



Annual Report 2024

International Centre for Traditional Irrigation in Europe (IZTB)



Group photo taken during the UNESCO celebrations and the IZTB Advisory Board meeting on 24 May 2024 in Burgeis, South Tyrol, at the Malser Haide, © Daniela Donolato, South Tyrol Heritage Association



On 29 April 2024, Pirmin Hilsendegen (right) leads guests from other local organisations and spokespersons from the International IZTB Advisory Board to "his" Queich meadows, before the celebrations for the inclusion of traditional irrigation in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage follow in the evening; image © IZTB

Summary

After traditional irrigation was added to UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage on 5 December 2023, the stakeholders involved in the International Centre for Traditional Irrigation (IZTB) enjoyed a year full of celebrations, encounters and optimism in 2024. But first, they paid tribute to Prof. Dr. em. Christian Leibundgut, co-initiator of the IZTB, who passed away in 2023. Coordinated by the International IZTB Advisory Board, a series of events followed, starting in the Swiss canton of Valais, continuing through the Netherlands, Rhineland-Palatinate, Upper Franconia, South Tyrol and back to the Swiss canton of Oberaargau. Unfortunately, shortly before the end of this series of festivities, we received the sad news that Johannes Mohr had died in Forchheim. Press articles also highlighted the diverse values of this centuries-old tradition. In addition, the IZTB Foundation Board members and the Managing Director maintained various contacts within and outside Switzerland. A memorandum of understanding was first signed with the city of Forchheim, followed in December by a cooperation agreement for the establishment of a branch office in the EU. Progress was also made on projects supported by Swiss authorities. Intensive cooperation took place in various committees and the groundwork was laid for further projects, for example with overviews in the field of education and research. Support was also provided for the newly developing French network. The IZTB, based in St. Urban, is thus pooling more and more resources and expertise to promote cooperation between the participating organisations in the field of traditional irrigation.

Starting the new year with the momentum of UNESCO recognition

The inscription of traditional irrigation on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which will take place on 5 December 2023 in Botswana, has given everyone involved a great deal of enthusiasm for the start of 2024. The multinational nomination by Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland led to various press articles about local irrigation being published in different countries at the same time and a series of celebrations (see below) being organised. All these activities highlighted the diverse values of this centuries-old tradition.

Foundation board meetings and other activities

The IZTB Foundation Board met on 13 March 2024 and 29 June 2024 for two Foundation Board meetings. The first was held online, the second in person. The first meeting was dedicated to the memory of Prof. Dr. em. Christian Leibundgut. In addition, the board was joined by hydrologist Prof. Dr. em. Rolf Weingartner (Thun) and Prof. Dr. Rolf Tanner (Melchnau). Rolf Tanner works in the field of education and has strong ties to the topic of cultural landscapes. Jörg Wetzel, another hydrologist, also joined the IZTB team. The IZTB team, which is primarily active in Switzerland, supports the Foundation Board and the office in St. Urban in various ways.



Throughout the year, Prof. Dr. em. Christian Leibundgut was remembered time and again, and his legacy continues to have an impact in a wide variety of contexts; image on the left © IZTB, image on the right © City of Forchheim, Julia Schrade.

The income statement for the first, long financial year (1 October 2022 to 31 December 2023) was discussed at the first and second meetings of the Foundation Board and was approved on 29 June 2024 with a deficit of CHF 13,545 for the attention of the Federal Foundation Supervisory Authority.

The three members of the Foundation Board Committee maintained various contacts throughout the year, e.g. with the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, the City of Bern World Cultural Heritage Site and the Swiss Landscape Fund, while the IZTB remained in constant contact with the Swiss Landscape Conservation Foundation through Dr Raimund Rodewald and Dr Karina Liechti. In addition, on 6 April 2024, the managing director briefly presented the latest news from the IZTB at the general meeting of the Oekonomische Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft Bern (OGG) in Schwarzenburg.

International Advisory Board and interest from additional EU countries

The IZTB's International Advisory Board met on various occasions in 2024, both formally and informally. On 19 February 2024, a memorial service was held in Staufen, Germany, for Prof. Christian Leibundgut, who passed away on 20 November 2023. His impressive life's work was remembered with great respect: in addition to his immense commitment to the appreciation and preservation of the European cultural heritage of traditional irrigation, it includes internationally recognised contributions to regional hydrology, integrated water research, tracer hydrology, runoff formation and arid zone hydrology (see also obituary on iztb.org).

