

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

With the start of the first lockdown a very rapid switch to online formats within the Biosphere (BR) Wienerwald took place. Right from the start, the internal online jour fixe was perceived as a thoroughly positive and flexible alternative, which was accepted by all actors. The new challenge was handled with great motivation. Additionally, meetings with already established bodies such as project meetings, supervisory board meetings, meetings with stakeholders and working groups (i.e. with the Austrian Federal Forests, the mountain bike platform, etc.) were handled online with great satisfaction of all actors. So far, the online format has proven to be a valued asset while dealing with information exchange and coordination. Yet over time the desire for physical meetings grew again to foster creativity and communication. A staff retreat that took place online did not really work and clearly showed limits; a follow-up in a "lockdown-free" presence brought more usable results. In our experience virtual meetings are a good alternative and a sensible supplement for the exchange of information within predefined structures. However, creative processes that need a certain "randomness" and the building of new (interpersonal) networks still need meetings in person. Most of all good humour needs the "interpersonal", which can only be created to a limited extent online. Within this workshop setting we would like to share our experiences of virtual participation and share the pros and cons.