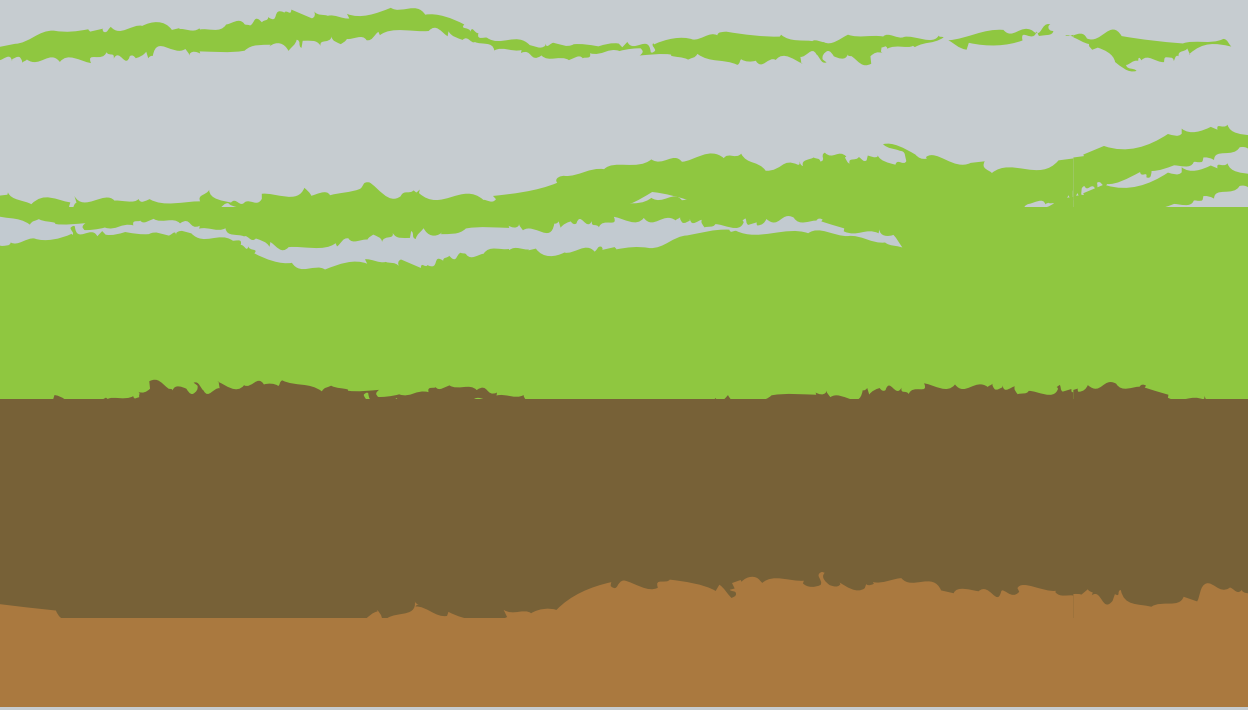
Soil management practices in the Alps

A selection of good practices - Case Study 13



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CS13.

Database on Land Use Management in Lower Austria

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Country, Region:	*Austria, Lower Austria*
Organisation:	*Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Department of Spatial Planning)*
Sector:	*spatial planning, land use management*
Land uses:	*building land, agricultural land*
Main soil threat:	*soil sealing*
Key soil ecosystem services:	*All services are threatened by soil sealing.*
Summary:	*Municipalities and provinces in Austria face an ongoing challenge of soil sealing — a situation that is further exacerbated due to a lack of information about the potential and availability of land and unexploited areas. In this ongoing project, an inventory of available land and associated contact persons is being developed, in order to understand the current status quo and to contribute the data needed in the creation of a database for land use management. An important outcome will be more effective and sustainable spatial planning - specifically a reduction in soil sealing.*
Keywords:	*land use management, database, stock taking*

Background and description of the problem

On one hand, soil sealing is a major problem in Austria and its limitation is a challenge for stakeholders especially in municipalities and federal provinces. On the other hand, municipalities often know far too little about the potential of land or unexploited areas. There is a lack of information on the status of availability of these sites. Structural vacancy, brown fields, vacant lots, and derelict land are just a few other relevant keywords here. To combat the problem, a first step to be undertaken is a systematic inventory-taking of the status quo. This is what the unit of spatial planning of the Provincial Government of Lower Austria has intended with the development of the "Database on Land Use Management" project.

Expected improvements / contribution to better soil management

Municipalities collect data on land use so that the potential for internal development can be utilised from the very start. By getting a bigger picture of the status quo, internal development is possible. As a next step, the municipality gets in contact with land owners to get information about their ideas for their land and buildings.

