovich'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a distinct dot above the 'i'.

DI Niki Berlakovich
Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry,
Environment and Water Management



Austrian Federal Minister
of Science and Research
Dr.ⁱⁿ Beatrix Karl

BM.W.F^a

Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung

Austria's tertiary education sector with its Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, Private Universities as well as Colleges of Education, has always strongly contributed to social and technological development, setting the pattern for society's values as well as protecting them. Those educational institutions, representing the origin of tomorrow's decision makers and the center of groundbreaking research, place responsible representatives of tertiary education in a vital position in society's change for sustainable development.

According to the Brundtland definition of sustainability, published by the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development satisfies today's society's needs without interfering with the satisfaction of future generations' needs and wants. In accordance with this definition Universities not only generate and divulge environment-relevant knowledge and technologies but also help define social norms and values which represent the importance of socio-cultural change.

Based on their double function of teaching and research and due to their autonomy, Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences as well as Colleges of Education are very well qualified to integrate sustainability in their organizational structures as well as in their teaching and research programs, orienting towards decision processes. Knowledge about sustainable development enhances the identification of correlations, the anticipation of certain scenarios as well as broadens the perspective, crossing categorical and theoretical borders. Furthermore, a sustainable perspective encourages

autonomous responsible action and intercultural interaction.

Those 45 projects submitted for the Sustainability Award 2010 clearly show that Universities face up to these challenges and position themselves via various initiatives not only as centers of innovation and research for sustainable development but also as intellectual centers, serving as exceptional disseminators and bridges.

The projects being presented here, altogether highly rewarded by the jury, represent inspiring examples that will hopefully encourage future submission and more importantly the implementation of numerous projects within the broad field of sustainable development. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the applicants for their participation and their extraordinary commitment and wish readers to gain stimulating intellectual insight in the world of sustainable development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beatrix Karl". The script is fluid and cursive.

Dr.ⁱⁿ Beatrix Karl
Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research

The Austrian Sustainability Award for Universities

■ *History and Background*

The Austrian Sustainability Award is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research and was established in 2007 as a means of promoting and increasing awareness for sustainability processes within Austrian universities (www.nachhaltige-uni.at). After a starting phase of networking and communication with the relevant stakeholders, the project supports pioneers in this field by organizing a nationwide “Sustainability Award” for higher education institutions as an incentive for sustainable higher education every two years.

For Austria, the innovation was to combine a publicity related approach with internal learning processes and benchmarking. The award was also the first approach to link different (and separated) sustainability initiatives among various universities.

Until 2007, many university initiatives for sustainable development were isolated and did not get the necessary support from their administration. Inviting the whole university (from the vice-chancellor and pro-vice-chancellors downwards) to take part in the award competition led to 42 applications by 13 universities in 2008. Two years later, 17 universities submitted projects. Interestingly enough, the number of submissions stayed roughly the same (45), due to much more internal coordination within the universities.

■ *Characteristics*

The Austrian Sustainability Award exhibits a whole-institution approach. Thus, it is addressed to a large target group consisting of students, teachers, staff, administration and regional stakeholders. University-wide sustainability is understood as a process of participatory and reflective learning characterized by several alternative routes.

It does not target individual or one-time projects, but instead recognizes long-term processes and improvements that mirror the internal learning and formation processes of the institution as a whole, concerning eight very different aspects of university organisation. A project in each of the eight categories receives an Austrian Sustainability Award. The categories are:

1. Administration and Management,
2. Curriculum and Instruction,
3. Research,
4. Structural Implementation,
5. Communication and Decision-making,
6. Student Initiatives,
7. Regional Integration,
8. European (International) Integration.

For each of these categories, a series of guiding questions was developed to help applicants locate their initiatives within these different aspects. Participation, learning and innovation should be at the very heart of these initiatives.

An interdisciplinary jury of sustainability experts (from science and research, business, culture and media) decides on the winner in each of the eight categories.

