

The field of politics

What framework conditions can we shape together?

The UN Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda in 2015. This includes the so-called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and applies to all countries. Austria has also committed to contributing to the implementation of these goals.

The state of Styria offers numerous guidelines and tips for implementing the SDGs in schools, businesses, and municipalities.

A network of universities in Austria, under the title „UniNETZ“ (Universities and Sustainable Development Goals), has proposed implementation possibilities. The platform „SDG Watch Austria“ – consisting of non-governmental organizations and other groups – advocates for progress in achieving the goals.

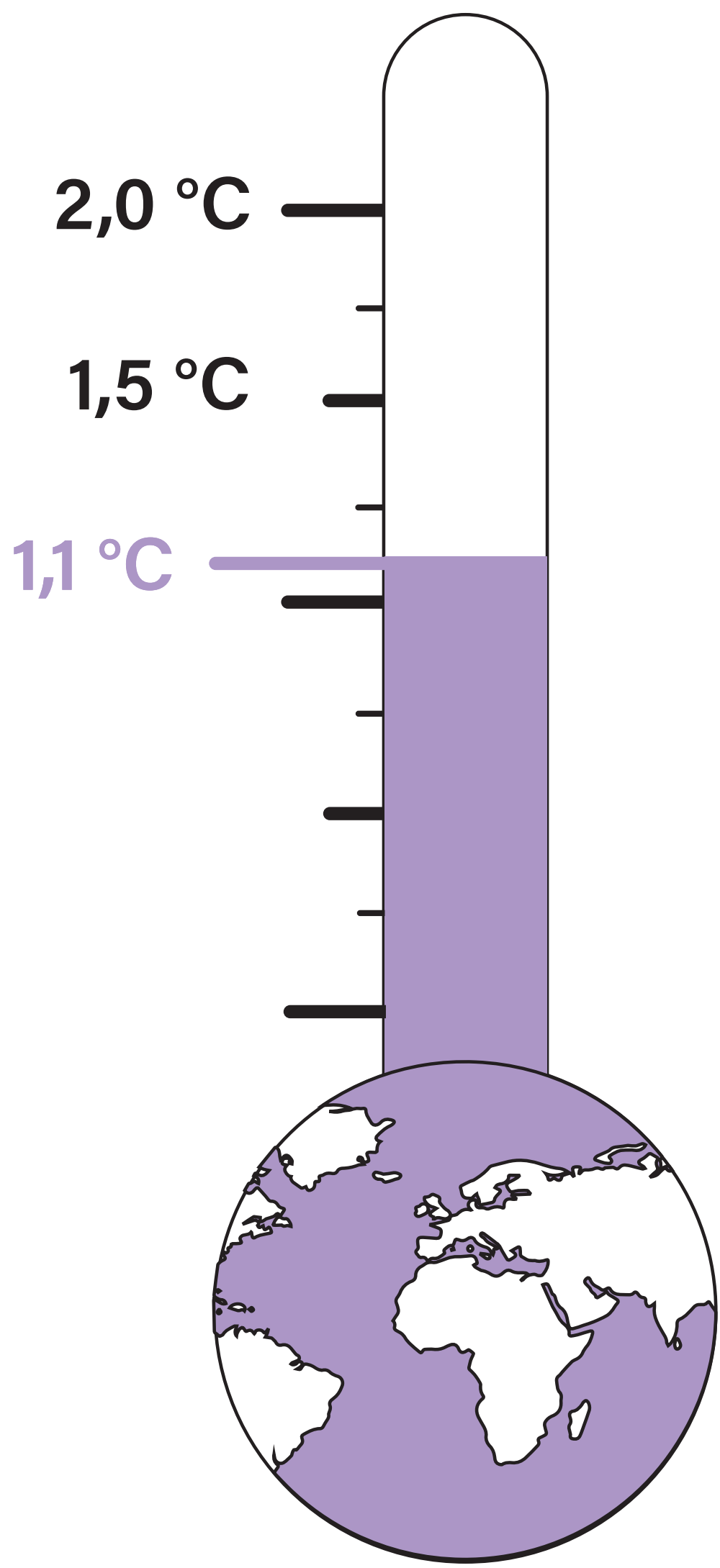


Paris Climate Agreement

Even though climate protection requires the collaboration of multiple SDGs, the 13th goal explicitly addresses this issue. Parallel to the UN resolution on establishing the SDGs, it was decided at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference to limit the temperature increase caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, while aiming for 1.5 °C.¹ The agreement has so far been ratified by 195 states.²

