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Building remote-work communities in the Alpine Space: co-designed and sustainable solutions

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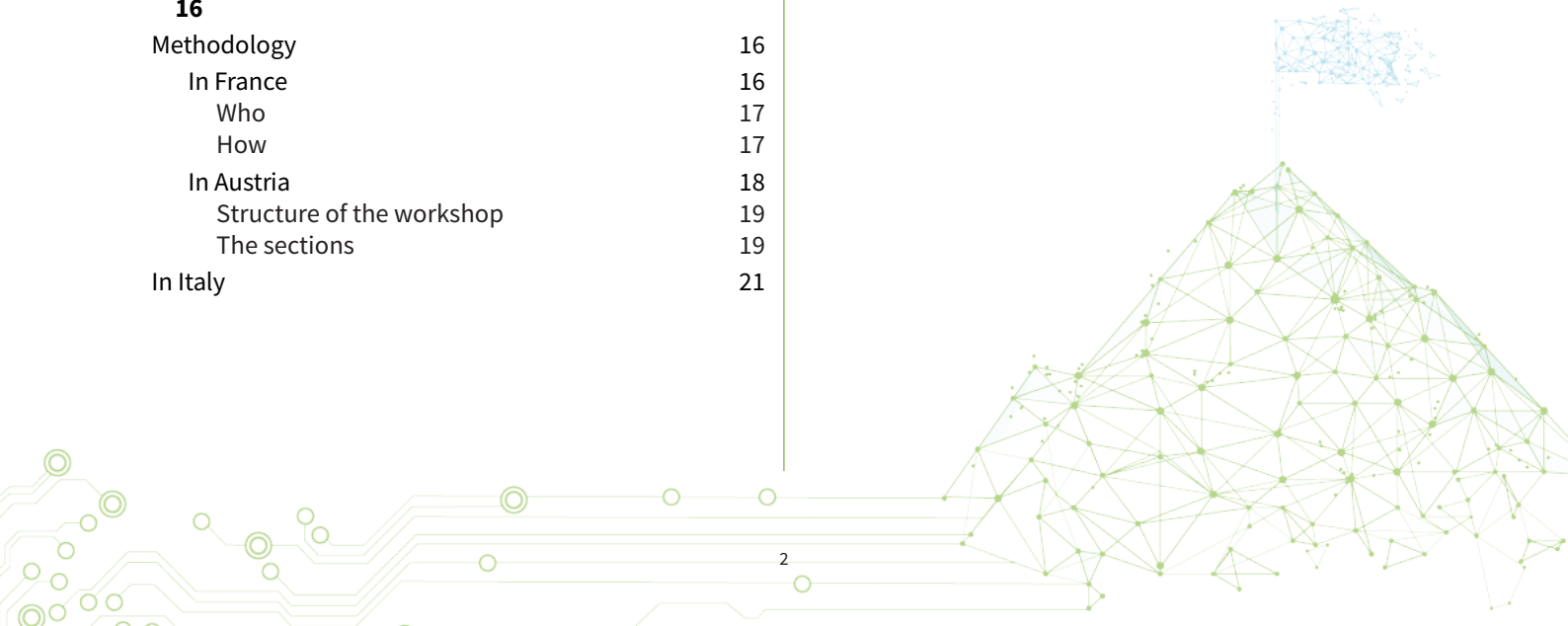
Deliverable A1.3
Building remote-work communities
in the Alpine Space: co-designed and
sustainable solutions

Managing the transition
to hybrid work and
satellite offices to revitalize
remote mountain areas

Deliverable A1.3 Building remote-work communities in the Alpine Space: co-designed and sustainable solutions

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of this project, the three areas under study have provided different results (annex). In both France and Austria, we found that there is already a significant number of coworking spaces and remote workers; however, in Italy, this “remote work” phenomenon is less present and simply more recent. In our endeavour to find the strengths/weakness and opportunities/threats of these three areas, we obtained some interesting yet varying results. While optical fibre is widespread in Austria and France, the situation in Italy differs. Additionally, we found that remote workers in France have more difficulty finding a home in comparison to those living in Italy and Austria. These main differences led us to the conclusion that the co-creation aspect of this project could not be presented in a standard way during this report. In fact, it was agreed that we needed to create three different methodologies and tools adapted to each territory.

To recall, the purpose of this action 1.3 was to co-construct solutions for working remotely in mountain areas. Since our three areas are not strictly the same as those explained above, we have decided to begin our reflections on different subjects. In France, given the abundance of coworking spaces and remote workers, the latter have often encountered challenges in establishing themselves and achieving full satisfaction with their living conditions. Consequently, French

partners have opted to conduct a benchmarking analysis of existing solutions in analogous rural French areas. In Austria, the coworking spaces are not well distributed throughout the country. Therefore, each of these spaces were studied to recognise their strong points/weaknesses, the services they are offering, and how they operate in order to gain a better understanding of what the potential creation of coworking spaces could be like. In Italy, on the other hand, there are no established coworking spaces in the for individuals studying, and therefore no other benchmarking was created. However, they drew inspiration from the information we provided about coworking spaces in the studied area, specifically those in France and Austria.

Following this, each country designed its own methodology for the co-creation groups. In the three countries, we decided to organise a workshop where all participants from the first steps were invited. In France, these participants included territorial employees; in Austria, these included students in particular; and in Italy, they combined various people (remote workers, companies, etc.).

All these workshops produced different results that we will present in this report. Also, at the end of the document, we will propose a conclusion of what we have learnt from these workshops which can be used in other mountain territories.

THE WORKSHOPS BASE

To better understand how the workshops were constructed, this section presents the results of the previous activities (1.1 and 1.2) on which we based our reflections, as well as the benchmark we carried out to draw inspiration from interesting existing ideas.

What we learnt from previous steps (1.1 + 1.2)

Thanks to the questionnaires, we were able to, firstly, “*synthesize the key factors pertaining to the settlement of new remote workers, new residents, and second house owners who can leverage remote work opportunities or utilize coworking spaces in our target areas. We have also synthesized the advantages of remote work for these regions and identified what facilitate remote work and coworking space utilization*” (D.1.2.).

