

EKO-LIFE

# Layman's Report

*just  
try it*



Experiments and Communication  
of Sustainable Lifestyles  
to Promote Energy Autonomy



energie  
autonomie  
Vorarlberg  
unter Land

LIFE12 INF/AT/000369

# Contact

This publication is a layman's report about the EKO-LIFE project (EKO-LIFE LIFE12 INF/AT/000369) and the resulting Probier amol/Just try it initiative.

From July 2013 to June 2016, the EKO-LIFE project was conducted by the Energy Institute Vorarlberg together with Allmenda, the Austrian Institute of Ecology, the Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences and supported by the European Union under LIFE+ and the Energy Autonomy Vorarlberg programme.

[www.justrtyit.life](http://www.justrtyit.life)

[www.probieramol.at](http://www.probieramol.at)

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*Dornbirn, June 2016*

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## Foreword

The Vorarlberg region has set ambitious goals with the Energy Autonomy Vorarlberg program. By 2050, renewable energy generation is going to equal energy consumption. The program was launched in 2007 starting with a vision process and currently has 101 sustainable measures to be effective at the 2020 benchmark. Much has happened, especially at the technical level.

Since the beginning, Energy Autonomy Vorarlberg has seen the ambitious goals as a challenge for society. These goals could only be achieved by working together. Leverage could be used with accumulative changes in individual lifestyles. 2012 marked the starting point for the LIFE+ project, EKO-LIFE.

The core aim of the project deals with personal lifestyles and possible approaches to support permanent change in behavior. Theoretically outlined experiments have proved to be very successful in practice, along with the accompanying communication of changes to be made.

The last three years were intense, and the entire project team came in contact with many people, who until then had little contact or access to the issue of climate change. The positive response to our project and the great amount of supportive feedback from the experiments is motivation enough to continue to pursue and develop the vision.

In addition to reaching 10% of the population of Vorarlberg, the ambitious goal to annually save 1,700 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions has been exceeded by the project's results. Also, Probier amol / Just try it, has been established and will continue to expand in the coming years.

There is still a long way to energy autonomy, but each step in this direction is an important step. Together, we can do it.

Just try it!  
*Karin Feurstein*



## EKO-LIFE and Climate Change

### Climate change is really happening

Global warming caused by human activity is a reality, also in Vorarlberg. In the last 150 years, the average temperature in Bregenz has increased by about 2°C. The main reasons for this are fossil fuel consumption as well as excessive use of energy and natural resources, especially here in the rich countries.

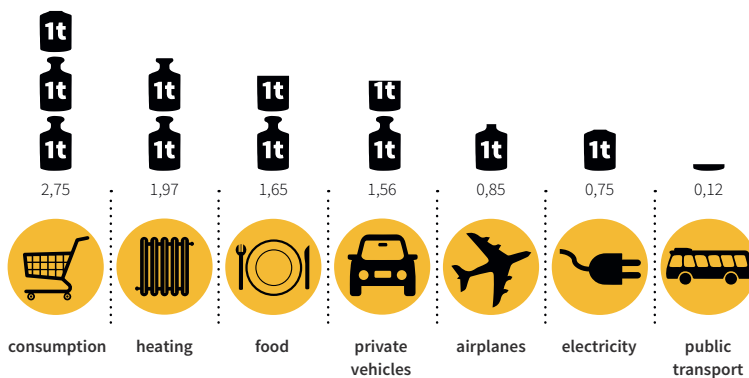
### Global warming can be limited

Although global warming cannot be stopped overnight, it can be limited to a manageable level. By 2050, the goal is to limit the rise in temperature to a maximum of 2°C, which would mean about an 80% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Energy Autonomy Vorarlberg closely examined the possibility of whether renewable energy sources could cover energy consumption in Vorarlberg, which would make a substantial reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This being the case, energy autonomy was adopted as a key, political objective until 2050.

#### CO<sub>2</sub> per head in a year

average personal CO<sub>2</sub> balance (without community shares)  
rounded values in metric tons



total amount = 9,65t



#### EKO-LIFE

*Experiments and Communication of Sustainable Lifestyles to Support Energy Autonomy*

##### Consortium

Energy Institute Vorarlberg, Allmenda,  
Austrian Institute of Ecology,  
University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg

##### Management

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##### Project duration

01.07.2013 – 30.06.2016

##### Project budget

775.599,- Euro (50% LIFE+)

##### Project area

Vorarlberg (Austria)

##### Funding

LIFE+ Program of the European Commission,  
State of Vorarlberg



EKO LIFE project area is Vorarlberg, the westernmost state in Austria.

