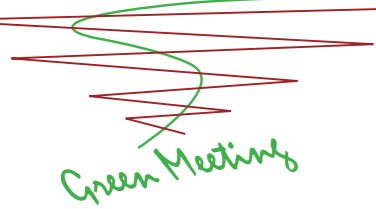
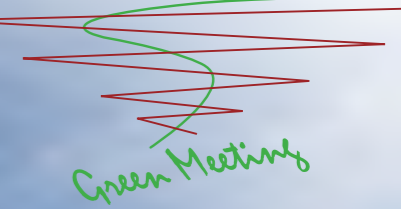


CONGRESS CENTRUM ALPBACH

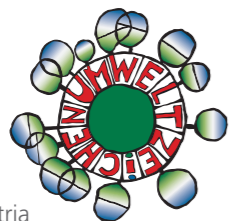


CONGRESS CENTRUM ALPBACH



## *Sowing the seeds of sustainability...*

Congress Centre Alpbach sustainability report



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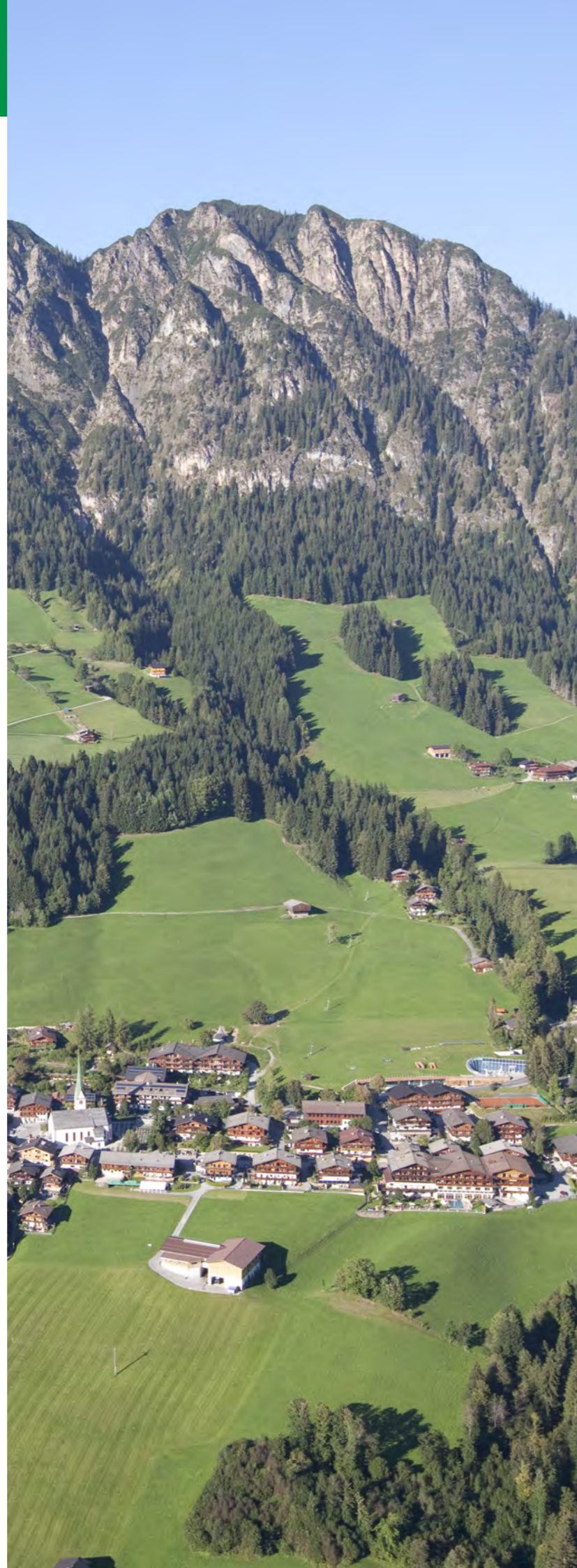
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# Foreword

Thanks to its uniform architectural style and fantastic flower displays throughout the summer, the village of Alpbach has earned itself a global reputation and a whole host of awards such as “Europe’s Most Beautiful Flower Village” and “Austria’s Most Beautiful Village”. The Congress Centre Alpbach is a masterpiece of construction and a Green Building that preserves the village’s unique image while also ensuring maximum energy efficiency. Having pursued a comprehensive sustainability strategy since 2010, the Congress Centre Alpbach now serves as a shining example of best practice when it comes to hosting Green Meetings. Read on to learn more about the framework conditions, fields of activity and real-world results of the measures that have been implemented to date as part of the Alpbach Green Meeting project. This forward-looking concept has already reached over 140,000 participants at the Congress Centre Alpbach alone, and these crowds in turn serve as vital multipliers. Looking beyond the progress we have made and the awards we have won, we want to keep working together with all our partner companies and customers as we further enhance our solutions and services. We are always happy to receive constructive criticism and suggestions: join the conversation and contribute to the sustainable development of the conference and meeting industry.

Kind regards,

Georg Hechenblaikner  
Managing Director  
Congress Centre Alpbach  
Alpbach Tourismus GmbH





# Alpbachtal Seenland

**Avoyage of discovery** in Alpbachtal Seenland! Alpbachtal Seenland is surely one of the most beautiful and diverse regions in all the world. Located between Innsbruck and Kufstein, it comprises Alpbach, Brandenberg, Breitenbach, Brixlegg, Kramsach, Kundl, Münster, Radfeld, Rattenberg and Reith im Alpbachtal. From hiking and cycling to skiing, it is home to a wealth of attractions that wow guests from across the globe all year round. Key destinations include Alpbach, located 1,000 metres up on a sun-kissed plateau and celebrated as Austria's most beautiful village, Rattenberg, the smallest city in Austria, and a series of hiking trails that guide visitors to the stunning Kundler Klamm, Tiefenbachklamm and Kaiserklamm gorges. From cold mountain streams to the warmest bathing lakes in Tirol, from cross-country skiing to downhill runs and from hiking to climbing, the region offers a little bit of everything. Alpbachtal Seenland also boasts sumptuous cuisine throughout the year, with rustic huts, snack stops and farmers' markets all serving up top-quality regional produce. Finally, the



*"It's important to us as a community that we preserve the local building regulations that help make our village truly unique. 20 years from now, we want Alpbach to look just as charming as it does today. If we can manage that, it'll prove our ability to deal with any future challenges that come our way."*

Markus Bischofer – Mayor of Alpbach

**Architecture.** A change to the local building regulations originally introduced in 1953 by then-Mayor Alfons Moser has had a dramatic impact on the look of Alpbach right through to the present day. Aimed at safeguarding the typical Alpine architecture of the region, it stated that all buildings in the village would boast a uniform style: each structure was to feature wooden cladding from the first floor up, with exposed brickwork permitted only on the ground floor. Still in force after more than six decades, this popular ruling is treasured by local residents as it has preserved the unique look of their village. On the strength of its uniform wooden architecture and dazzling flower arrangements, Alpbach has even been honoured as "Austria's Most Beautiful Village". And of course, visitors attending conferences and meetings here are always charmed by this wonderfully traditional building style.