In keeping with Christian Leibundgut's vision and spirit, the International Advisory Board held its first online meeting on 21 February 2024, with support from the Secretariat. Preparations were also made for the Advisory Board meeting in Vinschgau (see below).

On Thursday, 11 April 2024, the Dutch celebration of the inclusion of traditional irrigation in the UNESCO Representative List took place in Lankheet. The Dutch UNESCO Commission presented its flags to the Stichting Waterpark het Lankheet in Haaksbergen and to Plateaux-Pelterheggen of Natuurmonumenten in Bergeijk. The board members of Stichting Waterpark, Het Lankheet and Natuurmonumenten Brabant, the Haaksbergen municipal council, the water board, the implementers of the Buurserbeek plan, the residents along the stream and the volunteers: irrigators, excursion guides, boatmen and beer brewers, as well as all the supporters who had written letters and, of course, the farmers involved, were invited. There were passionate speeches and it was a very unifying event. After the speeches and the handover of the flags, and after coffee and cake, everyone went to the water meadows, where traditional irrigation was demonstrated. Another toast was made on the meadow.



In every region with traditional irrigation, there is a more or less extensive community whose members either irrigate traditionally themselves or are otherwise committed to this living tradition. Collage © Eric and Edwina Brinckmann

On 29 April 2024, the first German celebration of the inclusion of traditional irrigation in the UNESCO Representative List took place in Ottersheim, on the edge of the Queich meadows (Rhineland-Palatinate). Exchanges were fostered through excursions, an impressive ceremony and an IZTB book stand.



At the UNESCO celebrations in Ottersheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, IZTB Foundation Board member Dr Raimund Rodewald praised the great commitment of local actors to the Queich meadows and their living traditions; image on the left © J. Schrade. Former German Minister of State for Europe and Climate, Anna Lührmann, with IZTB Advisory Board spokesperson Johannes Mohr in Möhrendorf (Franconia); shortly afterwards, the IZTB community was deeply saddened to learn that Johannes had passed away on 10 June 2024 in Forchheim: see also next page; image on the right © IZTB.

The German celebrations continued on 10 May 2024 with a ceremony in Möhrendorf (between Forchheim and Nuremberg). Also in attendance was the former German Minister of State for Europe and Climate, Anna Lührmann, with whom IZTB Advisory Board spokesperson Johannes Mohr and IZTB Managing Director Werner Stirnimann, together with other individuals, had the opportunity to engage in conversation. Once again, an IZTB stand was set up, this time based on information from the new IZTB flyer, which presents the various water regions.

From 23 May to 26 May, the International IZTB Advisory Board met in Burgeis and Schluderns, in Vinschgau, South Tyrol. After an impressive reception by the South Tyrolean Heritage Association (headed by chairwoman Claudia Plaikner) on Thursday evening, the annual meeting of the spokespersons of the local supporting organisations took place on Friday. The invitation was again issued in German, English and French. As several people from the Netherlands and Flanders were also participating for the first time, the office developed a new meeting procedure in which whispering translations ensured communication between all four languages. In addition to visiting the special exhibition on irrigation at the Vintschger Museum (see p. 13 for pictures), the excursion to the Malser Haide was also a highlight of the day, complemented by a series of lectures and a cosy evening in Burgeis. On Saturday, there was an impressive South Tyrolean ceremony to mark the inclusion of traditional irrigation in the UNESCO Representative List, accompanied by a market (with an IZTB information stand), and there was even an excursion on Sunday. This impressive programme (including



Brochure) by Daniela Donolato and Florian Trojer from the South Tyrol Heritage Association. Thank you again!



After the meeting of the International IZTB Advisory Board on the morning of 24 May 2024, we went on a discovery tour to the Malser Haide, where traditional irrigation has led to rich biodiversity, among other things. The following day, the South Tyrolean Heritage Association held an impressive ceremony to mark the inclusion of traditional irrigation in the UNESCO Representative List. Images © IZTB, Werner Stirnemann

During the celebrations and meetings in May 2024, no one could have imagined that Johannes Mohr (born on 11 May 1956), a pioneer in water meadow irrigation, would pass away on 10 June 2014. We remember him with great respect and will commemorate him once again at the next advisory board meeting "in his Forchheim" (3 and 4 July 2025).

