Agricultural Research and Education Centre (AREC) Raumberg-Gumpenstein, Austria

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ERDF Project Partner 1

The Agricultural Research and Education Centre Raumberg-Gumpenstein is situated in the Middle of Austria, in the Styrian Enns Valley. It is the largest federal institute of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and driving-force for sustainable economizing in the region.

AREC has about 330 employees and comprises four research institutes: Livestock Research; Plant Production and Cultural Landscape; Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, Organic Farming and Farm Animal Biodiversity. The Technical Agrarian College with 436 students (~ 39% girls) is focusing on Agrarian Management, Environmental and Resource Management and 3-year advanced training course for agriculture.
AREC is specialized in research and development, education and training, consulting and expertise for sustainable land-use management and environment (land use development, agriculture, organic agriculture, biodiversity, protection of soil and water, climate change, natural resources).
Main tasks: scientific investigation, elaboration, collection, documentation and record keeping of knowledge and data by using modern information technology, development, testing and improvement of methods, processes, research facilities, machines, devices and materials, information activities, dissemination of knowledge (courses, seminars, events and counsulting), participation in advisory boards and similar bodies, the maintenance of domestic and foreign contacts for professional cooperation and the exchange of professional experience and publications.

AREC generates know-how for scientists, practitioners, stakeholders, decision makers, political actors, students and the population. The results are disseminated via national/international conferences, seminars, workshops, special trainings and publications.
Our researchers and experts contribute to the development of strategies, participate in different research and education networks and act as lecturers at national and international Universities.

AREC has a special Department for Project Development and Management, which is well experienced with the implementation of national and international projects and interdisciplinary networking in research and education.

Our region, the Styrian Enns Valley, is directly affected by the challenges of CAMARO-D. Problem areas are for example endangered settlement sites by flooding and debris flows, surface runoff, intensive grass land management and high land consumption for industry and trade. Invasive plant species along rivers and torrents, forest edges and protected areas (especially *Impatiens glandulifera, Solidago canadensis, Fallopia japonica*) as well as unfavourable spatial planning structures (extension of settlement areas) are current problems.
Based on the actual and future challenges concerning water and flood protection, the thematic priorities in CAMARO-D are:
Land use types and their potential impact on surface runoff, site specific native greening for protection of surface runoff, management tools for wetland areas (flood protection and biodiversity), strategy for spatial planning and flood risk management, management activities and awareness raising concerning invasive plant species (hot spots, environmental impacts, elimination measures e.g. in protected areas), water protection at alpine pasture sites and along rivers in agricultural regions (especially in grass land areas).
Our monitoring test sites in the Upper Styrian Enns Valley are of high relevance for the project.

We are coordinator of WP4 – Explorative Danube – and implement pilot actions and training activities.
The activities are realised in close cooperation with the transnational project team as well as with our associated strategic partners (ASPs): Office of the Styrian Federal State Government Styria (Dep. 14 Water management, resources and sustainability), Styrian Nature Protection Association (ASP5) and our external experts: the Austrian Research Centre for Forests (BFW) and the Austrian Service for Torrent and Avalanche Control (WLV). AREC is also best connected to regional/local stakeholders and administrative bodies which are relevant for CAMARO-D.

Former projects like *MONITOR* (Hazard Monitoring for Risk Assessment and Risk Communication), *BE-NATUR* (Better Management and Implementation of Natura 2000 Sites), Gewässer-Zukunft/*Water-future* (Reduction of nutrient inputs into surface waters in the cultural landscape of the Bavarian and Austrian foothills of the Alps), *Seenlandwirtschaft* (Sustainable agriculture in the EU-regional lake landscape), *LUBIO* (Land use, climate change and biodiversity in cultural landscapes: Assessing feedbacks and promoting land-use strategies towards a viable future), *Power Streams* (The self-purification capacity of streams under the pressure of increasing nutrient pollution) provide valuable basics for CAMARO-D.