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NASSFELD-PRESSEGGER SEE | LESACHTAL | WEISSENSEE

NASSFELD LESACHTAL WEISSENSEE

THE CASE STUDY 2/4

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Tourism

INTRO

WENATOUR PROJECT

WeNaTour is an Innovation Alliance project (ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-ALL-INNO) funded with support from the European Commission - Erasmus+ program under Grant Agreement No 101111561. The project aims at training new professionals for sustainable tourism and exploring emerging markets while keeping the well-being of local communities and preserving the environment at the core of its strategies, towards a more responsible and sustainable future.

As part of its efforts, WeNaTour highlights four case studies of certified sustainable tourism destinations. These destinations, selected for their commitment to sustainable tourism, include Valsugana Lagorai in Italy, Colinele Transilvaniei in Romania, Siena in Italy, and Nassfeld Lesachtal Weissensee in Austria. Each case study is presented in a factsheet format, offering insights into its approach to sustainable tourism destination management and practices.

The case studies were developed by Etifor with the collaboration of Carinthia University of Applied Sciences - CUAS and the Transylvania University of Brasov - UNITBV.



For more information on WeNaTour, its training opportunities and outputs you can visit www.wenatour.eu and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

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THE CASE STUDY



Case Study
Area

DESTINATION PROFILE

	Nassfeld Lesachtal Weissensee	Name
	Carinthia Region, Austria	Location
	nlw.at/de	Website
	21.064 inhabitants	Population
	1.005,8 km ²	Extention

DESCRIPTION

Nassfeld is at the northern foot of the Carnic Alps, bordering Italy to the south. Pressegger See is near Hermagor and extends north into the Gailtal Alps, with Weissensee accessible via the Kreuzberg Saddle.

The Gail River flows from west to east between the Gailtal Alps in the north and the Carnic Alps in the south. The mountains are part of the Southern Limestone Alps. The region features passes like Nassfeld Pass leading into Pontebba, Italy, Plöckenpass toward Lienz, and Kreuzberg Saddle toward Weissensee. Tourism has shown a stable positive trend over the past decade, with Hermagor-Pressegger See and Weissensee being key tourist areas. The region, divided into Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal, and Weissensee, offers diverse activities year-round. Visitors can swim in warm lakes, relax on secluded beaches, and ice skate on Europe's largest prepared natural ice rink. In winter, the Sun Ski World provides extensive skiing and snow sports.

MANAGING ORGANISATION AND ITS FOCUS OF OPERATION

NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH is the marketing company for the adventure areas of Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee.

Nassfeld Lesachtal Weissensee (NLW) Tourismus Marketing GmbH is the marketing company for the adventure areas of Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee. The task of NLW is to handle tourist marketing for the ten member communities in the southwest of Carinthia. The organisation is financed to 60% by subsidies from the municipalities and the tourism levy from the province. In addition, they are funded by promotional projects and co-operations (Carinthia-wide and Austria-wide). Extremely careful budget planning, forwardlooking management and a high level of commercial diligence are the stable basis for ensuring the economic sustainability of NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH.

SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CERTIFICATIONS AND SPECIAL FEATURES

- ✓ Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) for Destinations
First year of Certification: 2021
- ✓ UZ82 – Austrian Ecolabel for Destinations (the first national eco-label for tourism worldwide)
First year of Certification: 2024
- ✓ First cross-border GSTC certification worldwide (NLW region and Tarvisio in Italy)

HOW SUSTAINABILITY IS EMBEDDED IN THE DESTINATION'S VISION AND MISSION

The **vision** is to establish the Austrian Ecolabel for the region as an environmental seal of approval for sustainable tourism destinations. The destination is shaping “The world of good living” for the people in the region and will be climate-neutral by 2040. By raising the quality of life and leisure, locals and visitors alike will benefit from each other and interact with pleasure. With its projects, it is setting an example for climate and environmental protection in the region.

The **mission** is to become the most sustainable region in Austria by active commitment in strengthening local food production and supply; supporting local communities and contributing to the economic stability of the region; taking measures to reduce the CO2 footprint and thus contribute to climate protection; supporting the expansion of environmentally friendly means of transport and promote mobility concepts that conserve resources; relying on sustainable energy sources to cover energy requirements; committing in preserving biodiversity and protecting natural habitats.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PRACTICE

Nassfeld Lesachtal Weissensee aims to become an internationally recognized model for climate-friendly tourism. Under the “World of Mountains & Lakes” brand, the region has embraced the “Austria’s most sustainable tourism region” project, initiated by the Climate and Energy Fund and the [then] Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism.