## The EKO-LIFE Goals

The task of substantially reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions requires different strategies. In some areas, such as technology, infrastructure, and basic needs, regulatory or incentive approaches prove to be successful, especially when seldom, far-reaching decisions are targeted. But there are other areas, which require a different strategy. But for example when seldom, far-reaching decisions add up, they could cause an effect in other areas, which requires a different strategy. Especially in the areas of nutrition and mobility, decisions are made several times a day about what we should eat or how we get from A to B. Many of these decisions are manifested in mindless routines.

**Reflecting and breaking these routines to replace them with climate-friendly, daily practices is the core concern of the EKO-LIFE project.**

#### The specific objectives of EKO-LIFE

##### include that

- At least 26,000 people should be reached through communication measures in Vorarlberg.
- At least 2,000 people should establish climate-friendly mobility or eating habits.
- At least 1,700 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are to be saved during the duration of the project.

## Experiments, Communication, Evaluation

How can people's behavior be changed?

The EKO-LIFE project has answered this central question by creating concrete, enjoyable opportunities to change behavior. Reports of these experiences were widely distributed in order to promote imitation and multiplication.

This approach was based on the fact that climate protection campaigns, "From Knowledge to Action", had reached their limits. The EKO-LIFE approach is reversed and the motto is "From Behavior to Attitude".

To change routines, experiments invited different test groups to participate in the area of nutrition or mobility for a specific length of time. They were asked to reconsider their lifestyle by either eating less meat or traveling less by car.

„Not knowledge leads to action,  
but behaviour to attitude.“

Success stories from the participants were used in a communication campaign. The goal was to show what is possible by using real stories and to support the participants as multipliers in their communities.

Additionally, campaign specific catalysts for change were scattered amongst the general public with the aim to encourage rethinking of one or another routine. In order to determine whether the measures would prove successful, the entire project was subjected to a comprehensive evaluation.



Ausgezeichnet durch den NACHHALTIGKEITSRAT

In 2016, EKO-LIFE and "Probier amal" was given a "Werkstatt N" distinction. It is a seal of quality annually given by the Sustainability Council of the German Federal Government for the 100 most innovative projects dealing with social sustainability.

# Experiments as an Opportunity to Change Behavior

At the heart of the project were 24 experiments that encouraged questions and change in daily routines concerning nutrition and mobility.

The method was organized in three stages:

1. To start, background information was collected and objectives established. Then input about possibilities were formulated for trial within the framework of an initial event with participating groups
2. During a limited time, participants were encouraged to change to sustainable forms of mobility or to reduce their meat consumption. To achieve this goal, participants were supported by tickets for public transportation, e-bikes, cookbooks, kilometer passbooks, etc.
3. For the summary of the participant's experience, a catalogue of questions were asked. For example: Did the participants succeed in changing their daily behavior? What was perceived as supportive or inhibiting? How has the change in behavior affected their concept of sustainability?

The results were widely communicated and used for further development of the experiments.

## Figures regarding the experiments

- 24 experiments took place within the framework of EKO-LIFE (14 nutrition / 10 mobility)
- 557 people participated in the experiment (245 nutrition / 312 mobility)
- 375 people changed their habits during the experiment
- Over 1,300 people in the participant's environment were also involved in the changes
- 63 people took part in the largest experiment

More information, as well as access to the experiments, can be found at:

[www.justtryit.life](http://www.justtryit.life)

## Process of experiments

### Kick-off event for experiment



### Test phase (min. 3 weeks)



### Reflection meeting at completion of experiment



An arc of suspense is retained during the whole process by means of a competitive character, goodies and other incentives.



## Impressions from the experiments



To overcome something collectively creates bonds between the participants.



In the context of mobility experiments attendees had the chance to try managing their daily ways with E-Bikes.



The men choir from Höchst demonstrated that singing and cooking mixes quite well.



Seeing the processing of meat opens eyes for a certain quality.



A couple of local enterprises also took the chance to participate in the experiment.



The kindergarteners in Götzis have proven that environmentally friendly cooking is also suitable for families.

## Probier amol/Just try it and the Communication Campaign

EKO-LIFE sees itself as an easy, positive and inviting way to confront the issues of climate change and energy autonomy. To support this goal, Probier amol/Just try it was developed.

“Probier amol“ is a term used in everyday Vorarlberg dialect. It is a friendly way to prompt someone to try or taste something, which ideally describes the essential character of this project.