**Accommodation.** What is it that sets this traditional yet modern conference and meeting destination apart and makes this Tirolean mountain village one of the leading Green Meeting hubs in the Alps? One key aspect is accommodation, which is responsible for substantial regional value creation. Nearly 2,700 beds are available in the village, from traditional rooms in beautiful guest houses through to spacious apartments, cosy 3-star inns and 4-star superior hotels. No matter where you stay, you are sure to encounter courteous and professional hosts who will help you make the very most of these unique surroundings. It goes without saying that most of the attractions in Alpbach are just a short walk away, with every walk through the village from A to B serving as a wonderful complement to proceedings.

**Premium partners.** Numerous local accommodation establishments play a crucial role in supporting the CCA's Green Meeting activities – and they are given due recognition as "premium partners."

These partners offer a wide range of services, starting with breakfast buffets that focus on home-made, seasonal and regional products or their fairtrade counterparts. They also provide bike hire, help with arrival/departure via public transport and hypoallergenic bed linen, all while ensuring optimised use of energy and resources. Ingrid Walder, a member of the CCA team, succinctly sums up the importance of this collaboration: "The premium partners are essential to what we do."

<https://congressalpbach.com/en/themen/unser-service/zimmerreservierung/premium-partner-hotelerie.php>



*"Local residents help ensure a welcoming atmosphere, even if they don't provide accommodation of their own. Here in Alpbach, we take pride in being courteous hosts and helping all visitors feel right at home."*

Gitti Gschösser – landlady and premium partner



Ski Juwel Alpbachtal Wildschönau resort, which draws throngs of winter visitors to its 109 kilometres of slopes spread across two valleys, is perfect for action-packed adventures and family fun alike.

<https://www.skijuwel.com/en>



*"Far from being a hotbed of tourism, we ensure an ideal balance between local residents, tourism businesses, commercial interests and agriculture." (2,700 population, 2,700 beds available, 2,700 cows in the fields)*

Johannes Duftner – hotelier and premium partner



**Village life.** When Alpbach residents exchange friendly greetings with visitors, this is far from an empty gesture – instead, it is a proud part of village life. And if you show genuine interest in the local people and their lifestyle, don't be surprised if they engage in a little small talk or even take the time to discuss their time-honoured traditions. They are also more than happy to make use of their fluent English skills whenever they might be needed. Familiar with the throngs of high-status guests from the worlds of politics, science, finance and art that are drawn to Alpbach, the locals take all this in their stride and are never awed by celebrity. Even at peak times, when crowds of holidaymakers and conference attendees descend on this mountain village, life goes on as before. This is in fact key to the success of Green Meetings in Alpbach: while this internationally-renowned des-



*"The people of Alpbach take pride in their traditions and have helped preserve a great many for future generations."*

Markus Bischofer – Mayor of Alpbach

tinuation hosts dozens of meetings and business events throughout the year, the village itself remains a haven of tranquility. In short, Alpbach residents are real pros who know their routines, come together like a well-drilled team and always remain true to themselves. As modern restaurateurs, entrepreneurs and experts in the field of tourism, their excellent intuition and sheer enthusiasm helps them cater perfectly to the needs of today's conference attendees.

**History.** The unique story of Alpbach throws up a fair number of questions. After all, how did this village at the end of a Tirolean valley turn itself into a vibrant hub for meetings and conferences, a premier destination in Europe and a sustainability pioneer over the course of the last decade?

In 1945, a few months after the end of the Second World War and at a time when Alpbach was still a distant outpost, Otto Molden, Simon Moser and other like-minded individuals established the "International Summer Seminars". Renamed the "European Forum Alpbach" in 1949, this serves as an interdisciplinary platform for science, politics, finance and culture every August. The Forum has always focused on the burning socio-political questions of the day with the aim of creating a forward-looking democratic society and furthering European integration. In meadows and Alpine pastures, in hotel lobbies and local inns, at the primary school and in the many halls and lounges of the Congress Centre, representatives from all areas of society engage in an international and multi-generational dialogue featuring a rich variety of views. These discussions serve as a magnet for

attendees and attract enthusiastic young people from all over the world. This remarkable process of networking to safeguard ongoing peace fully reflects the visionary goal of the EFA's founders. The European Forum is an essential part of the Alpbach success story, having given local residents the unique chance to rub shoulders with thousands of scientists, politicians and artists from across the globe for over 70 summers. This small Alpine village could not be more proud to host this annual gathering, which has long served as a model example of how to conduct a modern conference.

Source: <https://www.alpbach.org>

Although it is the largest such gathering held in Alpbach, the European Forum is by no means the only event that has found a home here. Indeed, the Forum has been instrumental in ensuring that Alpbach is now celebrated as a premier destination for a wide variety of conferences and meetings, including a number of major financial and scientific conferences, specialist trade fairs, exhibitions, corporate events, incentives, evening events and receptions.

## Sustainability in the region.

For over ten years now, the Congress Centre Alpbach, the village itself and the wider Alpbachtal Seenland region have embarked on a shared sustainability drive. Having already reached a great many milestones while recording some pioneering breakthroughs, all involved remain dedicated to furthering their visionary goals. With this in mind, Alpbach, Brixlegg and Reith im Alpbachtal merged to form the Alpbachtal valley Climate and Energy Model Region (KEM) in 2014. Source: [www.alpbachtal2050.at](http://www.alpbachtal2050.at) and <https://www.klimaundenergiemodellregionen.at/modellregionen/liste-der-regionen/getregion/330>

The long-term vision of all 91 Climate and Energy Model Regions (KEMs), which encompass some 772 settlements across Austria, is a future without fossil fuels and a full-scale energy revolution. Some fantastic projects have already been completed in the Alpbachtal valley Climate and Energy Model Region (population 8,160), including the energy-efficient renovation of a Brixlegg secondary school, the installation of a photovoltaic plant at the Alpbach secondary school and the launch of an electric car-sharing project in Brixlegg. As the specially appointed manager of this model region, Rainer Unger knows that patience and persuasion are key to achieving success. Given his expert background as a qualified geographer specialising in the fields of geoinformation, climate change, energy and tourism, he is ideally suited to this

role. In his view, the biggest tourism-related challenge is that of visitor mobility – after all, emissions generated by arrivals and departures lend a global dimension to local tourism. As nearly 60% of tourist-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are generated by traffic alone, with the vast majority of visitors arriving solo rather than in a group, optimistic approaches are needed to ensure functioning and acceptable traffic concepts in rural regions well into the future. Starting in 2015, Alpbach was also the fo-



*"What makes Alpbach so special is its setting. The sheer beauty of this village and its surroundings is treasured by visitors from abroad."*