Secondly, the specific results of activities 1.1 and 1.2 carried out in each country are presented below.

We then used both sets of results to design the various workshops.

In France

In the initial stage (phase 1.1) in France, the study illuminated the multifaceted nature of remote work, subsequently outlining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the region. It then focused on identifying the

primary remote work needs specific to the area. During this phase, participants contributed innovative ideas to address territorial challenges. Then, in phase 1.2, we characterised the area with economic and sociological data, summarised in the form of maps where possible. Interviews also highlighted the characteristics of remote workers, the role of their past experiences with the region, the role of certain facilities such as coworking spaces in attracting and retaining them, and the specific case of dual-career couples. Finally, French report 1.2 concluded with a presentation of both the barriers as well as the opportunities surrounding remote work identified for its territory.

In Austria

During phase 1.1, the overall interest in remote work and coworking spaces was determined in each country. In Austria, particular focus was placed on including young people and students in the data collection process, since they are the new generation in the region who are most likely to adopt coworking spaces and shift towards remote work in their work habits. The three workshops succeeded in gathering interesting insights and ideas. Against our initial expectations, many strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities have been identified, particularly broadening the field of services and opportunities and challenges for both working remotely and coworking. During phase 1.2, we in-

investigated further into the dynamics of *Vorarlberg's* communities and analysed social capital as a requirement for the sustainable development of coworking and community spaces. These steps enabled us to better understand the needs of the region and its citizens, while also discovering different pathways for possible solutions. Phases 1.1 and 1.2 served as a strong foundation for the development of possible solutions in phase 1.3.

In Italy

During activity 1.1, the territorial animation highlighted the existence of three existing phenomena already present in the Italian research territory: workation, digital nomads and new residents. Therefore, these three phenomena were analysed to understand which of these could be more interesting for the areas.

Activities 1.1 and 1.2 ultimately highlighted the lack of co-working spaces and the need to create them, regardless of the specific target audience. The meticulous analysis of the target audience will be conducted during activity 1.3, which we will describe in the following chapters.

Existing solutions benchmark

During the interviews carried out as part of activity 1.2, we discovered initiatives that support or facilitate remote work in mountainous and/or rural areas. This section presents the different approaches identified in each country. These approaches will serve as examples for workshop leaders to showcase existing solutions, aiding participants in envisioning solutions tailored to their specific territory.

In France

In France, several initiatives already exist to support remote workers who are seeking to establish themselves in remote areas, or to attract remote workers to communities in need of new residents. Here, we present the five initiatives that we consider the most compelling for examination of this benchmark, either due to their relevance to regions similar to ours or their presentation of innovative ideas that would be valuable to explore.

Paris je te quitte

Paris je te quitte is a company that helps people who want to leave *Paris* and move to the provinces, in rural or urban areas. The approach consists of collaborating closely with local authorities, providing assistance to individuals who are considering leaving *Paris* and facilitating connections with the relevant local authorities. In this case, the support is primarily private. The advantage of this approach is that it offers personalised and comprehensive support (housing search, etc.) by specialised professionals. The disadvantage is that it only directs remote workers to partner areas and, to date, no mountain territories are part of these partnerships, possibly due to the perceived high associated costs.

Beaujolais vert votre avenir

Beaujolais vert votre avenir transformed from an association into a mixed syndicate. It actively promotes and supports new entrepreneurs with their projects, from preparation to installation in a new area. Remote workers can also benefit from this support. Historically, there were village committees responsible for helping newcomers settle in by connecting them with local stakeholders and teaching them about local customs to facilitate integration and prevent conflicts of use. While this approach provides individuals with support from preparation to installation, it tends to benefit self-employed entrepreneurs and therefore does not meet the needs of all remote workers.

Soho solo Gers

Soho solo Gers is an association funded by local communities. It actively engages and helps remote workers and project leaders to set up in the area (real estate, employment, etc.). The approach acts as a “gateway” to the region, directing individuals to the right contacts (real estate agencies, third places, economic players). Essentially, it functions as a networking opportunity, streamlining the arrival of remote workers, even though it doesn't provide ongoing support after they have settled in.

Agence Ariège Attractivité

Agence Ariège Attractivité is an association initially funded by the *Ariège* department and calls for projects. Since the *Notre* law, it has had to diversify its funding, notably receiving support from the communities of communes in *Ariège*. The agency aims to attract both project developers and remote workers. It actively seeks and supports individuals throughout their relocation process, providing assistance even in the initial months to ensure their satisfaction. Recently, it has broadened its scope by aiming to attract people who are deemed “useful” to the region. In this way, it helps to attract skills and manpower to areas in need.

Cantal: welcome sessions for working people

Every year, the *Cantal* department selects 20 new projects, encompassing not only remote workers but a diverse range of individuals. These participants are invited to spend 3 days, free of charge except for transportation, to discover the area, and connect with stakeholders such as elected representatives, professionals and real estate agencies. The objective is to help them settle in with a better vision of their future. Each individual is assigned a contact person who provides personalised support. This approach stands out as one of the most effective forms of support for remote workers that we have encountered.

In Austria

In *Vorarlberg*, there are several coworking spaces in the cities of *Bregenz*, *Dornbirn*, and *Feldkirch*, and in larger villages such as *Lustenau* and *Lochau*. The region *Bregenzerwald*, however, only has one coworking space, known as “Die Gute

Stube". Some coworking spaces in the area are managed by enterprises like PRISMA or Workfwd. PRISAM operates the Campus V in *Dornbirn* and the Iclub in *Lustenau*, while Workfwd manages the Glesshub in *Lustenau* and the "Coworking Space am Ambergpark" in *Feldkirch*.

The coworking space in the *Bregenzerwald* region is located in *Andelsbuch*, positioned in the heart of the *Bregenzerwald*. As a point of reference, it takes approximately 25 minutes for someone from *Dornbirn* to reach the coworking space in *Andelsbuch*.