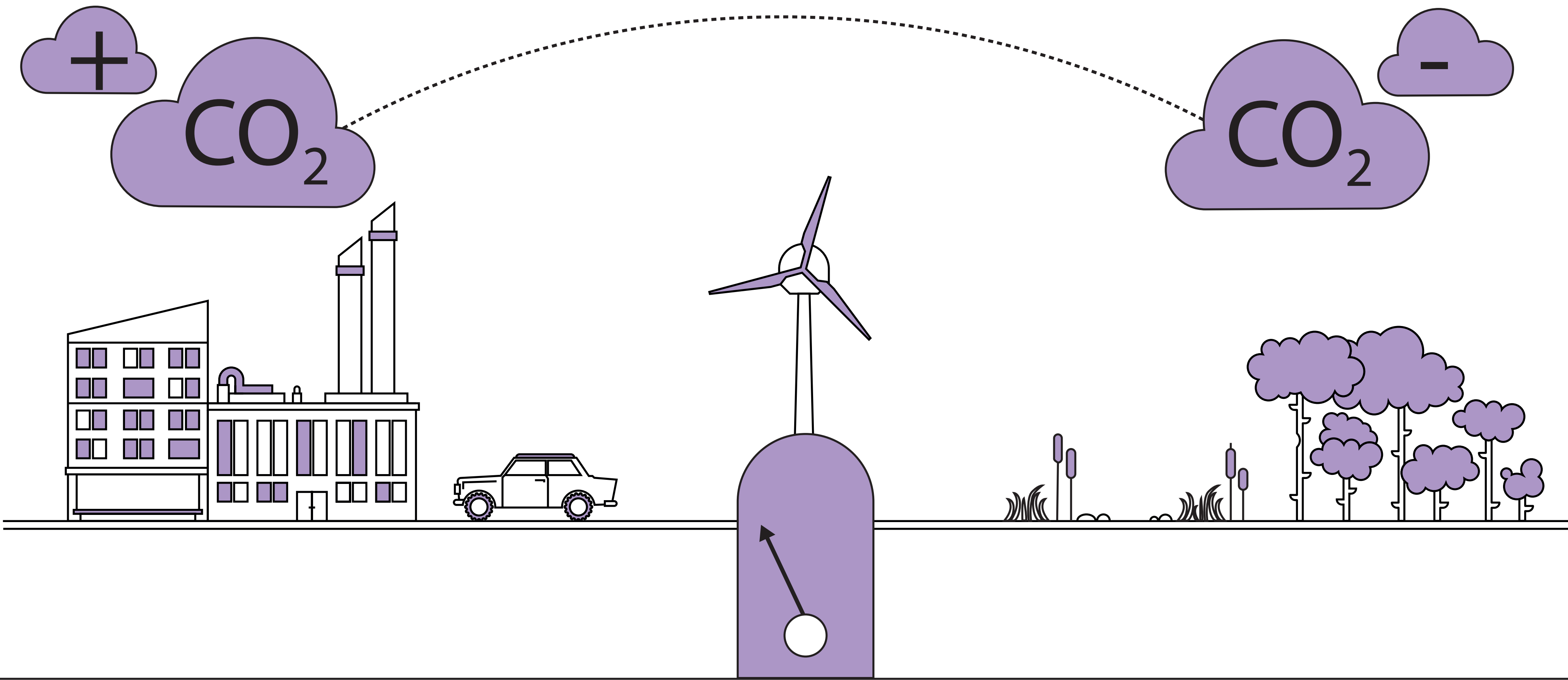
The global greenhouse gas budget

A greenhouse gas budget defines the amount of greenhouse gases that can still be emitted into the atmosphere to achieve a specific temperature target. The global greenhouse gas budget refers to the amount that can still be emitted to achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement with a high probability.