Franz Fischler – President, European Forum Alpbach

cus of research conducted as part of a flagship project for forward-thinking tourism. Within the framework of the holistic alpS COMET project "Mount++", a team of researchers led by Unger himself sought to identify energy-efficient and sustainable solutions for the entire ski region. Three of the world's leading winter sports firms were also keenly involved in this initiative: the snow groomer manufacturer Kässbohrer, the cable car producer Doppelmayr AG and the snow-making system specialist Technoalpin. After three years of research into enhanced eco-friendly solutions for snow grooming and snow-making, it was no surprise when Alpbach was



chosen as the ideal destination for this visionary project. The mountain village is of course wonderfully open to innovation, even though its rustic charm may sometimes obscure its dynamic character at first glance. This is just one of many developments in the Alpbachtal valley that demonstrate its ambition to tackle climate change and shed light on the major challenges faced by such regions

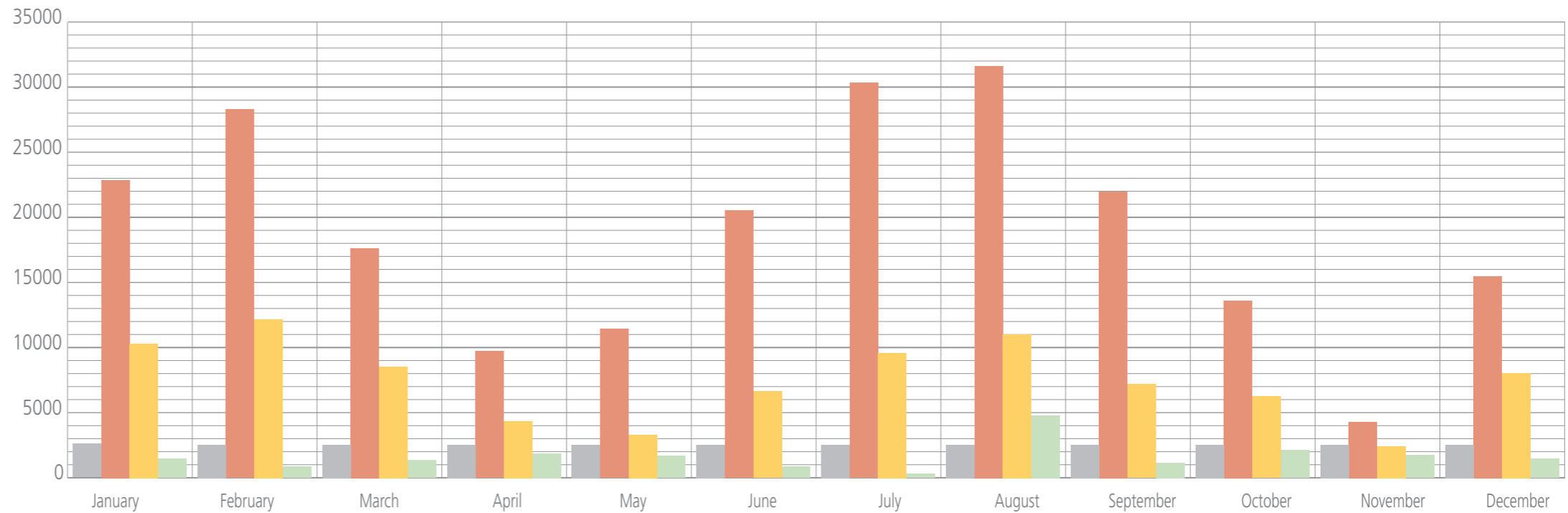
with a strong focus on winter tourism. Markus Bischofer, Mayor of Alpbach, is quickly getting used to the fact that his village is a Climate and Energy Model Region – and that Alpbach, Reith and Brixlegg form the largest communal climate protection network in Austria. In addition, regional decision-makers also appreciate that the most ambitious goals for the future can only be reached if we involve the youth of today. This realisation has inspired the model region project Energuido, which is a smartphone/tablet adventure game for school pupils aged 13 and over. Energuido uses GPS tracking to guide children to a series of checkpoints spread out across the local area. Scheduled for release in 2019, this provides a tangible experience of climate change and the energy revolution.



## Population / Arrivals / Participants / Events at CCA in 2017

The 15-year trend demonstrates a constant increase in the number of visitor arrivals in Alpbach, plus strong growth in the number of participants attending events at the Congress Centre Alpbach since the extension was completed in August 2016. In the month-by-month comparison for 2017, total arrivals in Alpbach and the number of participants at CCA events are compared with the population of Alpbach itself and total arrivals across the entire Alpbachtal Seenland tourism region.

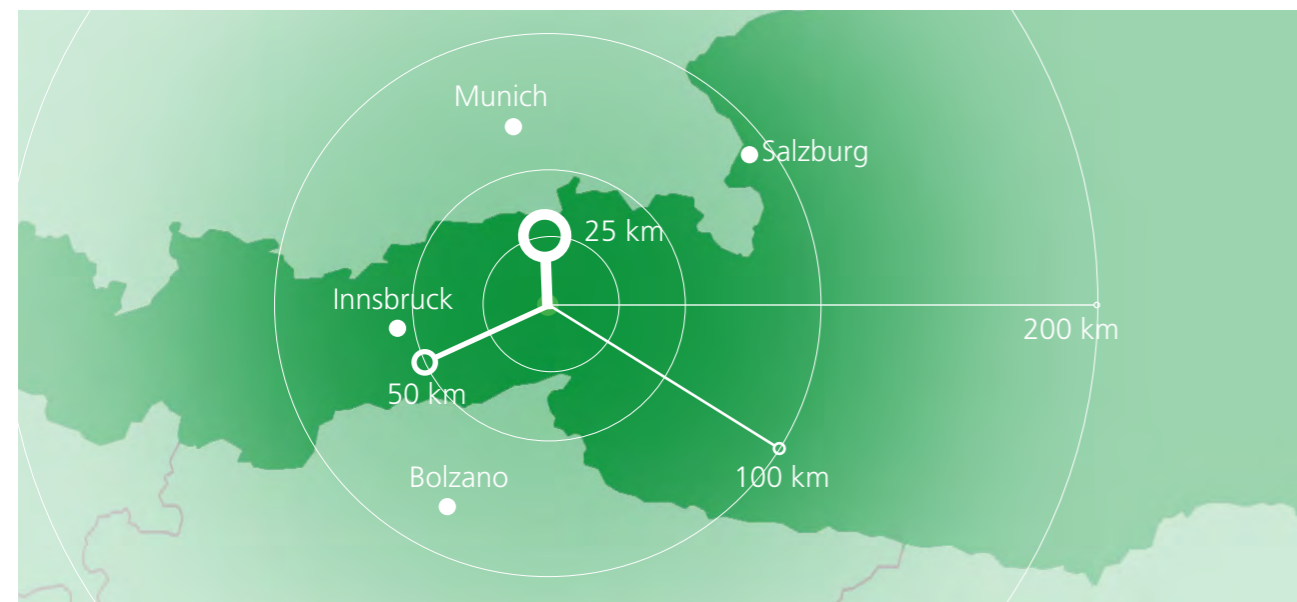
- Alpbach population in 2017
- Arrivals in the Alpbachtal Seenland region
- Arrivals in Alpbach
- Participants at CCA events