While there are coworking spaces in *Vorarlberg*, they are limited in certain regions. For instance, in the *Rheinthal* region, there are only coworking spaces located in the city of *Dornbirn*, and one in the village *Lustenau*. In the *Bregenzerwald* region, there is only one coworking space, limited in size, and as a result, remote workers often have to travel to the nearest city which is *Dornbirn*, in most cases. The journey from the *Bregenzerwald* to *Dornbirn* takes about 30 minutes by car and approximately an hour by public transport.

What Coworking Spaces in Vorarlberg Offer

Every coworking space in *Vorarlberg* provides standard amenities, including an open space room, meeting rooms, a small kitchen, a lounge area, and air conditioning. From a technical standpoint, each coworking space offers Wi-Fi, a printer, and meeting rooms equipped with projectors and speakers.

Different Ticket Options

Generally, a coworking space provides a desk and/or meeting rooms for a specific fee over a designated period of time. Various ticket options are commonly available, including daily, weekly, or monthly passes. Additionally, flexible ticket versions may offer, for instance, access to the space for a specified number of times, such as 10 visits.

At Campus V, there are three ticket options to choose from. The day ticket provides access for one day and includes a dedicated workstation, Wi-Fi, coffee and drinks, a lockbox, and entry from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. It costs 15 euros (net) per day. The flex ticket grants access for 10 visits, and is transferable. It includes the same as the day ticket and costs 130 euros (net). The fix ticket, which includes all of the above, is for one month but only allows the use of the meeting rooms and lounges for events. It costs 220 euros (net) per month. Without a day or flex ticket, a meeting room costs 50 euros (net) for half a day and 85 euros (net) for a full day. A lounge area costs 80 euros (net) for half a day and 135 euros (net) for a full day.

There are also three ticket options at the Glesshub in *Lustenau*. The desk for a day includes access from 7 am to 6 pm and comes with complete amenities such as coffee, tea, internet, printer, and scanner. The price for a day is 26.40 euros. The flexible desk includes the same amenities as the desk for a day. With the flexible desk, which costs 230 euros per month, gives you access for 8 days per month. And

you have a monthly credit of 180 euros for the meeting room. The dedicated desk offers 24/7 access and includes a lockable rolling container with a width of 2 meters. With the dedicated desk, you have a monthly credit of 300 euros for meeting rooms, and the price of this ticket is 380 euros per month.

Die Gute Stube

"Die Gute Stube" is the one and only coworking space in the *Bregenzerwald* region, located in *Andelsbuch* which is situated at the heart of *Bregenzerwald*. For example, someone traveling from Doren would require approximately 25 minutes by car or around 50 minutes using public transport to reach "Die Gute Stube".

Initiated by Public Youth Work Bregenzerwald, "Die Gute Stube" is housed in a building that formerly served as the Landammann hotel. In 2014, the Public Youth Work Bregenzerwald collaborated with young women from the *Bregenzerwald* community to transform the old hotel into a space featuring open experimentation and meeting areas.

In 2019, a demand for coworking space emerged, prompting a team to convert two hotel rooms into a unified, open working area. Currently, "Die Gute Stube" provides 6 fixed desks and a flexible coworking area. However, the coworking space is just one aspect of "Die Gute Stube". The facility also includes a meeting room for 5 people, a large hall for events, an analogue photography lab, a pottery room, creative suites, and a communal kitchen. Therefore, "Die Gute Stube" serves as both a community space and a coworking space. Individuals can not only work there but also engage in communal activities such as cooking together in the kitchen or participating in pottery workshops.

Community Spaces – connecting community and coworking spaces

In the Austrian context, the emphasis on community spaces is paramount, hence a small benchmark was conducted in this regard. The purpose of a community space is to build a space where everyone is welcome and each individual can contribute in their own way.

Why a community space works

A community space thrives when certain characteristics are present within the community, such as positive group culture, shared goals and values, a common history, and the ability to engage with each other, listen, and share experiences as well as skills and knowledge. The shared goals and values are often reflected in a collective understanding of what the group aims to achieve together. The successful implementation of such a concept requires meticulous planning, emphasising mutual exchange and coordination among members. Additionally, it is crucial for certain members of the community to undertake responsibilities. Creating a pleasant atmosphere that fosters conversations, openness, and emotional support is another crucial aspect. Therefore, community members are expected to possess competencies in terms of communication and conversation

management, as challenging situations may arise within the group, and each member should know how to handle them. There are two examples of well-functioning community spaces in *Vorarlberg*. The first is the Repair Café, and the second is the Hardground in *Hard*.

Repair Café

A Repair Café is a place where faulty electrical appliances can be repaired on-site. Unlike traditional repair services, the owners of the devices actively participate in the repair process while they bring their defective items to be assessed by volunteers who discuss repair options. Visitors have the option to purchase necessary spare parts on-site, and in the event of potential waiting times, they can indulge in coffee and cake. The experts work voluntarily, so there are no charges for the repair itself; only the required spare parts incur charges. Currently, in *Vorarlberg*, approximately 20 Repair Cafés open their doors once a month. The primary objective of the Repair Café is to revive the culture of repairing, showcasing that many products are indeed fixable. Simultaneously, the initiative aims to conserve both finances and the environment. Additionally, fostering a sense of community and providing a space for social interaction is a crucial factor of the Repair Cafés.

Hardground

The Hardground is an open youth space in *Hard*, designed

for teenagers aged 12 and above. It serves as a meeting place for socialising with friends. The opening hours of the space are Thursdays and Fridays from 3pm to 7.30pm. At the Hardground, a bar offers teenagers the opportunity to purchase drinks and snacks at cost prices. Moreover, young people can enjoy the facilities such as a football table, pool, darts, a PlayStation, and many other exciting games. A dedicated social worker is present on-site to interact with the children, play with them, and provide assistance with any concerns they might have. Furthermore, teenagers have the opportunity to contribute their own ideas and actively participate in the program.