This initiative evaluates existing sustainability projects and encourages finding new measures to further develop the topic, anchoring the vision of sustainable, resilient tourism as an integral part of a sustainable and climate-friendly policy in the region in line with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal. A 10-point action plan and implementation concept were developed with input from 29 partners, including municipalities, tourism organizations, the climate and energy model region, waste management association, businesses, and Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. This plan, positively evaluated by a national jury, sets concrete regional goals to make the region the most sustainable tourism destination by 2030. Measures will be reviewed after three years to ensure ongoing progress.

Within the fledgling Interreg project ‘Regenerate’, work is currently underway together with the Italian destinations Tarvisio, Arabba and Alta Badia to expand the region’s existing sustainable activities and measures with a regenerative offer and concretely go beyond sustainability.

HOW SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



Cultural heritage preservation

Slow Food Travel Alpe Adria Carinthia & 1st Slow Food Academy of the Alps: Lesachtal and Lake Weissensee have become the world's first Slow Food Travel destinations, fostering meaningful connections between guests and the local community through hands-on creation of traditional products. The Academy's knowledge-sharing on food production, processing, and enjoyment benefits both the environment and the climate.



Quality education: by providing a training programme for a sustainable, healthy food and eating culture.



Responsible consumption and production: by enhancing appreciation for natural, high-quality foods.

Nature conservation and valorisation

“Nature Forum 4.0 - Designing living spaces” on sustainable cooperation between landowners, agriculture and tourism. The project makes nature a resource that can be utilised by locals and tourists on clearly defined paths, while at the same time respecting and protecting nature. The project was presented during the Weissensee Nature Forum on conflicts of use and contradiction management in leisure activities.



Life on land: by ensuring biodiversity and natural heritage preservation in different land uses.



Partnerships for the goals: by stimulating cooperation between various stakeholders to achieve sustainable development.

Sustainable mobility

Mobility platform - mobility centre for the region: low-emission guest travel focuses on facilitating arrival and regional mobility without the need for a personal vehicle. By presenting regional transport services on a unified platform and integrating supra-regional services through various interfaces, this approach aims to streamline and enhance the travel experience. The operation and management of these services are overseen by Mobilbüro Hermagor.



Sustainable cities and communities: by investing in green infrastructures resulting in greener cities.



Climate action: by contributing in fighting climate change reducing the transport carbon footprint.

WHICH ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Communication

The main challenge involves the efficient distribution of sustainable content, activities, and measures to the relevant stakeholders. This task also entails preparing the information in a manner that is tailored to the target audience and presented as clearly and simple as possible.

WHICH NEEDS AND STRATEGIES TO RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGES

Communication

Guidelines on the optimal preparation of content for various target groups (locals, visitors) deriving from considerations of current priorities, which contents holds significant value within the destination or country, and potential obstacles that may arise.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Tourism Academy Carinthia provides online webinars and in-person events for apprentices, interns, employees, managers, and entrepreneurs in tourism. These training courses, workshops, and seminars aim to enhance skills and knowledge, thereby improving service quality in the industry.

The 1st “Slow Food Academy” of the Alps aims to enhance skills, seek solutions, and contribute to food sovereignty through a diverse educational program, including lectures, workshops, training courses, and experience exchanges. This program targets various professional and interest groups in the food sector, with plans for further development and regional expansion.