External communication of the EKO-LIFE project was and is logically built around Probier amol. It follows two main purposes:

- To tell about participants' success stories and encourage imitation as well as make the participant recognizable and establish them as a multiplier.
- Gives the public an identifiable face and motivation to change behavior.

A carefully coordinated palette of communicative instruments was used.

The backbone of the project's media blitz was the website ([www.probieramol.at](http://www.probieramol.at) *german*) ([www.justtryit.life](http://www.justtryit.life) *english*) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/probieramol.at](http://www.facebook.com/probieramol.at) *only in german*).

Other publicity measures included our own project events, participation in external events, public appearances, print and digital media from other partner institutions, local and regional print as well as online media, and recorded regional broadcasts.

By the end of the campaign, 17% of Vorarlberg's population knew about Probier amol/Just try it and could accurately identify its purpose.



### Measures and purview

(status end of May 2016)

- **18,000 visitors** [www.probieramol.at](http://www.probieramol.at)
- **2,200 friends on Facebook**
- **650 newsletter subscriptions**
- **138 radio spots**
- **100 articles in print and online media**
- **26 TV spots**
- **17% of the population in Vorarlberg recognize Probier amol**
- **12 testimonials**
- **1 trade fair appearance**
- **campaign total reach : 13.8 million people**

17% of Vorarlberg's  
population know about  
Probier amol/Just try it.

### Publicity campaign

The stories around the acquired testimonials acted as a fundamental base for the extensive communication campaign. The main goals here were supporting the testimonials in their social environment as multipliers on the one hand, and on the other hand to set a concrete stimulus to act into the target group. The content and design strategy of the campaign worked with consistent themes that were thoroughly tuned. Recurringly messages that were a clearly addressed, comprehensible and manageable call to action.

The media dissemination was structured homogenous, oriented on the target audience and involved both local print- and online-channels as well as radio and television. As a result the communication campaign reached more than 13.8 million people, which means that every citizen in Vorarlberg has seen Probier amol/Just try it 36 times in the course of two years.



## Testimonials

Over twelve experiment participants were interviewed about their experience and what it was like to change their behavior. In the role of protagonists, their reports were distributed on the Probier amol website, Facebook page, and local printed media. Three of the testimonials were made available to a wider audience as part of a larger campaign in Spring 2016, which included print, online media, and radio spots. These short, personal stories were directly connected with a theme supporting energy autonomy. And with success, some of the participants even became prominent in the region.



Judith Birk:

**“During the campaign, I was approached about Just try it several times a day.”**



Sonja and Elmar Hämmerle:

**“Whether in front of the house or on walks in the area, we were recognized everywhere!”**

### Trade fair stand

In September 2015, Probier amol/Just try it had an exhibit for a day at the regional Dornbirn Autumn Fair. The small garden stand brought the public closer to the idea of also growing their own vegetables outside the traditional gardening season.

Under the motto, “there’s place in the smallest box” pointed out that even if a private garden is not at hand, it is still possible to have access to CO<sub>2</sub>-light vegetables. Rather than motivating visitors to grow their own vegetables, the main point was to reawaken general awareness about seasonal vegetables, quality, and most importantly climate-friendly alternatives to resource-intensive meat.



All twelve reports from the experiment can be read at [www.probieramol.at](http://www.probieramol.at) (only in German).

## Media (exemplarily excerpt)



The website [www.probieramol.at](http://www.probieramol.at) was visited by more than 18.000 people.



Picnic baskets were handed out with information material during a jazzbrunch at a regional festival in Feldkirch.



Two different stages of prominent citylights established the brand in public.



650 newsletter subscribers got informed periodically.





Conscious gusto at our final summer event in June 2016.

CONSENTAL 24. MÄRZ 2016

## Symphonie der kulinarischen Art

Saisonal, regional und Bio-Gemüse: Einar Hämmerle hat im Rahmen von **Probier amol** seine Veranstaltung zu einem kulinarischen Experiment eingeladen.

Sie haben auf den ersten Blick wenig gemeinsam, die Themen Ernährung und Musik. Und doch steht die Schnittmenge weit über der Leidenschaft zur Sache hinaus, wie der Männergesangsverein Höchst einträchtig unter Beweis gestellt hat. Die engagierten Männer verfolgen im Rahmen des **Probier amol** Experimentes „Klimafreundlich kochen“ zumeist vorwiegend eine neue Mission – den Genuss einer kulinarischen, und nicht musikalischen Symphonie. Und das für das Gros der 3 teilnehmenden Männer in einer ungewöhnlichen Männermischung ganz ohne Fleisch. Stattdessen hat das Experiment Vorstandsmagid Einar Hämmerle.