## Transport routes for catering products Congress Centre Alpbach

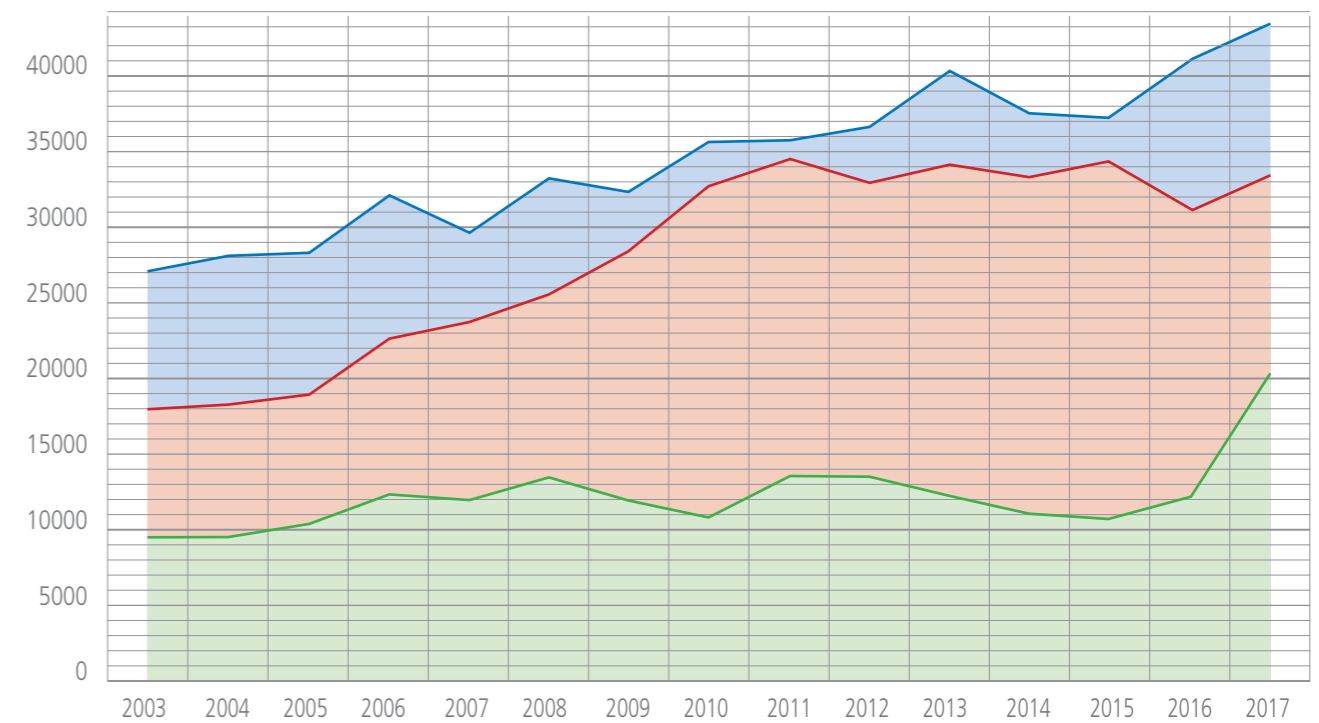
The vast majority of food served up by the catering provider at the Congress Centre Alpbach has travelled no more than 25 kilometres to get there. Tasked with maintaining the shortest possible transport routes between

their suppliers and the CCA, they can only succeed if the concept of "regionality" is clearly defined and continuously enhanced.



- Up to 25 km: dairy products, apple juice, mineral water, bread, pastries, bacon
- Up to 50 km: vegetables, salad, eggs
- Up to 100 km: meat, freshwater fish, sausage products
- Up to 200 km: poultry, meat, seasonal fruit

## 15-year trend: 2003-2017 Arrivals in Alpbach / Participants at CCA events



- Winter arrivals in Alpbach
- Summer arrivals in Alpbach
- Participants at CCA events



# Efficient

**The CCA.** Alpbach is famed for its ability to blend tradition and modernity, and the 2016 expansion of the Congress Centre was no exception. Built into the slope as a means of providing necessary additional capacity, this bright meeting facility boasts a total area of 2,796 m<sup>2</sup> and has been awarded the “Green Location” Austrian Ecolabel in recognition of its environmental performance.

For Managing Director Georg Hechenblaikner, this wonderfully designed and equipped Congress Centre boasts a variety of assets. “Energy efficiency was one of the key planning criteria for all involved, with Tirol Governor Günther Platter, Forum President Franz Fischler and the shareholders of the Congress Centre Alpbach all providing comprehensive support from the very start. It was equally important to us that this extension be integrated into the existing building in a seamless manner while also ensuring maximum flexibility for all facilities. This is precisely what customers need: exhibition areas that are easy to combine with one another, plus adjustable conference rooms filled with natural light. Event organisers are often pleasantly surprised when they first encounter our high-end light and sound technology.” Technical Manager Christoph Margreiter also explains how quality and energy efficiency influenced both the design of the extension and the simultaneous renovation of the exist-

ing building: “We wanted to ensure that high-quality solutions offering long-term energy savings were implemented across all areas, from heating, ventilation and air conditioning through to the devices that are essential for seminars and conferences – such as loudspeakers and projectors. And when buying new equipment for day-to-day use, we now pay great attention to energy levels and consumption values. We see this as a vital factor within the overall process.”

But what do the residents of Alpbach make of this cutting-edge Green Building at the heart of their traditional village? As Mayor Markus Bischofer explains, “the Congress Centre is an integral part of the community. Though it has grown significantly from small beginnings over the decades, it has local roots that date back all the way to 1945.

I believe that it is this storied background that has made it such an essential part of the village of Alpbach.”

Bischofer also notes that the CCA has given a welcome boost to other projects:

“This was perfectly in keeping with the strategy that saw us merge with our neighbours to form a Climate and Energy Model Region. For example, the conversion and partial rebuilding of the community centre in 2005 enabled us to abandon fossil fuels in favour of pellet heating. We also installed a pellet heater at the sports field and

switched to using sustainable energy sources at the primary school. And this change in thinking is reflected in the local building applications.”