In Italy

There are currently no co-working spaces in the research perimeter area (Evançon Mountain Community). One municipality, Challand-St-Anselme is planning a small space inside the municipal building, while in the municipality of Ayas the tourism consortium made its office available upon request for tourists who occasionally needed to work remotely.

The absence of co-working spaces was the decisive element in making the administrators choose to pursue this objective. In fact, the workshop was preceded by a meeting open to the Mayors of ECM who chose to continue activity 1.3 thinking about the creation of three co-working spaces. One for the lower, the middle and the upper valley.

THE CO-CREATION GROUPS

Following this preliminary work, the three countries participating in the project collectively decided to arrange co-creation workshops. Each country decided to host a workshop within its territory. In this section, we outline the methodology employed and the outcomes achieved at the local level for each country.

Methodology

Since the start of the project, we have studied three areas with similarities and differences. These variations prompted us, right from the initial workshops, to adopt different approach at local level. Considering the heterogeneity in results observed at the conclusion of phase 1.2, each country decided on different methodologies for implementing the co-creation workshops within their respective territory. This section presents, for each country, the time chosen for organising the workshop, the individuals involved in or leading it, and how it was organised.

In France

Initially scheduled for early September, the workshop was postponed to Friday 22 September 2023, to ensure the audience required for the objective - envisioning realistic solu-

tions implementable within the context of public policy support, be it regulatory or financial. September was not the most conducive month for a strong mobilisation, considering the accelerated return to activities following the school vacations. Nevertheless, the project's stages compelled us to execute this phase during this timeframe to allocate ample time for fourth phase of the project, focusing on the feasibility study of the proposed solutions.

Who

Invitations were sent to all the institutional and private partners, as well as the remote workers we encountered during our qualitative interviews. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, the timing was not conducive to a strong mobilisation. The timetable was also debated, and while evening meetings were preferred at the territorial meetings to accommodate those directly involved, it was decided, for this stage, to schedule the meeting in the daytime. This therefore enabled us to connect more effectively with individuals and organisations that can contribute valuable proposals and decisions.

Of the 161 people invited, 6 were unavailable while 15 were able to attend. These included representatives from two of the local authorities within the project perimeter (*Guillestrois-Queyras* and *Pays des Ecrins*), including two elected representatives, and individuals from the PETR. In addition to the local

authorities represented, participants also included the Ecrins Tourist Office, UPE 05 and PNR *du Queyras*. Noteworthy contributors also involved the mobilisation of ACSSQ volunteers and the *Aix-Marseille* University team.

How

The afternoon workshop invited participants to enjoy a friendly coffee session at 1pm and follow the following agenda:

- Introduction and reminder of the context and final stages of the project
- Utilization of the outcomes from phases 1 and 2 in France, based on the visuals designed (printing of A3 posters and table reading): reading and sharing reactions from sub-groups, followed by questions/answers to the ACSSQ and AMU teams on the results displayed.
- Three-stage solution co-design workshop (in sub-groups):
 1. inspiration time drawing from pre-identified solutions in the territorial meetings and the benchmarking conducted by the research team.
 2. ideation time to generate ideas for solutions to be developed for the areas, positioning them on the matrix of the three main entries identified (year-round services, communication, institutional support)
 3. time for drafting solutions: after the sub-group had chosen the solutions that were most relevant to develop, they were instructed to complete a “solution sheet” with the pre-defined entries
- Selection of solutions for the feasibility study phase: after drafting solution sheets, they were presented for all participants to review, suggest any necessary additions, and cast their votes (using stickers).
- Conclusion and next steps

In Austria

On 19th of July 2023, the workshop for phase 1.3 was held in Austria. The participants were invited to the Research Centre of Business Informatics at the University of Applied Sciences *Vorarlberg*. Most of the participants were young individuals, namely students, given their availability and the fact that they had also been participating in previous workshops of AlpSatellites. By re-inviting the same participants, we could seamlessly pick up from where we left off, and we therefore did not need to explain the project anew since they were already familiar with it. Even so, before we started the workshop, we provided a brief update on everything that happened since they last participated in a workshop and explained the results from phase 1.1 and 1.2. The workshop itself took 2 hours and was led by the FHV.

Structure of the workshop

As we started the workshop’s preparatory phase, we recognised the need for a more streamlined process, given the wealth of intriguing insights we had already gathered in the previous project phases. In order to give the workshop a structure and an easy-to-follow framework, we developed

eight focus points. We delved into the question of what distinguishes successful community spaces, coworking initiatives, and similar endeavours from those that falter. Especially after witnessing the thriving examples in France at the TPM, we became curious to answer this question. Therefore, we conducted a brief benchmarking exercise which enabled us to identify central factors to consider during the development phase of community and coworking spaces (see chapter titled ‘Benchmark’). This served as a guiding principle throughout the workshop. The main objective was to engage in a brainstorming session to generate various ideas and thoughts among the participants. We used a large whiteboard in one of our conference rooms and divided it into 10 sections. The first eight sections were marked by Demand, Input, Services, Support, Output, Environment, Emotion and Ideas. The remaining sections were used for more personal experiences and were therefore marked with the keywords: You, Why, and Challenges. During the workshop, each participant was asked to freely contribute their ideas, while the workshop leader took notes on ideas under the appropriate sections on the whiteboard. This collaborative approach allowed the group to explore different perspectives and collectively contribute to the discussion.

The sections

- Demand: = the need for something. The focus was on what is really needed and asked for within a community or municipality. What do people want?
- Input: This section focused on the questions who, where, when and what. Why do people give input? Who will help and who will participate (community, group, individuals)? Where do you find necessary inputs? What kind of input can people bring? This section also summarises which resources are required through the municipality.
- Services: What kind of services would you like to use? What do you imagine could be a service (for yourself or for others)?
- Support: The focus of this section was on different types of support that could be necessary in a community. People were asked to name support they need could also provide.
- Output: This section focused on the question what the community gets out of a community or coworking space. What broader impact does such a space have on the community.
- Environment: Through the term ‘environment’, an increased focus was placed on all aspects around a coworking and community space. The participants were encouraged to think of sustainability factors as well as mobility, infrastructure and ecosystems. Everything that might impact a coworking space or vice versa was noted in this section.
- Emotion: When developing something for people, emotions also play a major role. In this section we asked about feelings people might have in a coworking or community space. We also asked about feelings that people would be

expected to have and if emotions are important for such an initiative.