**Gemüseküste und Hochbeet**  
Wenig überraschend, lag der pastorierte Sänger aus Fußach bereits seit Jahren Wert auf eine ausgewogene und nachhaltige Ernährung. Wir haben in unserer Hofkategorie...

**Frisch vom Feld direkt vor die Haustür**

Mach's wie Sonja und Einar aus Fußach und erweitere deinen Gemüsehorizont mit einer Gemüseküste.

Bezugsquellen unter: [www.probierramol.at](http://www.probierramol.at)

MIT FINANZIELLER UNTERSTÜTZUNG VON **energie autonomie**

Advertisement and editorial section completing each other.



An example of our testimonial-campaign on a large scale LED-wall.

facebook

I-Mail-Adresse oder Handynummer:  Passwort:  Anmelden

Konto eingerichtet? [Nein, ich möchte ein Konto erstellen](#)

# Sommerfest

**Probier amol**  
@probierramol.at

10. Juni 2016

Chronik Info Fotos „Gefällt mir“-Angaben Videos

**Gemeinschaftliche Organisation**

Suche nach Beiträgen auf dieser Seite

**PERSONEN** 2185 „Gefällt mir“-Angaben

**INFO** <http://www.probierramol.at/> Impressum

**FOTOS**

**BESUCHERBEITRÄGE**

**Richard Dietrich**  
30. Mai um 08:45  
Vielleicht sehen wir uns bei diesem tollen Event. Wir sind dabei...  
Gefällt mir · Kommentieren · Teilen

**Wir sind Klima**  
11. November 2015 um 08:25  
Herzliche Einladung zur Klimakonferenz der anderen Art im Regener... Mehr anzeigen  
Gefällt mir · Kommentieren · Teilen

**Armin Kopf**  
12. September 2015 um 08:45  
Silvarex Valley Downtown-Silvarex Zentrum  
Gefällt mir · Kommentieren · Teilen

**DERNEN PERSONEN GEFAHLEN EBENFALLS**

**Marie - Die Voralberger Straßenz...**  
Gemeinschaft

**Metzler Naturhausteak**  
Biofleischwarenherstellung

**Visit Bregenz**  
Touristeninformation

**WURDE VON DIESER SEITE MIT „GEFÄLLT MIR“ MARKIERT**

**Wir sind Klima**

**Vetterhof**

**Werkstatt N**

Deutsch · English (US) · Türkçe · Español · Português (Brasil)

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**Probier amol** hat 3 neue Fotos hinzugefügt:  
21 Bilder · [Gefällt mir](#)

Klar, das Auto wäre oft bequemer. Aber: Die Kinder von Anja und Robert Koccar aus Götzs haben verstanden, dass es auch anders geht. Warum Bus und Bahn zur Entdeckungsreise einladen, erzählt die Mutter dreier Kinder hier: <http://goo.gl/YOEX90>

**Probier amol** hat 5 neue Fotos hinzugefügt:  
10. Juni um 13:42 · [Gefällt mir](#)

Es war genau! Perfektes Wetter, ein tolles Team und die besten Besucherinnen! Ein ganz besonderer Dank an - allen voran - Markus Curn, Thorsten Probst, Erika Kuchel - fabelhafte Suppenwelt, Richard Dietrich, Beate, Brauner Prälitz, Metzler Naturhausteak, Leslie Bio Hof, Vetterhof, MO Catering & Events und allen die dabei waren! Und jetzt Fußball, oder so...

**Probier amol**  
10. Juni um 08:57 · [Gefällt mir](#)

Es ist angerichtet...

The facebook-site is continuously updated with recent activities and individual stories from participants.

## The effect of EKO-LIFE

A complex, comprehensive system was established beforehand to forecast core project goals and effects:

- monitor and evaluate communication measures
- determine the effect of the experiments

In addition to continuous monitoring of digital communication, two surveys were also conducted in Vorarlberg. The first one was used to confirm the overall effectiveness of the communication strategy, and the second survey was used to determine the effect of communication on the target group (see fact box). Both methods are common practice in controlling communication.