*“How would I describe the Congress Centre Alpbach in three words? Modern, sustainable and inviting.”*

Franz Fischler – President, European Forum Alpbach





Efficient





**The world in a village.** Through its events and its network of scholarship recipients, the European Forum Alpbach (EFA) serves as an interdisciplinary platform for socio-political dialogue and knowledge sharing. National and international participants from science, politics, culture and civil society have met every year since 1945 to further this concept through the discussion of a general topic that provides the thematic framework for a variety of event formats. In this way, the European Forum Alpbach is an interactive, open think tank and source of inspiration. The remarkable discussions held in Alpbach attract attendees from all continents, each with their own particular expertise in a wide range of fields. Former participants from the world of politics include Bruno Kreisky, Jacques Delors, Indira Gandhi, Yitzak Rabin and Ban Ki-moon. Every August, the village of Alpbach duly plays host to a major weeks-long conference that welcomes 5,000 participants and is a recognised Green Meeting. Crucially, the representatives from the Congress Centre – from the mayor to CCA President Franz Fischler – broadly agree that there should be no attempt to target further growth. As the limits of Alpbach’s accommodation providers have already been reached, all sides accept that any increase in the number of participants would not be good for the village. To mark the 70th anniversary of the European Forum Alpbach, historian Maria Wirth

compiled a scientific monograph tracing the evolution of the EFA between 1945 and 2015. An English summary of this work is available for download (PDF, 30 pages). Source: <https://www.alpbach.org/en/about-us/our-history/>

**Scholarship programme.** This sees more than 700 young people from around 80 countries being given the opportunity to participate in seminars, breakout sessions and plenary debates at the European Forum Alpbach. Every year, applicants aged under 30 come from all over the world to tackle the key issues of our time with vision and curiosity.

Established 1945, features seminars, symposia, debates, summer schools and professional programmes for three weeks every August  
 5,000 participants from over 90 countries  
 700 scholarship recipients  
 650 speakers  
 30 alumni organisations in 19 countries

## Interview with Franz Fischler

Franz Fischler – President, European Forum Alpbach



Mr Fischler, what is it that makes Alpbach so special?

What makes Alpbach so special is its setting. The sheer beauty of this village and its surroundings is treasured by visitors from abroad.

And the much-vaunted “spirit of Alpbach”?

This is especially apparent at the European Forum, where we provide a platform for meetings on an equal footing with the aim of ensuring maximum creativity. What is it that distinguishes the “spirit of Alpbach” at the EFA from other such events in Europe? With some 700 scholarships up for grabs, we are able to bring together a relatively large group of young people. Many former participants have also established organisations for alumni in their respective home countries, thus making an active contribution towards furthering the “spirit of Alpbach”. There are now more than 30 such Alpbach clubs and groups in over 20 countries. And with artists continuing to play a key role at the EFA, this ensures that discussions are further enlivened by the colourful perspectives they

bring to the table. All this combines to form the unmistakable “spirit of Alpbach”.

What role did you play in ensuring such excellent acoustics at the CCA?

We can proudly say that Alpbach currently offers the best acoustics of any conference centre anywhere in Europe. Once I heard about the Graz Institute of Electronic Music and Acoustics (IEM), I knew that their expertise would prove to be a real boon for the new extension. Although this undertaking had to be specially financed, we were ultimately able to achieve a unique acoustic experience. You can now even choose from a range of options including the Vienna Music Society, Tokyo’s Suntory Hall, New York’s Carnegie Hall, a gothic cathedral and even modern 3D acoustics. And of course, the experience is equally perfect throughout the 800-seater Congress Centre Alpbach.



*“It was a wonderful stroke of luck that Alpbach was chosen as the host venue for the first Austrian Summer Seminars.”*

Markus Bischofer – Mayor of Alpbach



*“Once a year, the world comes to our village. It’s key to who I am: the Forum and the CCA have been part of my life for nearly 60 years.”*

Gitti Gschösser – landlady and premium partner



**EUROPEAN FORUM ALPBACH**



# Regional value creation

## Why not keep it local?

Regional value creation is a serious business in Alpbach. From renovation work to food and drink, we are delighted to invest in local quality. At the breakfast buffets of the CCA's premium partners and in the catering areas of the Congress Centre Alpbach itself, seasonal regional produce and fairtrade products are always front and centre.

As head of Alpbach-based family firm Gasthof Jakober GmbH, Jakob Larch is responsible for catering at the Congress Centre. Given his clear commitment to sustainable operations, which saw him awarded the Austrian Ecolabel in 2016, he serves up as much regional food and drink as possible at the CCA. This enables him to maintain an outstanding level of culinary quality even when catering to larger crowds at major events. His 20-year collaboration with the Congress Centre has afforded him a detailed knowledge of its processes and the advantages of short transport routes, with freshly-cooked meals delivered in a matter of minutes. Larch's love of sustainable, regional and seasonal cooking, which is fully in keeping with international trends, sees him source dairy products, meat, fish, fruit and vegetables from Tirol wherever possible. If any guests should request Chilean strawberries in winter or asparagus out of season, he uses his Tirolean charm to politely refuse – by explain-

ing how local fruit and vegetables, harvested in the right place at the right time, are even better. Knowing that actions speak louder than words, however, Larch and his team ultimately win over diners with high quality and remarkable flavour.

The catering team believes that products transported over long distances cause unnecessary damage to the environment. As a result, they prefer to craft their menus based on what is currently available. In the event of supply shortages, they naturally order from neighbouring Bavaria as opposed to other Austrian states that are further away. And when it comes to delivery chains, the highly dedicated

Alpbach catering team has had a real impact on reducing the use of plastics and packaging. If further improvements need to be made, not least for the benefit of the CCA's guests, then the team does not shy away from informing suppliers and distributors accordingly.



*"My breakfast options are almost exclusively local: cheese from farmers or dairies, bacon from Zottahof farm, home-made cakes and jams from Floberry, and fresh organic juice."*

Gitti Gschösser – landlady and premium partner



*"To adopt a sustainable lifestyle, you must start by looking at yourself."*

Jakob Larch – owner, Gasthof Jakober GmbH



# Sustainable meetings in Alpbach

## Green Meeting and Green Globe certification sets new standards.

Alpbach is the embodiment of best practice in a whole host of areas. Having pursued a sustainable approach since 2008, the Congress Centre Alpbach is one of the first Austrian conference and meeting destinations to seriously address such issues. Not only has the CCA been awarded the Austrian Ecolabel for Green Meetings and Green Locations, it has also secured international Green Globe certification in recognition of the high quality standards that are consistently met by the team and their local partners. And this decade-long sustainability drive has extended far beyond the Congress Centre itself. As CCA Managing Director Georg Hechenblaikner notes, the number of Alpbach catering and accommodation establishments boasting Austrian Ecolabel certification had risen to 10 by July 2018: "We're delighted with this development, as this shared commitment enables us to present Alpbach as a sustainable destination and establish an excellent reputation in this regard. Customers staying in Alpbach cannot help but appreciate this spirit of cooperation and collaboration."

Has Alpbach already reached the limits of what its Green Meeting, Green Location and Green Building package can offer? Not in the least, says Hechenblaikner. "There are still a great many providers that can be encouraged to



join our sustainability drive and establish a fruitful partnership. Looking to the future, we want to keep aiming high while analysing our own operations in real depth."



