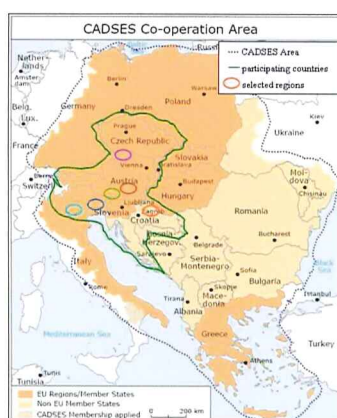**Connectivity in process:** examples from the field

Get to know IPAM-Joe

Country: Austria
He is your virtual assistant and on your disposal for any information.
IPAM-Joe is in charge of guiding you through an interactive Expert System for Integrated Management of Protected Areas.

Michael Jungmeier, Hanns Kirchmeir, Martin Kühmaier, Iris Velik, Johann Wagner

Project area and the pilot action regions, source: www.cadses.net, modified

Summary

"Experience is growing by sharing it". A newly developed expert system shall support planners, managers and consulters of Protected Areas (PAs) by self-assessment, focused recommendations and a comprehensive knowledge base. The interactive 'toolbox' provides substantial information on integrative management of PAs by means of new information technologies. Developed in cooperation with international partners and organisations this expert system aims to be an important backbone for the future development of PAs in Middle and Eastern Europe.

The Expert System

Many of the PAs´ managers and planners see themselves drowning in (ir)relevant information, but moan about a significant lack of knowledge. The IPAM-Toolbox intends to bridge this gap and has been developed in order to provide focused information for the question "what to do, when and how?"
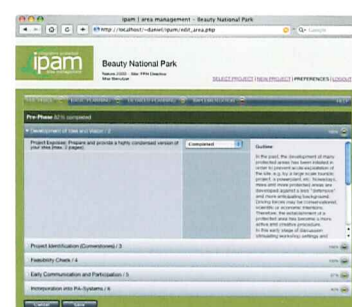In the frame of the European Interreg III B Project 'IPAM' a toolbox for planning and managing protected areas has been developed. The intention of the expert system is to provide a self assessment, standardised recommendations and a comprehensive documentation of instruments, best practice and literature in a knowledge base. The toolbox shall provide professional expertise free of charge, in a stringent concept and applicable to different categories of protected areas.
The development was prepared by an international inquiry among some 150 PAs in Middle and Eastern Europe and on expert interviews (Europarc, IUCN, Ramsar, MaB, WWF and many practitioners from different PAs).

Conceptual solution

The IPAM-Toolbox consists of three components:
- Self-Assessment. In a procedure of self-assessment filters are set up in order to primarily eliminate information being irrelevant for the situation and to (later) rank information by importance. A major "side result" of this self-assessment is a clear positioning of the PA in different "fields of activities" (FoA). Along the life-cycle of a PA 25 FoAs were identified and described.

- Recommendations. On a general level, of course, but highly corresponding to the recent situation of the PA the expert system provides a set of recommendations. These are automatically generated by the system. The systems' information is illustrated by some examples of 'best practice' and furthermore lead to the most detailed information that is provided in the knowledge base.
- Knowledge Base. In a comprehensive database various examples of 'best practice', in-depth information about literature, projects and available data as well as links and further expertises are made available.

User Interface of the Expert System – Self Assessment, source: IPAM

Project details

Project title:	IPAM Toolbox: Integrated Protected Area Management
Name of organisation:	Lead Partner: Office of the Government of Carinthia, Dept. Spatial Planning
Contact person:	Lead Partner: Johann Wagner, johann.wagner@ktn.gv.at
	Project Management: Iris Velik, velik@e-c-o.at
	Technical aspects of the toolbox:
	Michael Jungmeier, jungmeier@e-c.o.at
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	• Office of the Federal State Government of Styria, Dept. Nature Conservation (A)
	• Regional Directorate of agricultural, natural and forestal Resources of Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia-Giulia (I)
	• Regional Park of Colli Euganei, Veneto (I)
	• Academy of Sciences, Institute of Landscape Ecology (CZ)
	• Medimurje County, Department of Spatial Planning (HR)
	• Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (SLO)
Project duration:	2003/04 - 2006/03
Web-site:	www.ipam.info