

## 1. Introduction

The present document is a final report on the activities carried out within the project *Redesigning the research agenda for MAB-Austria, in special consideration of BRIM*. The project was designed with an intention to support the Austrian MAB committee in developing an explicit medium term research agenda for the Austrian MAB programme in line with the priorities set by the International MAB Council. The need for such an agenda was felt by the committee in March 2002 under its new chair, Prof. Georg Grabherr. In response, the IFF+IECB made a joint effort to submit a proposal for a feasibility study to assess the needs and opportunities in Austrian Biosphere Reserves on the basis of which a research agenda, in special consideration of BRIM, could be outlined.

The proposal was reviewed and accepted with some alterations, namely the agreement that the project would be carried out in cooperation with two other parallel projects in the MAB programme - that of E.C.O. and Lange/Borsdorf - for possible synergism. Consequently, a "project platform" was established and an open system of communication was set up to exchange information on each of our activities. This turned out to be particularly useful for coordinating our efforts with respect to field visits and interviews. It was also agreed that the two projects would contribute to the contents of the national/local and international workshops (see Activities 4 and 6 below).

A feasibility study usually contains a strong element of exploratory work and hence it is difficult to predefine all the activities right from the start. In this project as well, not all activities could be predefined on the basis of the project goals. Rather, in most cases, one activity led to another separated by phases of intense discussion and assessment over results as they showed up. Only towards the latter phase of the project, we could draw some coherence within the process. Hence, the structure of the following report is straightforward, where we first recapitulate the objectives of the project as laid down in the proposal. Second, we report briefly on the activities undertaken to meet these objectives along with a summary of results. Attached to this report is a body of annexes to add details to the activities reported. The reporting style that has been chosen is largely influenced by the nature of the project itself.