## Interview with Regina Preslmair

Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism.



Now that the CCA has been awarded a licence for Green Meetings and the Austrian Ecolabel for Green Locations, how important is its role as a pioneer?

The CCA was among the very first to kick off Green Meeting certification with the Austrian Convention Bureau (ACB) in 2010. It really helped that they were joined in these efforts by the European Forum (EFA), as this represented the largest conference held in Alpbach. The pioneering role played by the Congress Centre is of particular benefit given its international outlook, since the facility boasts a large and active target group. Take the European Forum, for example, which is attended by large numbers of opinion leaders every year. In this context, it is vital to explain the history of sustainability and provide a vivid demonstration of how it can be put into practice rather than falling back on declarations or wishful thinking. I am really impressed that they pursue such a consistent approach.

Does the CCA act as an important catalyst for the wider industry?

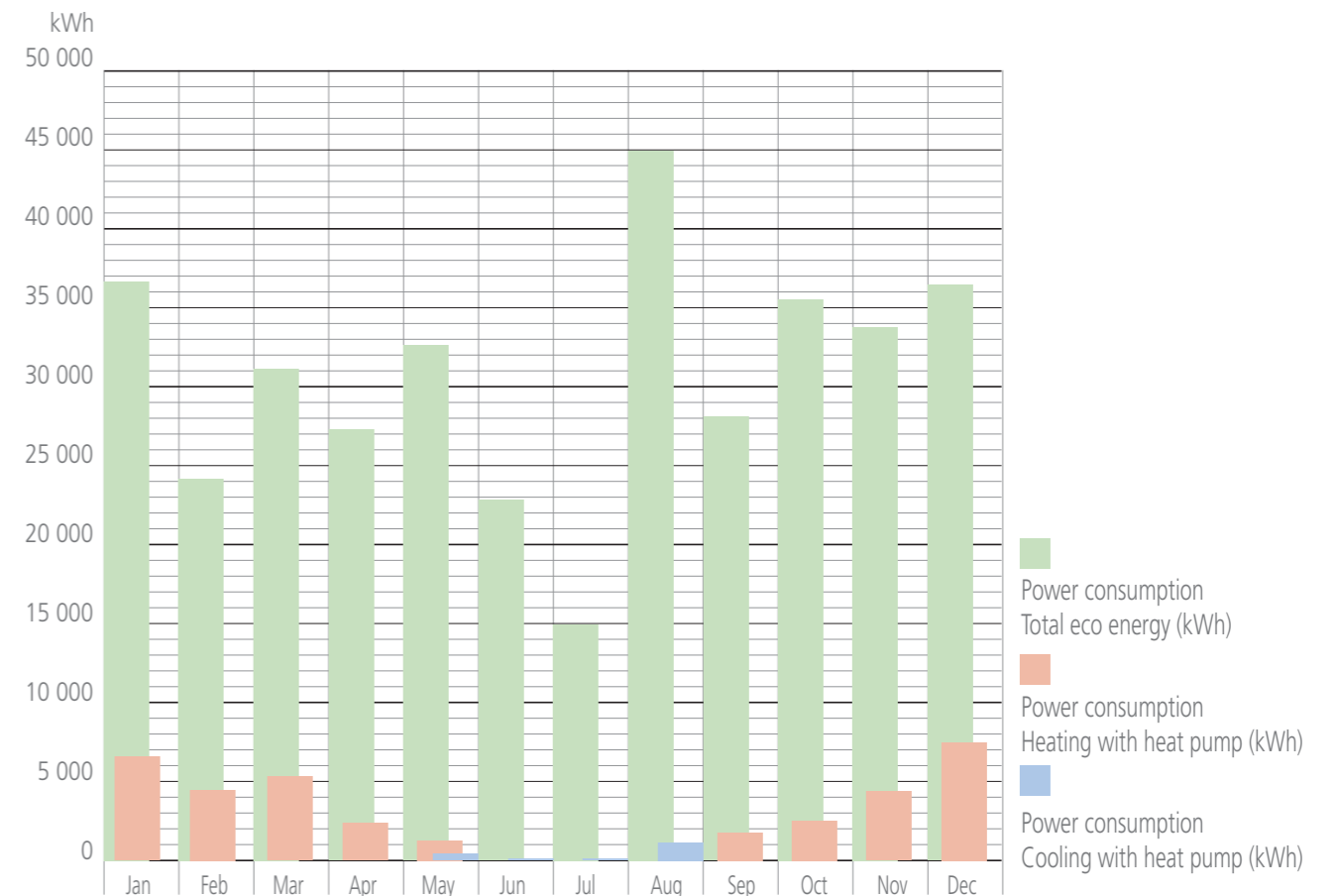
I think everyone involved in Alpbach has always been a pioneer. They look for new solutions, define new goals and use this to establish the framework for sustainable meetings. At the same time, the sheer number of hotels, accommodation options, caterers and service providers in close proximity to the CCA ensures they know what they are talking about. What particularly impresses us at the Ministry is how they provide a model example for others when it comes to defining and refining standards. And as the whole team in Alpbach has shown how to achieve success in this field, there is no doubting their status as genuine trendsetters.

Does the CCA provide its Green Meeting customers with next-level support?

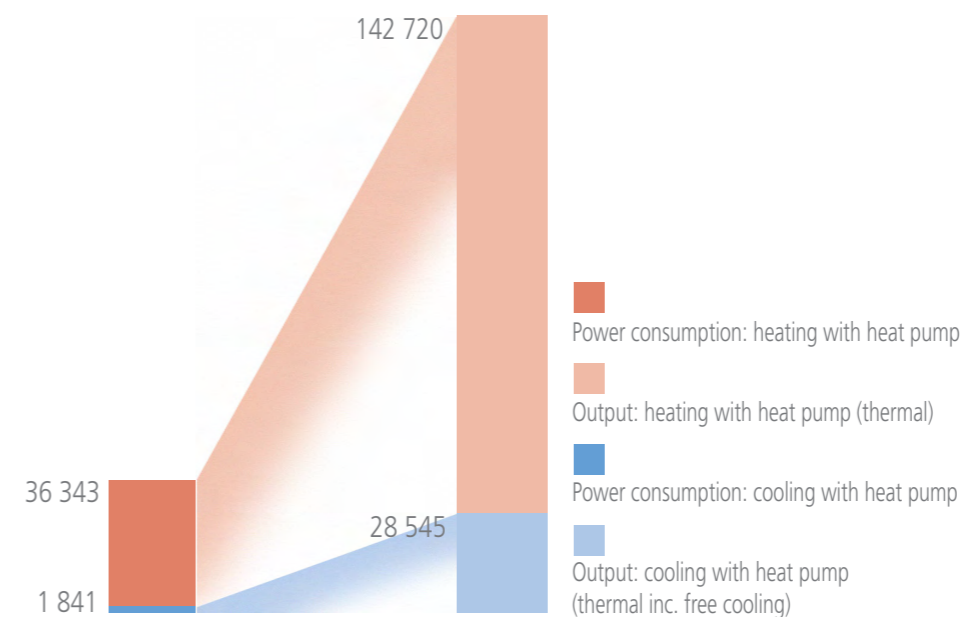
You can certainly say that – whenever you host an event in Alpbach, the CCA and its partners ensure you have everything you need right on your doorstep. But what truly sets the CCA apart is how it takes care of event organisation by pooling its own resources with that of its catering and accommodation network,

all while helping to establish a sustainable event schedule. In short, they offer an all-round package in the most beautiful of natural surroundings. And how many other providers can deliver that?

