



## GREEN CARE TOURISM

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### case study

# HTH - HOHE TAUERN HEALTH

Hohe Tauern Health Association offers health packages for people suffering from allergy and asthma using natural aerosol inhalation therapy at the local Krimml Waterfall.

*"In a broad framework program, guests will be taught important aspects of their illness. Our goal is to give them the tools they need for efficient self-control of the disease along the way. True to the motto: Control your illness and don't let your illness control you!"*

## MODEL IN A NUTSHELL

- **Website**  
[hohe-tauern-health.at/de](https://hohe-tauern-health.at/de)
- **Social channels**  
[facebook.com/HoheTauernHealth](https://facebook.com/HoheTauernHealth)  
[youtube.com/user/HoheTauernHealth](https://youtube.com/user/HoheTauernHealth)
- **Country**  
Austria
- **Main sector**  
Public
- **Specific sector**  
Health,  
tourism
- **Stage of development**  
Incorporated
- **Our work in SDGs**



## FROM FEW TO MANY

In the early 2000s, an article by Dr. Oberlechner from 1808 gave the final impulse to rethink the tourist concept of Krimml. In this article Dr. Oberlechner describes the **healing effects of the Krimml Waterfalls**. From that moment on, a small consortium of local authorities, including the mayor of Krimml and the Head of Tourism, pushed the idea of evidence-based health tourism in Krimml.

In 2006 the **Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg** joined the alliance and started with scientific research. Since then, several clinical studies have proven a curative effect for allergies and asthma. This led to the foundation of the non-profit organization **Hohe Tauern Health (HTH)**. Today, Hohe Tauern Health is an association with **academic** (Paracelsus Medical University), **touristic** (allergy friendly hotels) and **local partners** and is managed by a Chairman and an Executive Director. HTH has around eight employees who work on a fee-based basis and two full-year employees (administration & research).

The main target group for HTH are tourists with allergies and asthma from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. However, also local residents use our services.



## FROM IDEA TO ACTION

It all began in 1808, when the country doctor Wolfgang Oberlechner recommended his patients a stay at the Krimml waterfalls for various diseases. Almost 200 years later, in 2006, Paracelsus Medical University started **scientific research at the Krimml Waterfalls**. In several clinical trials, the effect of the Krimml Waterfalls on allergic airway diseases was investigated. The Krimml Waterfalls produce a **unique inhalable aerosol**. This aerosol is 200 times smaller than a droplet from an asthma spray and improves allergy and asthma symptoms.

Based on the results from the clinical trials, Hohe Tauern Health created **therapy packages for people with allergies and asthma**. Therapy packages are available from seven to 21 days and include:

- guided aerosol-inhalation at the Krimml Waterfalls
- spirometry
- allergy or/and asthma patient trainings
- guided exercise courses
- breathing classes
- consultation with a psychologist

The target group of allergy and asthma sufferers has special requirements for accommodation. Therefore, HTH initiated the establishment of **allergy-friendly hotels**. Local hotels, who joined HTH received EU-funding for the renovation and establishment of allergy-friendly standards. Together with the Paracelsus Medical University, HTH created a high-end certification for allergy-friendly hotels. Every two years, each individual guest room is checked for allergen and fine dust levels.

The business model of Hohe Tauern Health is mainly based on **public and private funding**. Our income essentially comes from three sources:

- local public funding from touristic tax from overnight stays in Krimml (main income)
- income from therapy package sales
- regional public funding

The positive impact of this initiative to local development and tourist image of the region can be measured by the number of created jobs, increased number of tourists visiting Krimml and increased number of stays in the local hotels.



## FROM OLD TO NEW

Non-communicable disease like allergies and asthma are on the rise. Therefore, it is essential to develop new therapy options for such chronic diseases.

The Krimml Waterfalls offer a side-effect-free therapy option for allergies and asthma, as they produce a unique inhalable aerosol. This aerosol is 200 times smaller than a droplet from an asthma spray. Within the airways, the aerosol induces an immunomodulatory process and improves allergy and asthma symptoms.

Hohe Tauern Health created an **evidence-based health tourism** concept and offers therapy packages to people with allergies and asthma. The key component of these therapy packages is the daily inhalation at the Krimml Waterfalls, courses on diseases management and the accommodation in allergy friendly hotels. In addition to the therapeutic effect of the aerosol-inhalation, we offer our customers a safe environment to improve their disease control and self-management.

Most of our customers are people with allergies and asthma. Although, therapy packages are only available during the summer season, the allergy friendly hotels can be booked throughout the year. The establishment of this evidence-based-health tourism approach strengthened the summer season in Krimml.



## FROM NOW TO THEN

Hohe Tauern Health can improve, especially in the areas of specific and sustainable marketing, the expansion of the therapy site infrastructure and the expansion of the interdisciplinary team.

The availability of reliable public funds and the lack of support from insurance companies in Austria are among the biggest challenges we are currently facing.

Our vision is to maintain our high-quality standards, improve the refunding of therapy packages by health insurance companies, to expand our allergy-friendly service chain and to increase the booking numbers. However, one of our greatest dreams is **the establishment of a sanatorium** in Krimml.