- **Ideas:** This section collects all different ideas from the participants, including ideas for concepts or strategies.
- **You:** In this section we specifically asked about the participants' personal experiences with community or coworking spaces, or the lack of these particular spaces. We also asked them about their honest opinion on the whole matter and if they would be willing to participate in such an initiative.
- **Challenges:** This section lists the problems community/coworking space could have. The participants were also asked about all the challenges they face during the development of such spaces.
- **Why:** The 'why' included one specific question for each participant. Why should anyone invest their time? We wanted to get a truly honest snapshot of the participants' opinions. We wanted to know if they were personally affected by the whole topic and if they thought that others might be affected by it as well.

In Italy

The workshop, held on October 30, 2023, at the Evançon Office in Verres, Italy, marked a pivotal moment in the quest to establish coworking spaces within the specified area. With a varied attendance of stakeholders, including local residents, entrepreneurs, university students, and political representatives, the session was distinguished by a spirit of collaborative enthusiasm and meaningful dialogue.

A total of 14 people participated in the workshop, including students, municipal administrators, entrepreneurs and citizens.

The workshop began with a comprehensive overview of the results of both Phases 1.1 and 1.2, setting the stage for the in-depth discussions that followed.

The three questions were posed to the focus group:

- Where would you establish the coworking space? Identify potential locations within the specified territory. Are there existing spaces that could be repurposed?
- How would you design the coworking space? Outline and describe the features based on identified users (digital nomads, workation tourists, residents & new residents).
- How can the coworking space succeed? Who contributes

RESULTS

This section presents the results of the workshops held in each country. First, it presents the intermediate results, i.e. the results that led the various people involved in the exchanges to formulate their final solutions, before then presenting these solutions.

to covering the expenses and in what way?

Participants explored potential locations for coworking spaces within the community. Drawing inspiration from successful coworking spaces around the world, the group delved into discussions regarding the reuse of existing structures, imagining dynamic and adaptable spaces tailored to the diverse needs of future users.

In the brainstorming sessions, the essence of coworking space design was thoroughly examined. Spaces were envisioned to seamlessly blend flexibility and functionality, offering collaborative zones for brainstorming and individual areas conducive to focused work. A significant emphasis emerged on integrating facilities supporting remote learning, catering to the requirements of both students and digital nomads. The significance of communal areas was also stressed, recognising them as vital hubs for fostering spontaneous interactions, networking opportunities, and the exchange of innovative ideas among coworkers.

Importantly, the discussions transcended physical reality. Participants explored different financial models, contemplating sustainable contributions from both the public and private sectors. Equally vital was the emphasis placed on community involvement. Strategies to actively engage local people were discussed, ensuring that coworking spaces evolved into vibrant communities that positively contributed to the social fabric.

Strategic partnerships have emerged as the cornerstone of success. Collaborations with educational institutions and local businesses have been encouraged to enrich the coworking experience, offering unique learning opportunities and attracting a wide range of users. The dedication and enthusiasm of the participants underlined the collective commitment to making this project a resounding success.

In conclusion, the workshop stood as a testament to the community's shared vision. The constructive dialogue, innovative thinking, and collaborative spirit witnessed during the meeting fuel optimism for the future. The journey ahead is infused with the collective determination of a community united in the pursuit: coworking spaces that not only provide physical workspaces but also nurture creativity, collaboration, and community spirit.

Intermediate results

Before presenting the solutions that emerged from the workshops, this section shows the intermediate stages that led to their formulation.

In France

During the appropriation of the results of the first two phases, participants contributed the following comments:

- Employers' awareness of the development of remote working (question about the loss of local jobs, whereas relocation is possible thanks to remote working)
- Acceptance of remote working (question of the level of trust on the part of managers, changing attitudes)
- Digital development and infrastructure (white zones that prevent installation)
- Existing spaces that do not cover the whole country and are not inclusive, recent creation of spaces more focused on social links than simple coworking (question of the need to create other spaces and for what purpose)
- Consequence of the rate of second homes on local housing capacity (question on the housing (rental) and land shortage, and the destination of properties that are more oriented towards tourist rentals)
- Impact of changes in the typology of local residents (question of satellite income, which modifies the local ecosystem)
- Development trends in France as a function of what is happening in other countries (question of similarities between countries, particularly if foreign holidaymakers/workers are welcomed)
- Evolution of demand for space (question of proposed format, from permanent coworking space to nomadic office)

- Mobility within the region (question of links with economic capitals)

In Austria

The figure below is a replica of the sections on the whiteboards. The participants were explicitly encouraged to unleash their creativity and explore all possible directions when brainstorming ideas for the sections. This approach is a common way of stimulating an innovation process. By allowing people to think broadly and not constraining them, including even the most unconventional ideas, genuine inventions will emerge. As mentioned previously, the participants of the workshop were predominantly young people and students; however, they all belonged to diverse backgrounds. Some of the participants were very young and had just finished school, some were mature students, while others already had a family and children. Nevertheless, the results correlate with the young age of the participants. During the workshop many interesting ideas were discussed but in order to use all results and gain real insights the whole workshop needed to be analysed. Following are the revised results:

What became apparent when talking and working with the participants was that the demand and interest for services and new activities in the municipality is generally high. All



participants endeavoured to give a detailed explanation about what they believe should change in the future, and many of their feelings towards the municipality that they live in reflected each other. This clearly demonstrated that, contrary to public assumptions, young people are keenly interested in municipal affairs and have a genuine desire to bring about change.