## CCA power consumption in 2017



## CCA heat pump performance diagram for 2017 in kWh





## Alpbach has so much to offer.

The Congress Centre Alpbach is a licensed bearer of the Austrian Ecolabel for Green Meetings and is also a recognised Green Location. It also hosts the European Forum Alpbach and the Leadership Academy, two major event series that have both received Austrian Ecolabel certification.

But while the CCA team aims to help as many customers as possible obtain Green Meeting certification, how are their efforts received? Georg Hechenblaikner is on hand to provide a little context: "We are not interested in preaching to our customers – but as soon as we provide event organisers with an objective look at the criteria and the benefits, many are quickly won over by



*"Customers really appreciate the fact that we provide consulting, implementation support and certification, as this means they can obtain everything they need from a single source – and our external partners are just a short walk away. These are all major benefits."*

*Ingrid Walder – Project Manager, CCA*

the excellent impact that certification has on communication and reputation enhancement. Once they opt for a Green Meeting, we can assist them every step of the way



if desired. With such a wide range of options available, no two meetings are alike! And though all our project managers have an expert knowledge of the criteria and stand ready to offer advice and support, we must ultimately respect the decision of those who choose not to acquire certification. I think our current approach strikes a good balance between patience and ambition: if some-

thing is not taken up at the first time of asking, then we are not afraid to ask again when the opportunity presents itself. Whatever the situation, our priority is always to ensure a positive dialogue and quality service. Most important of all, our in-house product development means that event organisers are now able to meet 70-80% of the Austrian Ecolabel criteria simply by choosing to host their gathering at the Congress Centre Alpbach."

## Green Meeting criteria.

These comprehensive criteria encompass aspects such as resource-conserving event management, a mobility concept with eco-friendly arrival and departure, catering, and waste prevention during events. For example, the vast majority of food and drink is drawn from seasonal, regional, organic or fairtrade sources. A wide-ranging waste management concept supports reduction efforts and helps prevent waste. And conference attendees are encouraged to stay at one of the local accommodation providers that each contribute to the shared sustainability concept.

## Green Globe certification.

In 2010, the CCA once again led the way in becoming Austria's first conference centre to obtain Green Globe certification. Originally developed for the travel and tourism industry, this independent global sustainability certification programme was extended to include operators in the conference and meeting industry through a partnership with the 750-member European Association of Event Centres (EVVC). The Green Globe Certification Standard is thus of worldwide relevance and importance to the industry at large. It is assessed on the basis of environmental friendliness, social responsibility and economic viability, with environmental factors accounting for 70% of the criteria and sociocultural aspects making up the remaining 30%. The process sees an independent accredited auditor conduct an on-site inspection to assess performance in terms of energy, waste and water, plus interaction and communication within the respective social environment.

Some 41 mandatory certification criteria provide the framework for the compliance indicators that are selected from a range of over 300, with specific indicators being used depending on the certification category, geographical area and regional factors. In order to obtain certification, the company in question must meet all the



criteria and achieve a score of at least 51% when combined with the respective indicators. And if they wish to retain their status, they are required to improve their performance every single year!

## klimaaktiv certificate

Upon the completion of the extension in 2016, the CCA was awarded the silver klimaaktiv certificate. This award was based on a calculation of the construction values that included both this extension and the main building dating from 1999. klimaaktiv is a pan-Austrian climate protection initiative run by the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism (BMNT), which is dedicated to promoting the energy revolution. The initiative is aimed at ensuring climate protection, reduced emissions and increased efficiency.

Key points of focus include the reduction of greenhouse emissions in construction and renovation, along with renewable energies, traffic and communities.

The wide-ranging klimaaktiv process assesses energy efficiency, design quality, workmanship, material quality, construction quality and core aspects relating to comfort and room air quality within buildings.



## fairpflichtet code

fairpflichtet represents the sustainability code of the event industry and was initiated by the German Convention Bureau (GCB) and the European Association of Event Centres (EVVC). This voluntary programme aims to ensure sustainable corporate responsibility in terms of the organisation and implementation of events. The Congress Centre Alpbach has signed up to this set of ten guidelines rooted in ecological, economical and social aspects of sustainability.

## CO<sup>2</sup> calculation

Since 2012, it has been possible for Congress Centre Alpbach customers to have the CO<sup>2</sup> value of their event calculated by the non-profit climate protection organisation atmosfair.

Under the patronage of Prof. Klaus Töpfer, this organisation records CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and creates detailed corresponding reports. Companies can then take this as the basis for making a voluntary contribution to promote climate protection, which sees atmosfair compensate for these CO<sub>2</sub> emissions within the scope of UN-certified climate protection projects. The certificate customers receive to confirm this CO<sub>2</sub> compensation can then be included in their corporate communication.

## Further awards and honours

The CCA team knows that awards and certificates provide valuable recognition of outstanding performance. So while Managing Director Georg Hechenblaikner and his staff are rightly proud of the many honours they have received over the years, they are also suitably motivated to maintain this high level of quality.

- Austrian Congress Award 2017
- EVVC Meeting Experts Green Award Nominee 2017
- I.M. Austria Award 2014
- EVVC Meeting Experts Green Award Nominee 2013
- Tirol Touristica Award 2011
- EVVC Best Center Award 2011
- TRIGOS Nominee 2011

<https://congressalpbach.com/en/themen/ueberuns/green-meeting-nav.php>



# The interaction principle

The CCA's high standards are reflected in its packed calendar featuring a slew of national and international events. Satisfied customers are a uniquely valuable asset, which is why the CCA team continuously analyses the level of satisfaction among event organisers and duly implements ongoing improvements. As with the CCA's partners, all customer relationships are founded on professional interaction. The number of Green Meeting certifications shows that the CCA's sustainability drive has been well received and that the close cooperation between event organisers and CCA project managers is highly appreciated.

Here is a brief list of certified events held at the CCA:

- European Forum Alpbach
- Leadership Academy (LEA) – Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
- Small Hydro Power Austria annual meeting
- Aebi Schmidt Holding AG management meeting
- Genuss Region Österreich federal meeting
- 15th International Alpbach Workshop
- Sustainable tourism seminar
- Climate Model Regions meeting
- Monitoring committee for regional competitiveness, Office of the Federal State Government of Tirol
- Convention Bureau Tirol annual meeting
- Alpbach Motors Workshop
- Oberalp Convention

Additional references available here:

<https://congressalpbach.com/en/themen/veranstaltungen/referenz-carousel-tagcloud.php>

This diverse mix of industries is proof of the CCA's successful positioning with regard to corporate customers.



