

UNESCO WIENERWALD BIOSPHERE RESERVE

A BIOSPHERE RESERVE ON THE EDGE OF A METROPOLIS



WHAT ARE BIOSPHERE RESERVES?

Biosphere Reserves are areas designated under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. They serve as "living laboratories" for sustainable development.

They are places where science, culture, decision-makers and local communities join forces, showing how conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development can work together hand-in-hand.

Rather than separating people from nature, Biosphere Reserves are founded on the principle that ecosystems and communities can thrive together. Local communities – including civil society and businesses – play an active role in protecting and restoring ecosystems and developing resilient and sustainable livelihoods.



THE WIENERWALD BIOSPHERE RESERVE

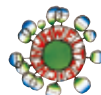
The Wienerwald was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2005 at the initiative of the provinces of Lower Austria and Vienna.

With an area of 105,645 hectares, the Biosphere Reserve covers 51 municipalities of Lower Austria and seven districts of Vienna. Approximately **900,000 people** live within this unique region with its natural and cultural diversity and its sustainably managed landscapes on the edge of the city of Vienna. Its convergence of different climatic and geological zones create a **remarkable diversity of habitats**, supporting an exceptional variety of plant and animal species. The close interlinking of forests, open landscapes and settlements, on top of the contrast between very rural communities and the metropolitan city of Vienna, create **unique spatial conditions**, while presenting **significant challenges** at the same time.

The protection of natural habitats is just as important as the conservation of man-made cultural landscapes to secure the diversity of the region and its ecological balance for future generations.



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Eine Initiative der Länder Niederösterreich und Wien



LIVING, WORKING AND PROTECTING WITHIN THREE ZONES

Every UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is organised into three zones: core, buffer and transition zones. These zones do not represent different levels of importance; rather, each zone serves a specific purpose.

The **Transition Area (64% of the total area of the Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve)** is where people live, work and enjoy recreation. This is where innovative approaches towards sustainable living are implemented, meeting the needs of both humans and nature.

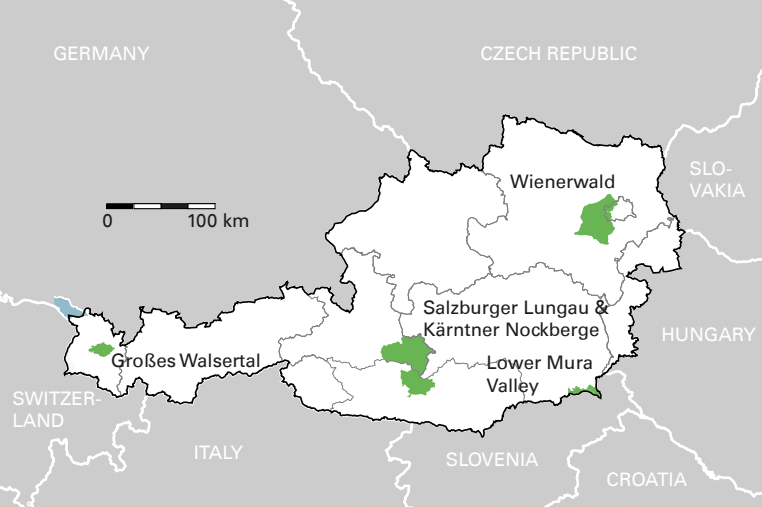
Within the **Buffer Zone (31%)** the focus lies on the conservation and responsible use of the valuable cultural landscape. This ensures the rich diversity of habitats, home to numerous species of plants, animals and fungi.

In the **Core Area (5%)**, nature is given top priority. The 37 strictly protected forest areas which are zoned as Core Zone provide space for natural processes to unfold without being disturbed. This is where the virgin forests of tomorrow can develop.

THE WIENERWALD BIOSPHERE RESERVE AS PART OF UNESCO'S WORLD NETWORK

As part of UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve actively participates in **workshops, conferences and collaborative projects** for the purpose of regional knowledge exchange. In Austria, the MAB National Committee coordinates the country's scientific projects of the MAB Programme and also serves as the national coordinator for Austria's other Biosphere Reserves. Aside from the Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve, Austria is home to three other UNESCO Biosphere Reserves:

- **Großes Walsertal** (Vorarlberg, designated in 2000)
- **Salzburger Lungau & Kärntner Nockberge** (designated in 2012)
- **Unteres Murtal** (Styria, designated in 2019)



Cartography: Kati Späth, GFDL, 2026. Data sources: BR Wienwald, bww.at, Land Salzburg 2017, Land Vorarlberg – data.vbg.gv.at (VÖGIS), 2014, compiled by Umweltbundesamt, GIS Steiermark, EuroBoundaryMap ©EuroGeographics

Biosphere Reserves in Austria

- Biosphere Reserve Border
- Vienna State Border
- Transition Area
- Buffer Zone
- Core Area

0 5 10 km

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