Although France is not yet officially part of the IZTB network (which was established around the German language), representatives of the emerging French network took part in both the meetings in Vinschgau and the online meeting on 4 December 2024. This was preceded in the morning by an exchange organised by the German Association for Landscape Conservation (DVL).



On 31 May 1925, the IZTB managing director gave the very first lecture in Salon-de-Provence as part of the new French network, now known as the Association pour la SAuvegarde de l'Irrigation Gravitaire (ASAIG). In France, some huge areas are irrigated, for example in Provence, north-west of Marseille. In addition to French, English is also becoming increasingly important at the IZTB. Images © IZTB, W. Stirnemann

During 2024, the good relationship between the IZTB Foundation and the International Advisory Board continued to develop. The IZTB Advisory Board has considerable autonomy from the IZTB, but is very happy to receive personnel support from the Foundation when needed. The process of refining the group of people involved continued even after the passing of Christian Leibundgut. In theory, each region with traditional irrigation is represented by a spokesperson. Due to established structures, there are still deviations from this rule (in some cases

multiple appointments or deputies present). Over the course of the year, solutions were developed and, in some cases, implemented. As a result, there is now a clear separation between the International IZTB Advisory Board and the IZTB Foundation Board (with one justifiable exception). This means that the distribution of tasks, communication, etc. are increasingly better regulated.

The principle of "one spokesperson per local authority" is also likely to gain in importance because, with the addition of sites from France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and possibly Norway to the UNESCO list expected at the end of 2026, various other spokespersons are likely to join. Since April 2024, the IZTB office has been in contact with representatives of Panthéon-Sorbonne University, and in 2024 it was able to contribute on various occasions to the rapid clarification of issues and the establishment of contacts with the additional (IZTB) network in the Mediterranean region.

IZTB branch in Forchheim

In the course of 2023 and 2024, IZTB managers noticed that not only are there traditionally irrigated areas of approximately 500 hectares around the cities of Forchheim and Nuremberg, but that in Nuremberg and especially in Forchheim (district; city with a water department), considerable human resources are working in the same direction as the IZTB. In addition, a very similar project by the German Landscape Conservation Association (DVL) was launched in nearby Ansbach at the beginning of 2024. It became increasingly clear that these efforts should be coordinated and bundled.

This was followed by initial contact in February 2024 and discussions between representatives of the city of Forchheim and the IZTB. Subsequently, a letter of intent was signed with the city of Forchheim on 10 May 2024 in Forchheim, followed by the drafting of a cooperation agreement. This was unanimously approved by the Forchheim City Council on 18 December 2024.



On 10 May 2024, Hans-Jürg Käser (IZTB) and Dr Uwe Kirschstein (Forchheim district town) signed a letter of intent (left-hand image, © Markus Ischi), followed by a cooperation agreement dated 18 December 2024. Traditional irrigation is of great importance both in the area around St. Urban and around the town of Forchheim (picture on the right © IZTB).

With approval from both sides, a four-year pilot phase began during which the independent resources of IZTB and Forchheim will be combined and joint projects, including financing, will be launched, particularly in connection with the EU and UNESCO. This will address the medium- and long-term financing of IZTB and the IZTB branch at a strategic level

. An operational approach – e.g. based on area per country, number of sponsors, etc. – has not yet led to the desired result.

The large district town of Forchheim will be given a seat on the IZTB Foundation Board, thereby gaining additional involvement. From a geographical perspective, the IZTB branch in Forchheim will develop activities primarily in German-speaking countries (excluding German-speaking Switzerland), while the IZTB will be largely solely responsible for Switzerland and the countries around the Mediterranean. The first product of this cooperation will be the meeting of the International Advisory Board in Forchheim on 4 July 2025, followed by an excursion to the Nuremberg area on 5 July 2025.

