

Preface

The Austrian Permafrost Research Initiative (permAfrost) is a national project started in 2009 and funded by the research framework program “Alpenforschung” administrated by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The project has been conducted by five research partners in Austria, which are the Institute of Geography and Regional Sciences of the University of Graz, the Institute of Geology of the University of Innsbruck, the Department of Geography and Geology of the University of Salzburg, the Institute of Geography of the University of Innsbruck. The project was coordinated by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. permAfrost is the first Austrian effort to bring together permafrost research on a national scale. Major tasks within the project are the research fields of

- permafrost reformation and degradation
- monitoring climate change impact on rock glacier behavior
- hydrogeological investigation of changed permafrost discharge
- detecting and quantifying area wide permafrost change

The project finalized in 2013 is now looking back to the establishment of a close network of national permafrost activities including a large variety of research activities resulting in several outputs such as scientific papers partly published in index scientific journals, contributions at national and international conferences and workshops, and the elaboration of PhD, MSc and BSc thesis. An overview of the major scientific output from permAfrost is given in the following chapter.

However the finalization of permAforst raises new research questions and challenges. Especially, strategies for establishing and ensuring long-term monitoring and research on alpine permafrost in Austria will be an important task. The editors thank Matthias Monreal for initial project launch and management, Fides Braun for laying out the report, the Austrian Academy of Sciences for financing this project, and especially Dr. Günter Köck for any support given during the time of the project.

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