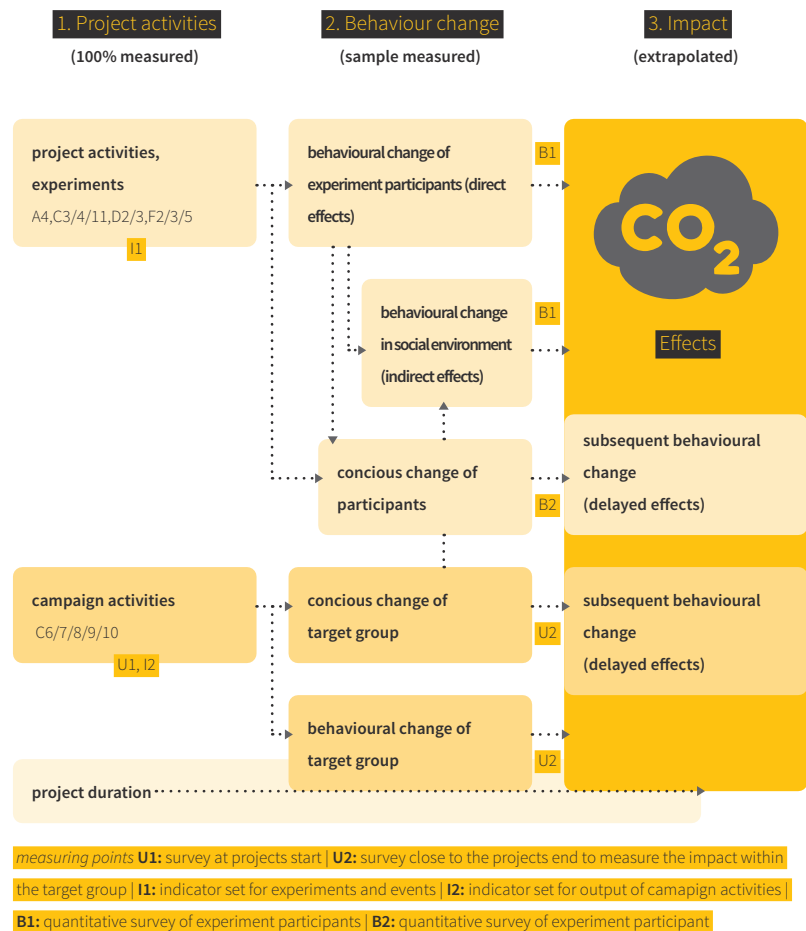
An analysis of the effectiveness during the experiments showed some interesting aspects:

- if changes took place during the experiments
- if there were immediate savings of resources and CO<sub>2</sub> during the experiments
- if there were favoring or inhibiting factors
- if the experiments had an effect on the participants' attitude towards climate change and energy autonomy.

The participants were asked about this theme at the beginning and end of the experiment. As part of the mobility experiments, participants had to keep detailed records of their method of transportation.

In addition to other questions, a final survey asked the participants whether they still practiced the change that they made during the experiment even after several months. This was confirmed by 90% of those that responded.

## Impact model in EKO-LIFE



### quantifiable effects

- During the experiments 5.8 tons of meat and 514,000 auto kilometers were saved, which equals 166 less tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- During the communication campaign a further 126 tons of meat and 3 million auto kilometers were saved, which equals 1,800 less tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- A total of 2,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were saved (goal: 1,700).
- 41,000 people in Vorarlberg know what Probier amol stands for (goal: 26,000).
- Due to Probier amol, over 10,000 people have partly changed their behavior (goal: 2,000).



## Outlook

As the brand Probier amol/Just try it is widely spread among Vorarlberg, there is an intense motivation to continue the efforts to keep it a vivid and interesting one. At least the project's website, newsletter and Facebook-page are therefor going to be continuously maintained. Within an "After Life Communications Plan" further measures are drafted.

An extensive and helpful toolkit collected on the german part of the project's website ([www.probieramol.at/toolkit](http://www.probieramol.at/toolkit)) enables other organisations to easily transfer Just try it into their regions. Within a cross-border project supporting sustainable commuter mobility further, Probier amol/Just try it-experiments are to be rolled out.

Amongst all these, there has already been a transfer of Probier amol/Just try it into South Tyrol / Alto Adige, where the initiative has been started in spring-time 2016, giving attention to sustainable mobility, nutrition and consumption.



Probier amol/Just try it has reached Italy: [www.probieramol-provaci.it](http://www.probieramol-provaci.it)

For any further information please contact us via **[probieramol@probieramol.at](mailto:probieramol@probieramol.at)**.

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energie  
autonomie  
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