*"Sustainability is nothing without interaction."*

Georg Hechenblaikner – Managing Director, CCA

The field of science and research has also become increasingly important to the CCA in recent years, with numerous national and international scientific conferences being drawn to Alpbach and its Congress Centre as the ideal place for open discourse.

"Routine is one of my pet hates," reveals Managing Director Georg Hechenblaikner. Small wonder, then, that the CCA has established a dynamic team that is committed to keeping things moving in this small Alpine village. "Ensuring a broad partnership on an equal footing with all participants is essential to our success. Sustainability is nothing without interaction," notes Hechenblaikner as he reflects on his 15-plus years in Alpbach. Customers benefit hugely from the CCA's pioneering spirit and its understanding of its role as a service provider. After all, the CCA team is full of sustainable ideas for pursuing the shared goal of outstanding quality management.

How did the topic of sustainability develop within the team and in the course of customer interaction? Change did not come overnight, with a great deal of time being spent on the concept of "sustainable meetings in a mountain village".

As Project Manager Ingrid Walder and Alpbach-born Technical Manager Christoph Margreiter both recall, the entire team was highly enthusiastic about this positioning from the very start.



There remains a certain amount of untapped potential on the customer side: while some cannot initially see the benefit of certification, more and more are opting to commit to sustainable meetings with a view to passing external inspections.

The triumph of the visions for Green Meetings and Green Buildings means that this sustainable concept is now a fully-fledged success story. And when the industry discusses forward-looking meetings and conferences, the CCA is repeatedly cited as an example of best practice. Hechenblaikner sums up the challenge facing the team in the future: "As in many fields, it's ultimately about achieving tangible results and a healthy financial basis. We bear responsibility for ensuring this day after day."

## Interview with Karl Schwärzler

Managing Director, Xnet agency



-On Alpbach as a destination:

"Alpbach is the ultimate conference village."

"Everything is within walking distance. That means you can meet up in the morning on your way to the conference and have the time to enjoy a proper talk."

-On Alpbach's natural surroundings:

"The mountain backdrop is absolutely unique. Instead of hurrying between meeting rooms, participants can simply head out into nature."

-On the village of Alpbach:

"There are lovely little aspects, such as hearing the schoolchildren playing at break time, that are truly heartwarming and human. I believe that the authentic nature of such experiences is what puts events in Alpbach on a whole different level."

"When the brass band strikes up, it's a sign of appreciation for the customer. After all, it takes a team of 30-40 people who contribute their free time for this wonderful type of reception."

## Entries from the guest book

*Ein kulturelles Symposium  
in traumhafter Kulisse!*

*Eine spannende Tagung  
in einer herrlichen Umgebung*

*Alpbach inspiriert.*

*Excellent facilities, warm hospitality.*

*Es war einzigartig, man kann es anders  
machen, aber nicht besser.*



*Hervorragende Betreuung in Alpbach,  
wie immer!*

*Ein schöner Ort zum Tagen!*



# Quick-fire Q&A



Markus Bischofer – Mayor of Alpbach

What is my favourite thing about the village of Alpbach? The high quality of life here.

What are my hopes for the future of the sustainable CCA way? That the CCA never lets up in pursuit of its goals.

What will be my biggest challenge as mayor over the coming years? To ensure that Alpbach retains its wonderful character – and that all Alpbach residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life.



Jakob Larch – owner, Gasthof Jakober GmbH; guest catering at CCA

What's the biggest sustainability challenge we face? Meeting ever-increasing customer needs in an environmentally friendly manner.



Georg Hechenblaikner – Managing Director, CCA

How would I describe my experience of the team in three words? Professionalism, teamwork and flair.

What are my hopes for the future of the sustainable CCA way? A broad partnership involving all participating customers, suppliers and enterprises, as this is the only path to success. If each of us works in isolation, then our project will surely fail in the medium term. But if we all pull in the same direction and ensure excellent communication, then we have every chance of succeeding long into the future.

Why is it easier to think in Alpbach? The pace of village life is slower and the beautiful natural surroundings provide the perfect backdrop.

What's the biggest sustainability challenge facing the world? The need to turn words into actions.



Christoph Margreiter – Technical Manager, CCA

What are my hopes for the future of the sustainable CCA way? That we maintain, and even raise, our high standards. And that we inspire people.

Why is it easier to think in Alpbach? Maybe it's because of the extra freedom. Being out in nature can be more beneficial than staying at a conference hotel, when you're only ever a minute away from your own room. That might well be what helps our guests truly free their minds here.



Gitti Gschösser – landlady and premium partner

What are my hopes for the future of the sustainable CCA way? That customers coming to Alpbach and the Congress Centre appreciate the values we represent.



Karl Schwärzler – Managing Director, Xnet "rent a village" agency

How would I describe the Congress Centre in three words? Modern, sustainable and professional.

How would I describe my experience of working with the CCA in three words? Fast, effective and skilful.



Ingrid Walder – Project Manager, CCA

What sets Alpbach apart? Its remarkable variety, which starts with the unmistakable look of the buildings and is embodied in the personalities of the local residents. Above all, Alpbach is a village with a truly international atmosphere: we draw crowds from all over the world.

What's the biggest sustainability challenge in my day-to-day work? Striking the right balance. We deal with customers, customer requirements, the village itself, its residents and our partners. Sometimes, we even have to act as translators of sorts in order to ensure that all sides fully understand one another.



Regina Preslmair – Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism

What is my favourite thing about the village of Alpbach? The fact that rolling meadows and Alpine pastures are just a short walk away.

How would I describe the Congress Centre in three words? Green meets cool.

What are my hopes for the future of the sustainable CCA way? A steady stream of solutions that will help us conduct even more sustainable meetings.



Gebhard Klingler – Chairman TVB Alpbachtal Seenland

Thanks to its comprehensive sustainability strategy and optimal use of resources, Congress Centrum Alpbach contributes greatly to the Alpbachtal region's success.



Franz Fischler – President, European Forum Alpbach

What is my favourite thing about the village of Alpbach? The European Forum.

How would I describe my experience of working with the CCA in three words? Constructive, friendly and efficient.

What are my hopes for the future of the sustainable CCA way? That true sustainability remains front and centre.



Johannes Duftner – hotelier and premium partner

What are my hopes for the future of the sustainable CCA way? That we further expand and enhance this refreshingly honest programme, making it an even more positive influence on other tourism businesses in the region. How would I describe a sustainable lifestyle?



Buying regional food, using local services, avoiding plastic waste in particular and investing in cutting-edge technology (electric cars, pellet heating, solar energy) for my own private use.





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