³ For a safe path to avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis, we do not have much time left. At constant emissions (without increase or reduction), this budget would be exhausted before 2030.^{4,5} However, annual emissions are currently increasing.^{6,7} The later we start reducing greenhouse gases, the greater the annual reductions must be to still achieve the target. It is still possible to reach the 1.5 °C goal.⁸



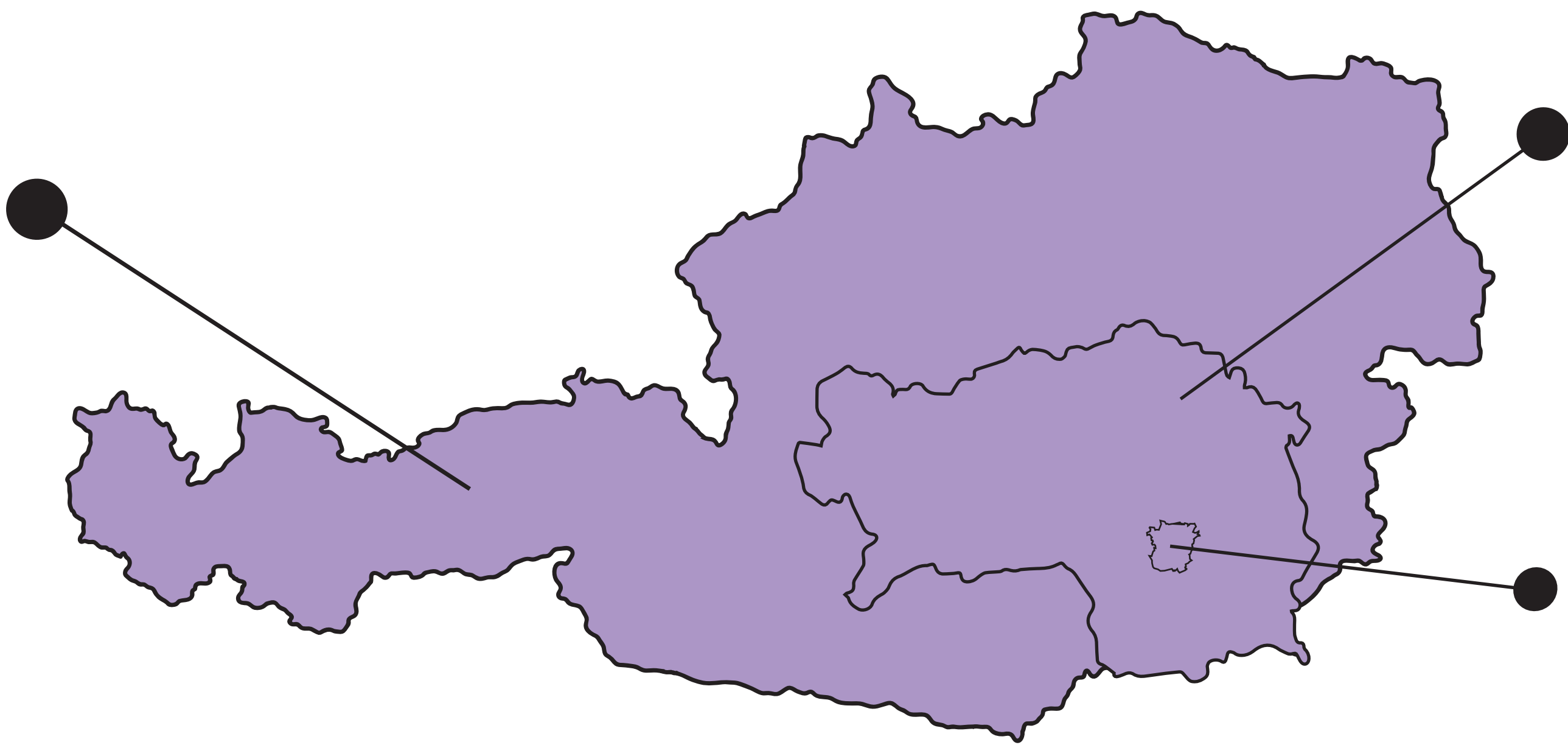
What does climate neutrality mean?