Project supported by the Federal Office of Culture (FOC)

The project "Securing the future of traditional irrigation as intangible cultural heritage" was launched at the beginning of 2023 and has already been a great help this year in the preparations for the upcoming entry of traditional irrigation into UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This resulted, for example, in a joint photo collection, which was expanded in 2024.

This sub-project primarily promotes projects within Switzerland, although the FOC also follows activities abroad with great interest and considers the coordinating umbrella and hub function of the Europe-wide sponsors to be very useful. At the same time, it has become apparent that the coordination and translation services provided by IZTB officials are also valued within Switzerland. Here, the IZTB works together with representatives of the other organisations involved in the project: the University of Bern, the Swiss Landscape Conservation Foundation, the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch UNESCO World Heritage Foundation (SAJA) and the Musée des Bisses (MdB).



Through the BAK-supported project, the IZTB is doubly involved in the network of so-called "focal points". The "focal points" are the representatives of the national UNESCO commissions (AT, BE CH, DE, LU, NL, IT, see some of them in the picture on the left © IZTB); Since the beginning, Dr Karina Liechti (picture above © SAJA) has been the driving force behind the BAK-supported project, complemented by IZTB Managing Director Werner Stirnimann (right in the picture).

The objectives of the BAK-supported project focus on two main areas: a) safeguarding and communicating intangible cultural heritage by documenting knowledge, practices and cultures and implementing awareness-raising and educational activities, and b) preserving and promoting the sustainability of existing usage systems by promoting social learning, cooperation and strengthening cohesion; with a focus on the present and the future.

In the calendar year 2024, the IZTB accompanied three events in Valais and thus in the realm of the suonen or bisses: In view of the SAJA celebrations on 21 March 2024 surrounding the UNESCO listing – including a special exhibition on traditional irrigation – the World Nature Forum (WNF) in Naters, Valais, was supported with images and short texts. At the ceremony itself, Dr Karina Liechti and Werner Stirnimann gave a joint presentation on traditional irrigation across Europe and expressed their appreciation for the valuable work of the WNF and the water managers. At the celebrations held by the Musée des Bisses (MdB) on 20 April 2024 in Bötyre, Valais, the IZTB managing director also expressed his appreciation for the achievements of the MdB and the water managers and thanked them for their excellent cooperation. Furthermore, a delegation from the IZTB and the Wässermatten Foundation, based in Langenthal BE, visited the Traditional Irrigation Day in Ausserberg on 10 August 2024. Initial organisational work for a return visit to the Wässermatten was undertaken in autumn 2024.



The BAK-supported project focuses heavily on exchange and social learning on the one hand, and on the other hand, jointly supported events, visits, guided tours, etc. are created, which in turn provide beautiful subjects for photos and short films (© images, IZTB, W. Stirnimann).

With regard to the special exhibitions of the World Nature Forum Naters (WNF) and the Musée des Bisses in Bötyre (MdB), 14 short films (publicly available on Vimeo, each 5-10 minutes long) on various topics were produced and shown in Naters from 21 March 2024 and in Bötyre from 20 April 2024. The MdB also promoted the film project "Si les glacières ne revenaient pas" with an additional budget of well over CHF 100,000. The IZTB also made an appearance at the film premiere on 3 October 2024 in St. Romain VS.



From March to October 24, photos of the IZTB, among other things, were on display at the Word Natur Forum (Naters VS) as part of a special exhibition

The Musée des Bisses presented its film on 3 October 24. Images © IZTB

Research

Filming was also carried out as part of Christian Kleiner's master's thesis. The thesis was supervised by Dr Karina Liechti and Dr Theresa Tribaldos (University of Bern, Centre for Development and Environment, CDE). Nico Renggli (SAJA) and Christian Kleiner worked together in Valais and Oberaargau to shoot short film sequences on traditional irrigation practices and techniques, which are a valuable resource. Christian Kleiner also interviewed a number of irrigation farmers in the catchment area of the Wässermatten Foundation in Oberaargau (based in Langenthal, Bern).