A recurring theme found in numerous suggestions across various categories is the emphasis on flexibility and freedom. Whether it pertains to a service, support, or even a demand, participants emphasised the need for independently available services. This stands in stark contrast to the prevalent situation in many municipalities. Current structures, characterized by many clubs and expensive coworking spaces, often force people to subscribe to memberships to benefit from different activity offerings. It also fosters the isolated development of services, diminishing the level of comprehensiveness. Many of the ideas generated by the participants in the workshop starkly oppose this current exclusivity, advocating for increased shared resources, greater usage freedom, and enhanced flexibility in taking part in communal activities.

One demand the participants named was an increased focus on young people. In many smaller municipalities, there is lack of space for young people to use, whether that may be a hangout spot or an entertaining activity. There is a call for increased inclusion of the youth, which is evident and manifested in different aspects of input or services. The participants also made connections between services and contributions involving young people. For example, by enhancing the appeal of the municipality and its community to young people, certain services and support activities for older people can be provided. When young people feel included, they are more willing to help and offer their time to others. Recognising that young people are also the future of the municipalities, fostering their integration increases the likelihood that they will remain in the community and actively contribute to its development.

Another factor that emerged during the workshop was the importance of a physical (sometimes also virtual) room. Many of the proposed activities and services require a certain level of infrastructure. In addition, the participants specifically emphasised the importance of having access to a space, regardless of its nature. Individuals require a welcoming place where they can freely come and go, receiving assistance when needed. The participants suggested a *café* or restaurant, a community space, a skate park, a community garden or an IT platform. When queried about a coworking space, there was widespread approval. A coworking space with additional features and rooms was seen as an ideal addition to a municipality. The participants also reversed this concept, proposing the incorporation of coworking in open spaces within the municipality. They connected this with their own experiences, mentioning that very often a space that already exists gets transferred into a coworking space (or at least a few rooms). Besides physical rooms, focus was also put on virtual rooms that should be available to people. Both citizens and newcomers need online spaces where they can access information about services, activities, the municipality, administrative matters, opening hours etc., and where they can connect with each other. This digital space is particularly vital for attracting remote workers and digital nomads should be attracted. For these individuals, obtaining ample information about their new destinations online and acquainting themselves with the municipality and its surroundings is of paramount importance.

In Italy

This collaborative session, marked by a spirit of innovation and purpose, yielded valuable insights into the creation of coworking spaces tailored to the region’s unique needs. Below is a summary of the main observations and proposals arising from the recent workshop dedicated to Val d’Ayas. These findings have been organised into a table for better comprehension and utilisation of the results.

Development Level	Location	Observations/Proposals
HIGH	Champoluc, Terme	Search for suitable space within Champoluc's thermal baths for local activities
HIGH	Ayas, Former Champoluc Elementary School	Renovation of the structure with a significant investment to create a co-housing and co-working project, offering mini-apartments managed by Adava for seasonal employees
MEDIUM	Challand Saint Anselme	Potential of the new schools
MEDIUM	Brusson	Underdevelopment of infrastructure, specifically concerning the Brusson library
LOW	Verres, Station	Need for redevelopment of the station to improve logistics
LOW	Disused Industrial Zone	Possibility of revaluation and reuse of the industrial area
LOW	Utilization of villages and hamlets	Discouragement of solely focusing on Verres, instead exploring the potential of villages and hamlets
LOW	Montjovet, Old School	Social use of the facility as apartments for victims of violence, despite its less convenient public transportation access
LOW	Montjovet, Station	Possible development opportunities related to the Montjovet station

his table summarises the main observations collected during the workshop, highlighting the diverse realities and development opportunities in various locations within Val d’Ayas. Further assessments and targeted action plans are recommended to fully leverage the potential of these areas, considering the importance of strategic investments for their optimal development.

Strategic Location Proposals

Within the high valley, Champoluc’s thermal baths were strategically considered, conceived as a dynamic coworking space. Ayas, notably the former Champoluc Elementary School, emerged as a focal point for integrated co-housing and coworking initiatives. Transitioning to the middle valley, the prospect of utilising the new schools in Challand Saint Anselme was explored. In the low valley, the revival of Verres’ station and the repurposing of dormant industrial areas became focal points, mirroring the region’s industrial heritage.

Inclusive Space Design

The workshop participants expressed a vision where coworking spaces serve not only as professional hubs but also as community anchors. The conceptualised design includes inclusive spaces for students engaged in remote learning, specifically designed zones for youth, and communal dining areas promoting social cohesion. Seasonal outdoor spaces, conducive to creative thinking and relaxation, added a distinctive touch to the envisioned coworking environments.

Financial Sustainability and Accessibility Strategies

Financial models promoting sustainability were meticu-

lously examined, while visitor vouchers, stimulating the local economy, were proposed. Online booking systems, complemented by vigilant camera surveillance, were identified to ensure controlled access and a secure working environment. Special considerations were made to facilitate access for young participants through reduced fees or complimentary access, fostering an ethos of inclusivity.

Collaborative Partnership Initiatives

Beyond theoretical discourse, the workshop exemplified a collective commitment to action. The proposed coworking spaces, embodying functionality and fostering community engagement, stand as a testament to this shared vision. Crucially, the collaborative dynamic observed between public and private entities throughout the deliberations underscored a strategic alignment essential for the successful implementation of coworking spaces in Val d’Ayas.

This workshop, characterised by its strategic foresight and community-driven ethos, has paved the way for a transformative period in the area, where coworking spaces will not merely serve as workplaces but as thriving hubs fostering innovation, collaboration, and community development.

Solutions

In this section, each country presents the ideas and solutions that emerged from the workshops held there.

In France

During the first phase of the co-design workshop, a number of ideas emerged, classified according to the priority inputs defined on the French side.

>With regard to local hospitality (social ties, housing, etc.)