This tool is a key instrument to realise the planning principle of "internal development before external development". One major aim is to avoid soil sealing. The planning tool is free of charge and available for any municipality in Lower Austria.

Stakeholders and knowledge transfer

Target groups are mayors, heads of offices, employees in public administration and local resident groups in general. The database was tested by four pilot municipalities and there were also workshops aimed at gaining even more experience from these pilot projects.

The unit of spatial planning of the Provincial Government of Lower Austria developed the project and is in contact with the interested parties.

Data and methods

The project started in 2014 and is still ongoing. There is no information on costs.

There are three main steps:

1. Discover the potential of internal development and
2. Get in contact with the owners of land and buildings
3. Monitoring

For further information:

https://www.raumordnung-noe.at/index.php?id=520

https://www.raumordnung-noe.at/fileadmin/root_raumordnung/gemeinde/oertliche_raumordnung/planungstools/Folder_FMD.pdf
(only German version available)

Results

The outcome is a database (MS Access Database) with collected information on available land and contact persons.

The Database was tested in four pilot municipalities and users gave positive response to the database.

The "Database on Land Use Management" project is not only about land use management and prevention of soil sealing, but it also aims at enhancing the appeal of city centres, enhancing liveability in the municipalities and, last but not least, helping to reduce community charges. These are important issues for community stakeholders who can function as multipliers and reach a broad audience with these topics.

Transferability and applicability

The approach can easily be replicated and applied in other regions and states. Lower Austria also developed this database following a project on land use management in Bavaria.

- Important fact: land use management is part of the every-day planning process and will not be completed on a specific date. This also means: The database must be updated on a regular basis.
- Intensive communication with local communities and awareness-raising are key factors at all stages.
- The project leader drafted a decision about the adoption of the database as an instrument for long-term planning for the municipal council. (further information: http://www.raumordnung-noe.at/index.php?id=520)
- In case there is an external person who is in charge of spatial planning concepts for the community, the database must be explained to them and used as basic information for the next planning stages.

The database can also be an instrument for inter-municipal cooperation.

Environmental and climate change impact

Measures like brownfield development or reactivation of vacancies have a positive effect on climate change. Internal development causes shorter distances and reduces the need for motorised private transport. Other positive effects are the conservation of resources and, of course, soil conservation.

Photos / illustrations / maps

The illustration on the next page (available only in German language) shows scenarios for internal development. The number of residents, residential units and energy consumption varies widely:

1. Status Quo
17 residents/hectare
35 residential units
100 residents
energy consumption of 2 megawatts per hour

2. Internal development within existing structures
100 residents/hectare
250 residential units
600 residents
energy consumption of 12 megawatts per hour

3. Terraced houses
88 residents/hectare
220 residential units
500 residents
energy consumption of 11 megawatts per hour

4. Maximum
180 residents/hectare
450 residential units
1,000 residents
energy consumption of 22 megawatts per hour

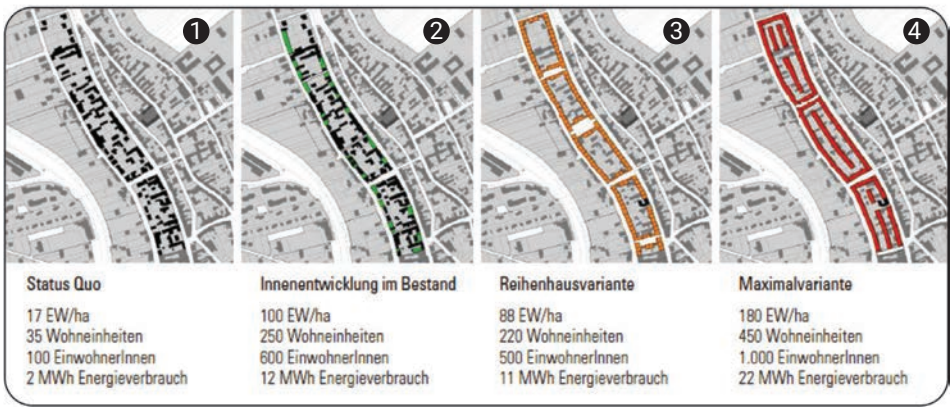

Figure 47: With information from the Database on Land Use Management, it is also possible to develop scenarios for the internal development of a municipality.
(Source: https://www.raumordnung-noe.at/fileadmin/root_raumordnung/gemeinde/oertliche_raumordnung/planungstools/Folder_FMD.pdf)

Caring for Soils
- Where Our Roots Grow