Christian Kleiner, a master's student at the University of Bern, visited, interviewed and filmed a number of irrigation farmers in the Langetal and Rot valleys. Images © IZTB

Intangible cultural heritage, especially traditional knowledge, is of great importance in terms of preserving and developing tangible cultural heritage. The CDE at the University of Bern has been studying this interaction for years. The work of the Swiss Landscape Conservation Foundation is along the same lines: for example, intern Sabrina Althaus, under the supervision of Karina Liechti, interviewed eight contact persons in various irrigation regions in Europe. The focus was on governance, i.e. how irrigation is organised and who is responsible for which tasks. The interviews revealed, for example, that farmers have little time for their work and therefore need a great deal of persuasion and support from the public. In addition, restrictions on water extraction, climate change, a lack of responsibility in some cases, unequal distribution of burdens, a lack of successors and, in some cases, a lack of community spirit make life difficult for irrigation managers.

The University of Bern also announced a call for bachelor's theses on legends, songs, prayers, etc. related to irrigation, as well as on historical documents (regulations, court cases) from the Valais. Unfortunately, no students have shown interest in this so far. These are student projects in the fields of history and geography. References to interested students are welcome.

The various meetings and events of the international IZTB advisory board also revealed a considerable range of research projects related to traditional irrigation. In 2024, an initial overview of this diversity was created (additional information for the IZTB office is very welcome). This overview should make it possible to promote research opportunities in one way or another in the future.

However, the commitment of local stakeholders is just as crucial: for example, Foundation Board member Dr Eric Brinckmann continued his research into soil fertility on irrigated land in the Netherlands and Belgium and also prepared a future

research project with interested parties in Franconia. An important basis for this was a successful meeting in Lommel at the beginning of the year (11 February 2024) with stakeholders from the Netherlands and Belgium. In addition to celebrating the UNESCO award together, the research results of the eDNA and soil sensor measurements were exchanged. Four irrigated areas were compared using eDNA measurements: Het Lankheet and De Pelterheggen (both in the Netherlands) and Lommel and Mol (both in Belgium). Although Lankheet is located far away from the other sites, the sandy soils are comparable. The results revealed something astonishing: after four decades of irrigation, the plots in Lommel were able to compete with the best soils at the Wageningen University test site. Even recently irrigated areas showed better vitality than regularly farmed grassland. It is certainly noteworthy that irrigated meadows have a considerable moisture storage capacity and therefore survive (extreme) dry periods well compared to regular, non-irrigated plots. The latter suffered from serious dehydration problems during the same period.

Furthermore, Foundation Board member Prof. Dr Rolf Tanner began organising the 2026 annual meeting for the ARKUM organisation. This organisation sees itself as a hub in a network of historical cultural landscape research in Central Europe. It is expected to take place in Langenthal BE and will include excursions to the water meadows.

Education

In the field of education, an initial overview of educational projects in the various water regions was also compiled in 2024. Thanks to this foundation, the IZTB office was able to start bringing together various stakeholders (e.g. the University of Bamberg and the Bern University of Teacher Education). This also resulted, for example, in an initial overview of museums associated with traditional irrigation. The IZTB office also welcomes information about other projects in general.



In 2024, Prof. Dr Rolf Tanner initiated a specialist study in the field of teaching methodology at the Universities of Teacher Education in Lucerne and Bern, in collaboration with the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern.

Intergenerational aspects are an important part of this; on the right-hand image, a young water carrier, images © IZTB.

One of the ongoing projects is the 2024/2025 specialist study in the field of teaching methodology for the Master's programme in Nature, Humanity, Society and Sustainable Development at the Universities of Teacher Education in Bern and Lucerne and the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern. The management of water meadows offers potential for education for sustainable development for a number of reasons

potential for education for sustainable development: productivity, multiple perspectives, controversy, intergenerational aspects, norms and values, from local to global.

In September, a course on identifying and restoring traditional irrigation systems was held in the Netherlands. Approximately 20 water experts, local government officials and private individuals took part. In addition to theory, participants were also able to contribute their own cases and locations. The course offered practical exchange and insight into unknown historical sites.