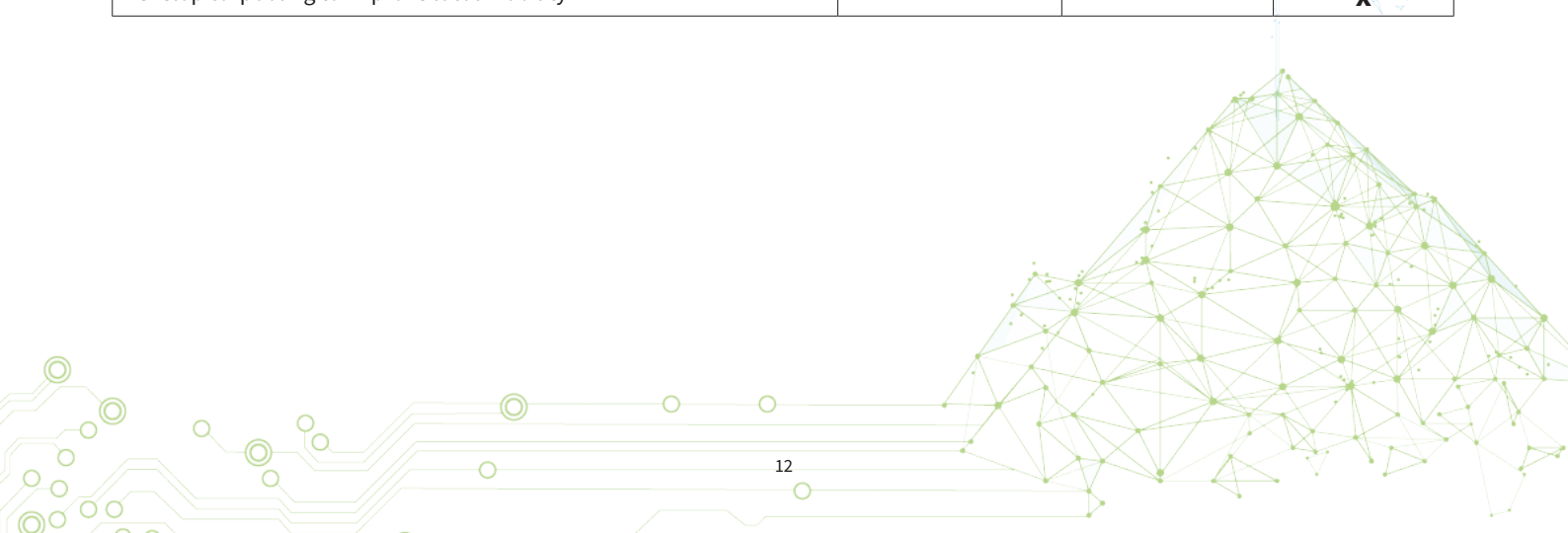
Idea title	Services year-round	Communication	Support
Guide remote workers in activities/associations to do outside work to create social links	X		
Building a pathway to housing for remote workers	X		
Reserve housing near coworking spaces	X		
Have remote workers present testify to the feasibility of this lifestyle choice		X	
Promoting local services	X	X	X
Create a "carte vitale territoriale" / multimodal transport card + culture pass + services...	X		
Providing the region with a comprehensive/complementary range of services	X		
Present territories / services on website and applications	X	X	
Recruiting resident ambassadors		X	
Welcome for newcomers (booklet, welcome day, local outings)		X	
Work on retaining residents/new arrivals over the long term	X	X	X

> Specifically concerning the development of workplaces and workspaces

Idea title year-round	Services	Communication	Support
Lack of remote working and coworking spaces in the <i>Pays des Ecrins</i> , making effective communication challenging	X		
Distribute flyers in all private/public reception areas throughout the <i>Hautes-Alpes</i> region		X	
Create awareness of the fact that quality remote working is possible in the region (via tourist offices?)		X	
<i>Pôle emploi</i> widget to promote local job offers on websites		X	
Identify and communicate on coworking spaces in the region	X	X	
“ <i>Cartable à la neige</i> ” initiative in <i>Queyras</i> to be extended throughout the region (family vacations outside school periods with tutoring = potential remote-working parents).	X	X	X
Networking platform for 100% remote work offers	X	X	X
Keep holidaymakers (tourists or second homes) for 2 weeks longer thanks to the nurseries’ remote working service		X	X
National website to enable remote working throughout the <i>Hautes-Alpes</i> region		X	X
Extend the <i>Lucéo</i> principle to other areas of the <i>Ecrins</i> (<i>Argentière, Vallouise</i> , etc.) by creating partnerships with hotels or youth hostels			X
Promoting remote working to businesses		X	
Night train infrastructure with washroom	X		X
Connected campus			X
Provide information on assistance for people who create remote working jobs (ZRR assistance, etc.).			X
Call for projects		X	X

> Concerning more specifically the development of mobility

Idea title year-round	Services	Communication	Support
Mobility within PETR and communities of communes	X		
Mobility support for attractive regions for remote workers	X		X
Develop carpooling to improve local mobility			X

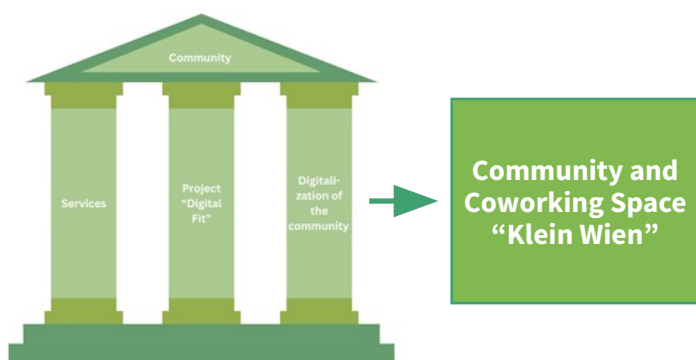


During the 2nd phase of the workshop, 7 solution sheets were worked on.