The first award ceremony took place in March 2008, and the second in March 2010. The award is coordinated by “FORUM Umweltbildung”, an agency specialising on Education for Sustainable Development.

■ *The Future of the Austrian Sustainability Award*

The examples presented on the following pages show that sustainability has become an important topic in many Austrian universities and can be implemented in a wide variety of ways. The award will be organised again in 2012 and 2014 with the hope of further increasing awareness of the need for sustainability in Austrian higher education. Alternating with the award, a more systematic networking of sustainability pioneers is envisaged to increase communication about sustainability and the exchange of good practice models within Austrian universities and beyond.

For more information, please visit the homepage: www.nachhaltige-uni.at

Bachelor Programme Environmental Pedagogy



Applicant:
**University College for Agrarian and Environmental
Pedagogy, Vienna**

The goal of this 6 semester Bachelor study programme is the preparation of students for professional work in fields related to the environment and environmental pedagogy, both in teaching and counselling. The programme, amounting to 180 ECTS, is subdivided into modules focussing on social, economic, environmental, technological and educational aspects and is completed with a Bachelor in Education (BEd). It provides both basic knowledge and work-related skills and conveys them as comprehensibly and as effectively as possible. Special focus is put on key skills

such as interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary work, team work, and working and communicating in specific contexts and for special target groups.

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Centre for Development Research, BOKU



Applicant:
**Centre for Development Research, University of Natural
Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna**

The Centre for Development Research, in short „CDR“, is a university unit with a multidisciplinary network of partner scientists. It has a mandate to conduct research and training in areas related to sustainable natural resource management. As an organization with expertise in applied development research, the CDR designs and promotes development innovations that work for land users in resource poor contexts, especially those regions affected by food and energy crises. The Centre works towards poverty reduction, food security, and well-being for the most vul-

nerable population. It collaborates with over twenty BOKU scientists and a wide range of partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

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Mobility concept, University of Innsbruck



Applicant:
**Vice Rectorate for Infrastructure,
Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck**

When the staff of the University of Innsbruck asked for more parking space, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for infrastructure reacted by designing an innovative mobility concept, consisting of a combination of public transport tickets heavily subsidized by the municipality, bicycle stands, bicycle lanes and an electronic car parking system. This offer was accepted by 400 members of the staff and thus valuable green areas surrounding the university facilities could be saved and individual (motor)traffic around the university was reduced.

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Initiatives by students of “Health Management in Tourism”



Applicant:
**„Health Management in Tourism“,
FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences**

Students of the study programme “Health Management in Tourism” had the task of preparing the university for the Austrian ecolabel. They decided upon their own goals like saving of energy and material resources, substituting conventional products with organic and/or fair trade ones, and making their university become a role model in the region, including a co-operation with schools and their pupils. They developed a mission statement for the university integrating SD and designed an education concept for the primary and secondary schools in the region. At the schools they per-

formed a play on the carbon footprint, initiated a competition for the pupils and arranged a final “Festival of the Future” to honour the winners.

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Mentoring programme for women, University of Vienna



Applicant:
Center for Gender Equality, University of Vienna

The Center for Gender Equality of the University of Vienna developed the mentoring programme in order to advance the scientific careers of women. Female junior scientists can apply to participate in the 18 months mentoring programme. Groups of four mentees are mentored by one scientist to get strategic knowledge and build networks. The interdisciplinary groups are also offered seminars on key competences. Another aim of the project is to critically examine traditional mentoring relationships and gendered hierarchies within the university with the goal of reforming them. One of the next steps is to dis-

seminate the findings of the project in an international context.

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Sustainability4U



Applicant:
University of Graz for all four universities in Graz

Lecturers from the four universities in Graz (Technical University, University of Graz, Medical University and University for Music and Performing Arts) dealt with sustainable development from a technical, a medical, a musical and an ethical as well as a climatologic perspective. In the final lecture, the Vice-Chancellors of the four universities held a panel discussion on the overarching topic of sustainability. The aim of this lecture series was to give students and staff the possibility to get to know sustainability related research activities of the four universities, to trigger discussions with each other and to cross disciplinary and university

boundaries. This lecture series is the kick-off for a number of joint initiatives between the four universities, called "Sustainability4U".