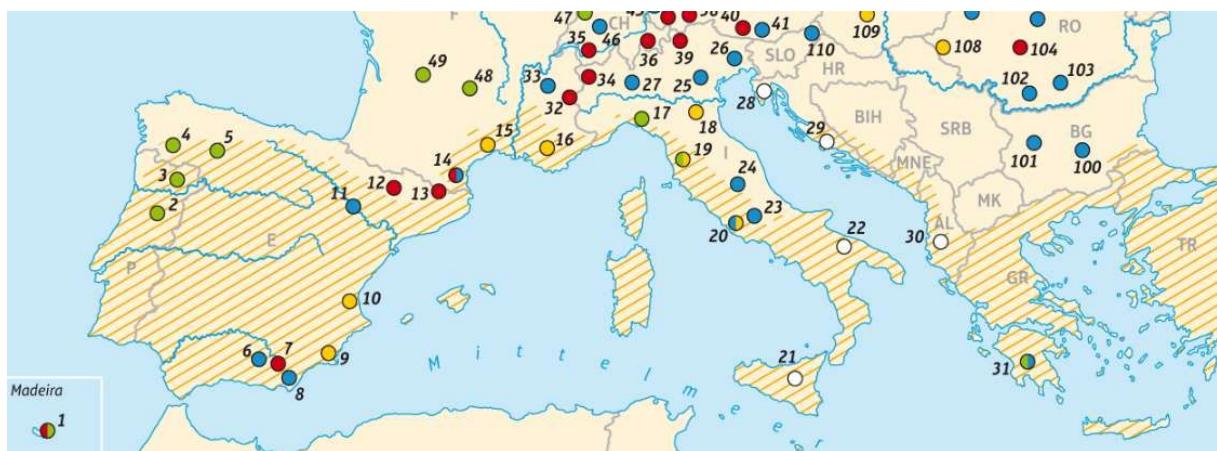
Project supported by the New Regional Policy

A project running since 2021 as part of the New Swiss Regional Policy (NRP) – financed by the Canton of Bern, the Swiss Confederation and voluntary contributions – enabled the IZTB Foundation to be established in advance. The project is also making a decisive contribution to setting up the office, the archive including the documentation centre, and to the digitisation and translation of documents into English. In 2023, a small but exquisite exhibition of irrigation objects was set up in the office.

In 2024, the development of the office continued in leaps and bounds. For example, through the development of cooperation with the city of Forchheim (and Franconia in general) by means of an IZTB branch office (see also above).

Furthermore, the newly established French network and its efforts to build a network across France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and, if possible, Norway and Morocco were supported. Objects from these countries are expected to be added to the existing entry in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage in 2026 (see also above). This would place the IZTB even more strongly at the interface between Germanic and Romance-speaking countries, but also at the interface between EU and non-EU countries.

For example, there are also "water meadows" in the United Kingdom.



In addition to Great Britain, Norway and other countries, there are many traditional irrigation landscapes, especially in southern countries. In 2024, a movement started in France that will greatly supplement the existing inventory; map excerpt © Ingeborg Vonderstrass

At the same time, the archive in St. Urban was further refurbished with practical work, the room and its sloping ceilings were measured in detail, suitable shelving was evaluated, a room layout was developed and the shelving was finally installed. Once again, we were able to count on the active support

the monastery administration in St. Urban, once again many thanks! In addition, a visit was made to the Roth Foundation in Burgdorf BE and its organisational structure was analysed. An exchange regarding potential service providers also took place. Furthermore, discussions with the Langenthal city archivist confirmed the assessment of IZTB team member Melanie Lerch regarding the further course of action based on a professional service provider. Initial contact was made with this company. In addition, a first delivery of documents from Germany was received, with more to follow soon.

Also in relation to Germany, various local organisations were advised on the subject of irrigation, supported in their work and given presentations.

In addition, groundwork was laid and important (internet) content was translated into English. With interest from France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and possibly Norway and Morocco, the IZTB network has already shifted significantly from a German-language network towards French and, above all, English.

Furthermore, at the request of the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, the entire IntWater website, including extensive data (and the associated email addresses), was taken over and secured at the beginning of 2024.

The IZTB, based in St. Urban, is thus pooling more and more resources and expertise for the benefit of cooperation between the participating organisations with a view to protecting, preserving, continuing to operate and, where possible, reactivating the last traditional irrigation systems and their unique cultural techniques.



