



FACTSHEET



Platzer-Valley („Platzertal“) with Platzerriver © Christoph Praxmarer

THREATS FOR THE ÖTZTAL REGION

**119 x
450 m**

Size of Dam
in Platzer-Valley

EXTENSION OF THE HYDROPOWER PLANT KAUNERTAL

In the course of the extension of the Kaunertal hydroelectric power plant, the Tyrolean Energy Provider TIWAG intends to increase the active storage of the impounding reservoir Gepatsch. This will require a diversion of the waters from the brooks of Venter and Gurgler Ache via a pipe of approximately 25 kilometres in length and a maximum diameter of 6 meters. Additionally, a pumped-storage operation between the existing Gepatsch reservoir and a new one to be constructed in the higher valley of Platzertal is planned. The new embankment dam - in the pristine alpine valley of Platzertal - would be 119 metres high and 450 metres wide. Aside the existing power plant Prutz I the construction of Prutz II is being planned. The enlarged Kaunertal hydroelectric power plant is projected to provide an additional 600 GWh (giga watt hours) of electricity per year.

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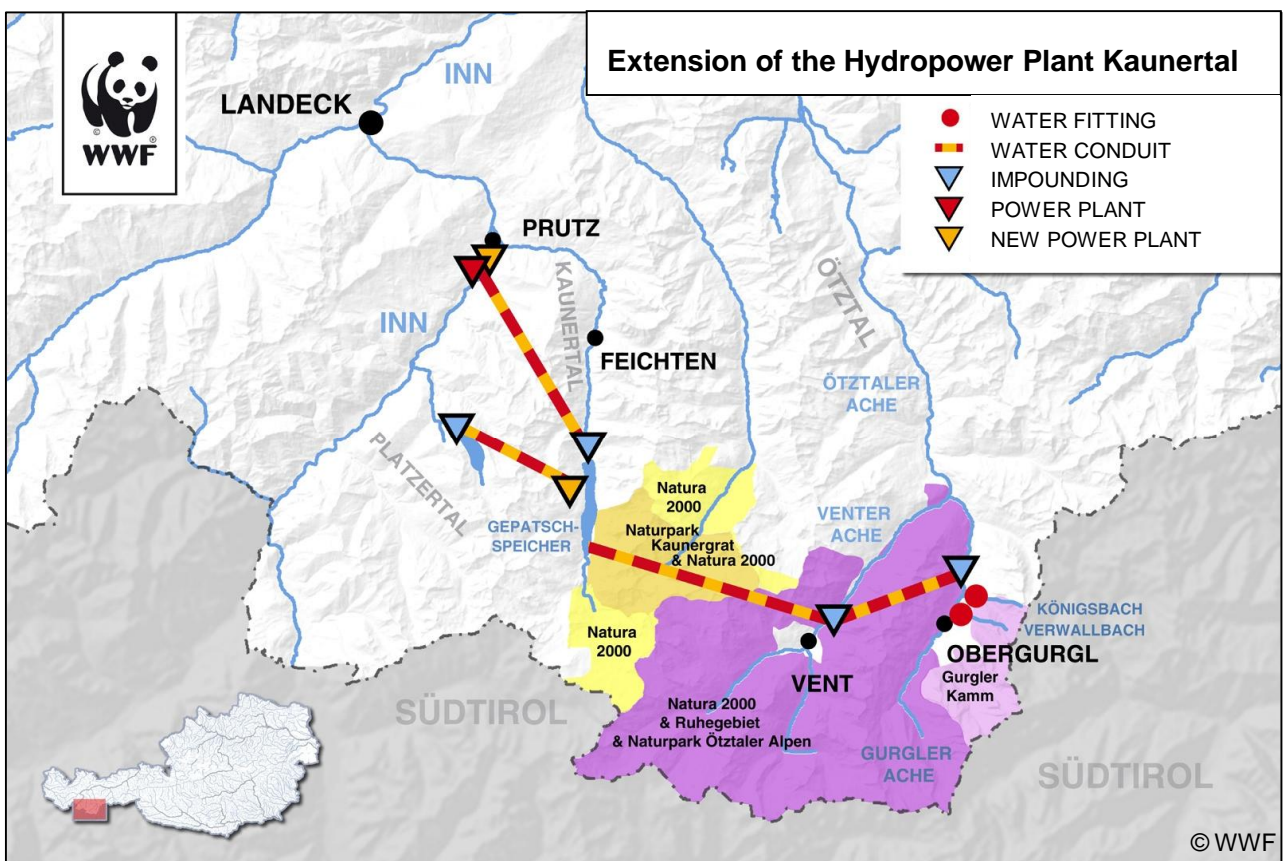
Landscape and ecology of the affected area

The wilderness area of the Ötztal Alps represents the largest connected glacial zone in the entire eastern Alps. It is part of a pan-Alpine network of wilderness areas and an important refuge for typical alpine species (such as the Alpine marmot and the rock ptarmigan). The moraines of

the Ötztal Alps are highly important climate archives and exceptional models for studies and research on climate change.

The rivers of this region are of a very pristine character and high ecological value. For good reason they were classified as “river-sanctuaries” of Austria in 1998. WWF and the Republic of Austria then promised to advocate for the protection and preservation of such rivers of national importance.

The larger tributaries of the Gurgler Ache and the Venter Ache – such as Königsbach and the Ferwallbach – are also in an exceptional ecological state. These tributaries have their sources in the Gurgler Kamm, an area that was declared an “UNESCO Biosphere Reserve” due to its specific ecological values.



The new dam in the Platzervalley would irreversibly impact the nearly untouched nature of this high alpine valley, which contains alpine meadows and dry grasslands, all of which are protected under European Habitat Directives. Such habitats belong to the most threatened in the entire Alps and are therefore of supra-regional importance.

Current state concerning the TIWAG Projekt

Currently this TIWAG Project is in its planning stage. The environmental impact assessment process started in July 2012. TIWAG submitted this project under a “water management framework plan”. Nevertheless, according to Austrian Water Laws such framework plans

Further Information:
www.fluesse-voller-leben.at
www.oekomasterplan.at
www.wwf.at/kaunertal

are primarily dealing with the restoration and ecological improvement of water bodies, and can definitely not serve as planning tools for the implementation of new hydroelectric power plants.

In addition, the TIWAG expansion project was put on a list of projects of common European interest which is likely to affect the IAE. WWF and other international environmental organizations, and the European Environmental Bureau criticize that this list was elaborated without involving the NGO's opinion, and is therefore purely economically motivated. The original concept of sustainability of the "Energiewende" (energy shift) was thus not taken into account in the desired manner.

A strong coalition against the extension of the Kaunertal power plant

In a joint effort the CEOs of WWF, Greenpeace, GLOBAL 2000 (Friends of the Earth) and ÖKOBÜRO signed a declaration aimed at stopping any further planning and implementation measures of the TIWAG project in its present design. WWF is not generally opposed to the construction and operation implementation of new hydroelectric power plants, but claims that any new installations must comply with strict ecological and social standards.

In addition a broad coalition of fishermen and canoe associations, as well as other nature conservation associations such as "Lebenswertes Kaunertal" and "Naturschutzbund" alongside with the "Naturfreunde" (Friends of the Earth Austria) signed a position paper against the TIWAG Plans.

AGAINST THE PLANS OF TIWAG

A broad coalition of Austria's largest nature conservation organisations, paddlers' and fishermen associations oppose the Kaunertal-Project



Unser Ziel

Wir wollen die weltweite Zerstörung der Natur und Umwelt stoppen und eine Zukunft gestalten, in der Mensch und Natur in Harmonie miteinander leben.

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