Climate neutrality might be assumed to mean no impact on the climate at all, i.e., no greenhouse gases are emitted. However, this is not the case. Climate neutrality should be understood in balance: over a certain period, as much carbon must be captured as is emitted. This is called Net Zero. If more is captured or otherwise removed from the atmosphere than emitted, negative emissions are achieved.⁹ Since not all human activities can be fully decarbonized, the resulting emissions must be captured again. This is also referred to as CO₂ compensation when money is spent outside one's organization to avoid or capture greenhouse gases, such as through reforestation projects.^{10,11}



Goals of the EU and Austria

As part of the Green Deal, the European Union has set the goal of becoming climate neutral by 2050. By 2030, greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced by more than half compared to 1990.¹² This target applies to all sectors not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System, such as heating, transport, agriculture, waste, and small industrial facilities. According to the Austrian federal government (2020-2024), Austria aims to be climate neutral by 2040.¹³ However, neither the current efforts nor the plans presented so far are sufficient to achieve this goal.^{14,15,16}

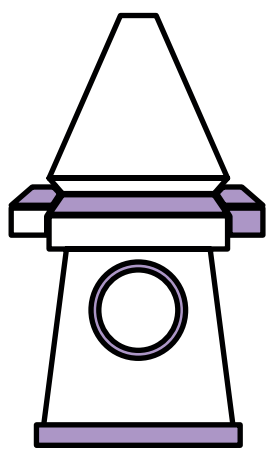


Climate protection of the state of Styria

The Climate and Energy Strategy of Styria (KESS) provides the strategic framework for Styrian climate policy and supports both international and national climate protection goals. Increasing energy efficiency plays an equally important role as raising the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption.¹⁷ The 120 measures of the 2022-2024 Action Plan address nearly all aspects covered in this exhibition, such as energy, mobility, consumption, nutrition, soil, procurement, and resources.¹⁸

Climate Protection Plan of the City of Graz

The City of Graz presented a climate protection plan with an initial balance in 2022. By 2030, „Haus Graz“ – including all municipal departments and operations – is to become climate neutral. By 2040, the entire city of Graz aims to be climate neutral.¹⁹



¹vgl. UNFCCC, 2015
²vgl. UN, 2023
³vgl. IPCC, 2021, S. 777
⁴vgl. IPCC, 2022b, S. 229
⁵vgl. IPCC, 2022b, S. 327

⁶vgl. IPCC, 2022b, S. 59
⁷vgl. IPCC, 2021, S. 284
⁸vgl. IPCC, 2022b, S. 315f.
⁹vgl. IPCC, 2022b, S. 365
¹⁰vgl. CCA, 2020, Seite 11
¹¹vgl. CCA, 2023a

¹²vgl. Allianz Nachhaltige Universitäten in Österreich, 2022, S. 4
¹³vgl. Europäische Kommission, 2021
¹⁴vgl. Bundeskanzleramt, 2020, S. 72ff.
¹⁵vgl. CCA, 2023a

¹⁶vgl. Kirchgang & Steininger, 2022, S. 2f.
¹⁷vgl. Köppl & Schleicher, 2022, S. 4ff.
¹⁸vgl. Land Steiermark, 2017b, S. 2ff.
¹⁹vgl. Land Steiermark, 2022a, S. 29ff.
²⁰vgl. Stadt Graz, 2022, S. 2f.