Guided tour of the Vintschgger Museum (24 May 2024) in Schladerns, South Tyrol, for the IZTB advisory board. The IZTB is increasingly pooling resources and expertise to promote cooperation between the participating organisations.
Images © IZTB

Appendix A

IZTB Foundation 2024

Foundation Board:

Hans-Jürg Käser, Südstrasse 28, 4900 Langenthal (President)
Christine Badertscher, Lerchenweg 3, 4934 Madiswil (Vice-President)
René Abgottsporn, Ringstrasse 4, 3937 Baltschieder
Anna Aeberhard, Erlenweg 8, 4912 Aarwangen
Eric Brinckmann, Landgoed Het Lankheet, 7480 AE Haaksbergen NL
Rudolf Haudenschild, Sternenstrasse 9, 3380 Wangen a/Aare
Markus Ischi, Riedhofstrasse 22, 4900 Langenthal
Raimund Rodewald, Schweizersbodenweg 9, 2502 Biel
Rolf Tanner, Hüsligasse 7A, 4917 Melchnau
Ingeborg Vonderstrass, Erlenweg 20, D-79238 Ehrenkirchen
Rolf Weingartner, Pfaffenbühlweg 36, 3604 Thun (from 13 March 2024)

Foundation Board Committee: Hans-Jürg Käser, Markus Ischi, Rolf Weingartner (from 13 March 2024) Managing Director: Werner Stirnimann, Waldhofstrasse 8c, 4900 Langenthal

IZTB team:

Barbara Keller, Mühlestrasse 5, 3362 Niederönz,
Melanie Lerch, Bäreggstrasse 53, 4900 Langenthal,
Karina Liechti, SL, Schwarzenburgstrasse 11, 3007 Bern
Markus Maag, Schürliacher 1990, 4954 Wyssachen
Susanna Reinhard, Schmittenstrasse 14, 4914 Roggwil,
Rolf Tanner, Hüsligasse 7A, 4917 Melchnau
Jan Trösch, Brennofenstrasse 11, 4914 Roggwil
Jörg Wetzel, Oberburgstrasse 12, 3400 Burgdorf
Fritz Wüthrich, Winkel 17c, 4924 Obersteckholz

Appendix B

IZTB hub

The foundation aims to preserve, establish and maintain traditional irrigation as a common cultural heritage of Europe. To this end, the foundation promotes research, historical documentation and the rehabilitation of selected water use systems in particular.

The purpose and mission of the IZTB Foundation is to provide financial and organisational support for all activities and projects of the International Centre for Traditional Irrigation in Europe (IZTB), which was founded in autumn 2020. As the supporting institution, the IZTB, based in the former St. Urban monastery, forms the common umbrella for Europe-wide sponsorships and initiatives for the protection, preservation, continued operation and, where possible, reactivation of the last traditional irrigation systems and their unique cultural techniques.

Appendix C

The role of the IZTB in detail

Let us first recall what traditional irrigation is. It is worth noting that in traditional irrigation, water is moved solely by gravity. Accordingly, the supply lines are adapted to the regions and terrain, and overall it is a sustainable, resource-saving and energy-neutral form of land management.

Traditional irrigation methods are based on ancient knowledge of water and nutrient supply. They are anchored in socio-structural interest groups and among individual irrigation farmers. Traditional irrigation encompasses numerous additional uses such as pest control, groundwater recharge, flood mitigation and much more. It also serves to protect species and landscapes.

The functions of the International Centre for Traditional Irrigation in Europe in detail:

- As a supporting institution based in the former St. Urban monastery, the IZTB forms the common umbrella for Europe-wide sponsors and initiatives for the protection, preservation, continued operation and, where possible, reactivation of the last traditional irrigation systems, including their unique cultural techniques.
- To this end, the IZTB collects and determines where irrigation facilities still exist, how they can be preserved and where water use systems can be reactivated if necessary.
- The IZTB is a knowledge centre for the various traditional irrigation methods in Europe and promotes research on this topic.
- The IZTB creates and operates a central archive, including a documentation and information centre, for the purposes of raising awareness, education and communication.
- The centre maintains contact with landowners, irrigators, communities and interested parties, as well as universities and specialist institutions, and promotes exchange and cooperation between the various partners, particularly between irrigation communities with their living, traditional and well-maintained cultural techniques
- It invites participants to scientific information conferences, exchanges of experience and site visits in the region, and organises exhibitions.
- The IZTB promotes value creation in connection with traditional irrigation.