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Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Graz-Styria



Applicant:

Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Graz-Styria – Education for Sustainable Development

The Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE) Graz- Styria has been located at the Faculty of Environmental and Regional Sciences and Education of the University of Graz since 2009. It serves as a contact point between university and society, sharing information and experiences and promoting dialogue among regional and local stakeholders. The RCE Graz-Styria acts as part of an international network 'Global Learning Space for Sustainable Development' (GLS) including over 70 RCEs worldwide, which

is coordinated by the United Nations University (UNU).

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Euroleague for Life Sciences



Applicant:

Institute of Hydraulics and Rural Water Management, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences

The Euroleague for Life Sciences (ELLS) is a network of leading universities cooperating in the fields of Natural Resource Management, Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Life Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Food Sciences, and Environmental Sciences with substantial coverage of subjects related to sustainable development. This network enhances the position and capability of all partner institutions through the sharing of expertise and resources as part of the development and implementation of their degree programmes. ELLS offers International Master Pro-

grammes, Summer Schools/Intensive Programmes, Scientific Student Conferences, Student Exchange - Grants and Awards, International Networking and Joint Teaching and Lecturer Mobility.

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■ *Category Curriculum and Instruction*

- 2nd BA and MA Programme Design & Product Management
University of Applied Sciences FH Salzburg
web: www.fh-salzburg.ac.at/en
- 3rd MA Programme Social Ecology
Department of Social Ecology, Alpen Adria Universität Klagenfurt
web: <http://uni-klu.ac.at/socec>

■ *Category Research*

- 2nd Institute for the Environment and Regional Development
Vienna University of Economics and Business
web: www.wu.ac.at/ruw/en
- 3rd Feasibility Study for a Man and Biosphere Park, Samothraki
Department of Social Ecology,
Alpen Adria Universität Klagenfurt
web: www.uni-klu.ac.at/socec/inhalt/1.htm

■ *Category Structural Implementation*

- 2nd Sustainability Committee of MODUL University Vienna, MODUL University Vienna
web: www.modul.ac.at
- 3rd Learnscapes und Gender in Schools
Centre for Sports Sciences and University Sports,
University of Vienna
web: <http://zsu-schmelz.univie.ac.at/index.php?id=24093>

■ *Category Student Initiatives*

- 2nd oikos: International Student Organisation for Sustainable Economics and Management
oikos Graz
web: <http://graz.oikos-international.org/international.html>
- 3rd Place to Perform-Austria's Best Internships
web: www.uniforce.at

■ *Category Administration and Management*

- 2nd Passive House University Campus of FH Salzburg
University of Applied Sciences FH Salzburg
web: www.fh-salzburg.ac.at
- 3rd Certification Process for the Ecolabel
University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy
web: www.agrarumweltpaedagogik.ac.at/

■ *Category Communication and Decision-making*

- 2nd Pupils' Online-Panel "Opinioncorner"
Institute of Education and Psychology,
Johannes Kepler University Linz
web: www.opinioncorner.at
- 3rd Interest Group of External Lecturers and Free Researchers
web: www.ig-elf.at/

■ *Category Regional Integration*

- 2nd Training Course Communal Education, Lower Austria
University College of Education in Lower Austria
web: www.ph-noe.ac.at
- 3rd Event Series „Austrian Days of Environmental Law“
Department for Environmental Law,
Johannes Kepler University Linz
web: www.iur.jku.at

■ *Category European (International) Integration*

- 2nd Tourism Know-How for Small Hotels in Nepal and Sri Lanka
University of Applied Sciences FH Salzburg
web: www.smaps-asia.com
- 3rd Joint Master Programme CREOLE
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology,
University of Vienna
web: www.univie.ac.at/creole