NEW TRENDS FOR THE DESTINATION

#SustainableTravelling
#Digitalisation

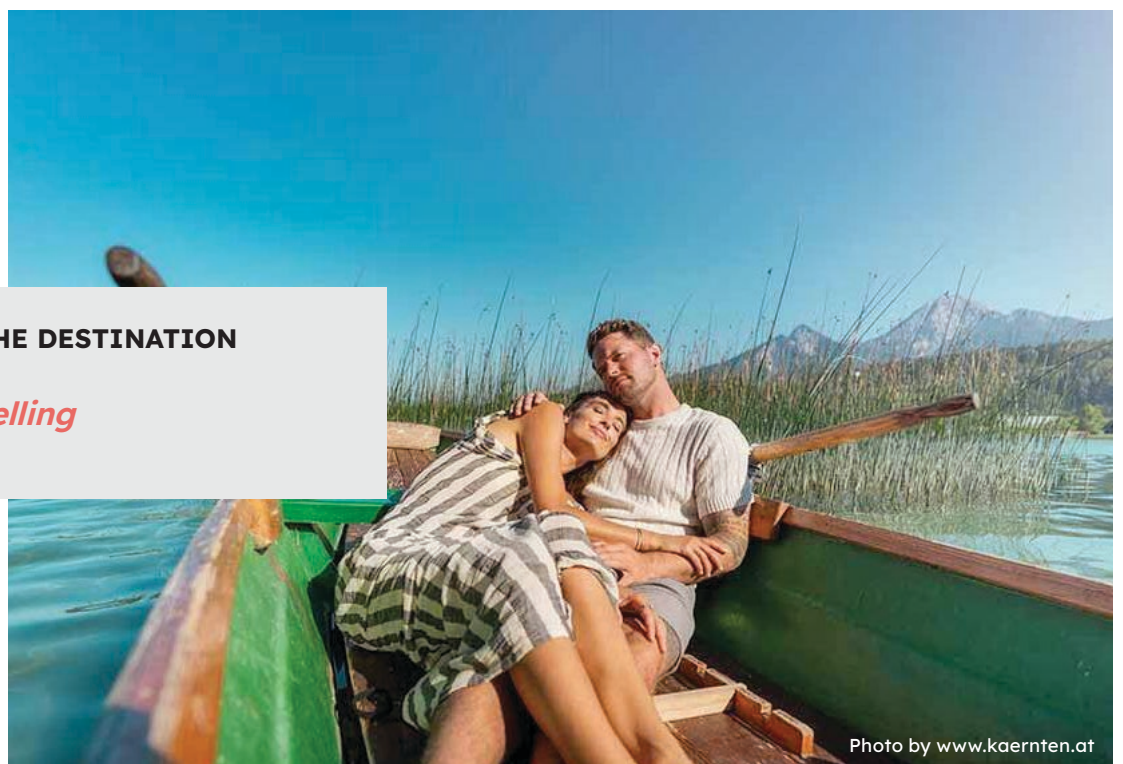


Photo by www.kaernten.at

INNOVATION AND CERTIFICATION

THE ROLE OF CERTIFICATION IN INNOVATING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

WHY CERTIFICATION

The decision was driven by the goal to set a benchmark in global sustainable tourism. Being the first cross-boarded region to achieve this standard highlights a commitment to international best practices. The certification is unique for its worldwide application and its comprehensive criteria, including environmental, cultural, socio-economic, and management aspects, leading to a common understanding of 'sustainable tourism'. The involvement of an independent organisation in reviewing and controlling the standard ensures the credibility and integrity of the certification, reinforcing a commitment to a robust and transparent approach to sustainability.

HOW CERTIFICATION IS SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT: KEY ASPECTS (KA)

KA2: Management and funding

Vision: the certification allows to differentiate from other destinations and understand tourism as a common good.

Approach: the work done contributed to organise tourism through an holistic sustainable approach.

KA3: Stakeholder engagement

Cooperation and opportunities: the certification raised awareness of the interaction between tourism and stakeholders in the region, allowed to be part of a new network, led to opportunities for innovations in the region, and helped increasing the know-how through webinars.

Communication: the certification process lead to an improvement of communication with both guests and locals.

KA5 & KA6: Nature conservation/restoration & Socio-cultural valorisation

Natural and cultural heritage: the knowledge gained with the process allowed to take appropriate decisions to ensure sustainable living for the local population and preserve natural and living space for future generations.

SUCCESS FACTORS

The destination is not working 'for certification', i.e. 'just' for the award, but to continue working with the people (guests, locals) in the region towards a world of sustainable and good living. It is a continuous process that should take place on an ongoing basis. This is the only way to develop a mutual understanding in order to drive development forward in the 'right places'. The certification itself offers an additional opportunity to view the current measures from an external perspective and from a different angle and to correct or adapt them as required.

LESSONS LEARNED

The GSTC standard has proven valuable by driving improvements in the local mindset and establishing a process for ongoing implementation and refinement of the criteria. The certification process has facilitated the development of a new tourism concept in collaboration with various stakeholders and civil society.

FUTURE COMMITMENTS

The challenge for the future is to advance sustainable tourism by moving forward together. This involves supporting the efforts through certification processes. Continued professional cooperation with institutions will be crucial to examining both the long-term and short-term positive effects of these initiatives. Finally, expectations include establishing a professional tourism monitoring system and strengthening cross-border cooperation to build on these successes.



Photo by nlw.at

WENATOUR EMERGING MARKETS

THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE DESTINATION ON THE 3 EMERGING MARKETS IN TOURISM THAT ARE THE FOCUS OF THE PROJECT WENATOUR



Green care

One approach to this in the region is the so-called 'Green Experiences'.

The Destination's approach is not yet focused on healing experiences but it tends more to develop experiences that foster a connection with nature with a strong focus on sustainability. The Destination developed some criteria to offer Green Experiences that guarantee:

- Experience sustainability;
- Public transport;
- Sustainable guides;

The Green Experiences are to be further developed in the region and potential opportunities utilised.



Company Welfare

The "ARGE ARAM attractive region for attractive employees" project aims to keep people in the region and attract qualified specialists. Several measures have been adopted for companies, including an employee card that offers benefits for different categories, such as leisure experiences.



Accessibility

- Barrier-free vacation at Lake Weissensee and through the of mountains and lakes of Nassfeld-Pressegger See together with specially trained guides.
- Barrier-free vacation in Carinthia which include barrier-free hiking trails, guided tours in nature, accommodation, restaurants, excursion destinations and bathing facilities, and package deals. All the barrier-free facilities proposed have been tested and are recommended by ÖZIV (Austrian Association for People with Disabilities). A map with all the facilities is available and a new map is in progress that will also show the barrier-free routes.



"NLW Tourismus Marketing GmbH has set itself the goal of turning the neighbouring regions of Nassfeld-Pressegger See, Lesachtal and Weissensee, and Tarvisiano into a single crossborder destination: a destination that is able to work in a coordinated and sustainable manner while at the same time preserving and enhancing the shared natural and cultural heritage."

*Markus Brandstätter,
Managing Director*



Photo by nlw.at

WENATOUR EMERGING MARKETS

THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE DESTINATION ON THE 3 EMERGING MARKETS IN TOURISM THAT ARE THE FOCUS OF THE PROJECT WENATOUR



OPERATOR PROFILE

	Hotel Schloss Lerchenhof	Name
	Untermöschach, Austria	Location
	www.lerchenhof.at	Website

Lerchenhof Castle, managed by the fifth-generation Steinwender family, integrates a long history with a commitment to a circular economy. Sustainability is central, reflected in their “holiday with a good conscience” philosophy. The castle features a railway station, in-house energy management, and a ZERO kilometer restaurant. It has 20 double rooms, mostly renovated, without disposable items or energy-intensive facilities. Furnishings are made from natural, locally-sourced materials, and linens and hygiene products are certified. Guests are encouraged to support sustainability through room add-ons. Additionally, a small wellness area and rental items like e-bikes, e-Vespas, and snowshoes offer diverse options for active holidays.



Sustainability

Power Place of Schloss Lerchenhof.

The power place is 14 hectares of natural landscape around Schloss Lerchenhof. It includes all the mainstays from the railway station to the hotel and combines them into one big whole. From river to field, forest to mountain, it is a diverse and unspoilt idyll. Biodiversity areas, nature conservation areas, bird sanctuary. The protection of nature is important to us here and should convey values and understanding with natural hiking trails, retreats (our Platz'In), our sustainable farming methods and interesting signposting. Raise awareness, learn from nature, enjoy the peace and quiet. Learn crafts and traditions together with us at workshops, grow and harvest vegetables, clean grain or feed pigs. We make it possible for everyone from kindergarten children to pensioners to experience the circular economy.



Green care

Lerchenhof Castle offer activities that align with the concept of Green Care. They emphasize sustainability and nature-based experiences promoting physical and mental health through active participation in nature, such as:

- Nature walks and hiking: opportunities to explore the surrounding natural environment, promoting physical health and mental well-being;
- Wellness area: includes features like a wellness area that support relaxation and health;
- Active holidays: rental items such as e-bikes, e-Vespas, and snowshoes encourage active engagement with nature.

“A very positive outcome was the formation of a community and the opportunity to explore new perspectives and concepts.”

*Johann Steinwender,
Managing Director*



Photo by lerchenhof.at