Title	Description	Carrier	Ease of use	Number of votes	Main theme
Facilitating travel inside and outside the region	1. Within the region: develop carpooling with a platform and meeting point to be set up (publicise and share the service).	Communauté de communes and Département	Green	6	Mobility
	2. Trains and public transport (e.g. equipping night trains with toilets), quality transport allowing comfort (train rather than bus).	Region and State	Red	6	Mobility
Access to housing: facilitating the housing journey	Creation or identification of an operator able to provide transitional housing, with equipment and Internet access (or close to coworking spaces) to facilitate the arrival of teleworkers on the territory before permanent installation (renovation of aging and vacant stock in this sense).	Public authority initiative / impetus and conversion of former vacation centre	Orange	9	Home: social ties / housing, etc.
Courses to facilitate remote working	Develop services to make them appealing (role of politicians). Facilitate the integration of new arrivals (role of associations). Set aside a budget for new arrivals (purchase of equipment / rental / rent).	EPCI with stakeholder network management	Orange	2	Home: social ties / housing, etc.
Attracting / retaining remote workers with a link to the region (longer stay)	Bring in remote workers who already have a link to the region (family, residence, etc.) and introduce them to the existing offer by:1. building a homogeneous, professional reception offer on the region and communicating on it, 2. accompanying profiles on service needs (mobility, connection, etc.).			5	Home: social ties / housing, etc.
Promoting the region's assets (myth-busting)	Approach companies that are conducive to remote working, targeting groups (services) and young people. Promote facilities (hospitals, cultural centres, schools, tourism, sports facilities, shops, etc.). Demystify distance constraints. Promote the ZRR. Use the study for this communication. Have remote workers testify.	Communauté de communes and Region	Orange	9	Job offer / space
Directing the <i>Agence départementale de développement's</i> policy towards promoting remote working	Launch a territory-wide call for projects. Select the most viable projects. Invite project leaders to meet with stakeholders + discover the region. Provide financial and material support for new entrepreneurs.	Department	Orange	5	Job offer / space
"Pass Partout" / "Multipass" card	Optimise service offering. Acknowledge the status of remote workers to access mobility support. Provide reduced rates for cultural and sporting activities. Create a remote workers' works council (e.g.: seasonal workers' associations that obtain benefits in the resort).	EPCI / Organising municipalities / Human services, cultural, sports associations...	Red	5	Home: social ties / housing, etc.

In Austria

The Austrian partners are developing a solution centred around Doren, making it highly tailored to the specific region. However, it can be up or downscaled if needed since there are some main streams that can be applied to other rural areas as well. As evident be from the project's progress, the successful development of a coworking space in *Doren* can be built only through a strong and resilient community. That is why our blueprint begins with the establishment of a vibrant community, which then also serves as a cornerstone for the coworking space. The establishment of the community is structured around three main pillars, as illustrated in the figure below.



A range of community services will be offered in *Doren*; however, it is important to note that services are just one facet of this comprehensive approach. Equally crucial are the pillars of the project “Digital Fit” and the Digitalisation of the community. These pillars are dedicated to advancing the digital landscape of the community and providing support to its residents throughout this transformative process.

Nestled in *Doren* is a cosy space known as “Klein Wien”. Here, the front section houses the small *Doren* library, while the rear contains an array of chairs and tables, a well-appointed bar counter, a compact kitchen, and an intimate stage. **The vision of our solution is to cultivate a dynamic community life centred around this space. The goal is to give people more reasons to walk past this space in the village centre and strengthen their connection to the municipality.**

Pillar 1 – Services

The idea is to offer different services both within and adjacent to the space of “Klein Wien, encouraging people to frequent the area even if they do not have a specific need to enter. Within “Klein Wien,” services encompass various offerings such as year-round workshops, coworking facilities, public computers, events, gatherings, cooking courses, readings, and more. External services refer to amenities situated in the adjacent open space to “Klein Wien”. This might encompass features like vending machines offering local goods, a parcel station for received packages, or 24/7 accessible bookshelves.

Pillar 2 – Digitalisation of the community

Digitalisation is steadily expanding, presenting an increasing number of opportunities. Even official procedures and administrative processes are evolving rapidly due to increased digitalisation. For example, people can complete official documents from home, eliminating the need to visit the municipal office for such matters. However, the problem is that the sense for community diminishes with less and less personal contact. This poses a significant challenge for municipalities, as residents may lose their sense of belonging to the village, and those in need of assistance become increasingly isolated due to a lack of available support channels. To address this, citizens must be prepared for digitalisation and actively integrated into the process.

One important point of the sustainable “Digitisation of the community” includes, among others, the establishment of an accessible website.

Characteristics of an accessible website:

- Good readability of texts & scalability: The website is structured, the font size is appropriate, and the line spacing is sufficient.
- Contrast between foreground and background: This means a dark text colour on a light background. When deciding the colour scheme, it is important to consider the red-green colour deficiency.
- Optimisation of links and buttons: For an accessible website, sufficiently large links and buttons are crucial. Additionally, they should be operable using the keyboard.
- It provides alternative text for images for screen reader functionality: People with visual impairments or blindness use screen reader software to have websites read aloud to them. Images require textual descriptions, known as alternative text, to be understood. It is crucial to provide alternative text for every image so that the content of the image is explained.
- It must be comprehensible even without images and graphics: The essential content of an accessible website should be understandable without images, graphics, and videos; these visual elements serve merely as supportive elements and should not be the focus.
- Use simple and understandable language: Use short sentences and simple sentence structures. Avoid foreign words whenever possible and explain technical terms.
- Clear and intuitive website structure and navigation: A clear and intuitive website structure facilitates use for all users, including keyboard navigation and voice output.
- Accessible forms: In embedded forms, input fields must be large enough and accessible via keyboard. Labels should explain the functions of the input fields.
- Videos with subtitles and/or detailed descriptions: Provide video and audio files with clear subtitles. A detailed description of the content enhances understanding.
- Device independence: The website should be device-independent, accessible as both desktop and mobile versions, and usable with a screen reader.

Knowledge Base Platform:

In addition to updating and enhancing the existing website, the development of a Knowledge Base Platform is essential. The platform serves as an online library with information about digital topics, such as how to complete an online document or utilise cloud storage. On this platform, it is crucial that the instructions are clearly explained, and users can find the solution to the problem in just a few clicks. Additionally, it should be user-friendly for people of all ages and from around the world. A 75-year-old person should be able to navigate the website independently, with the instructions aiding them in problem-solving. Simultaneously, a digital nomad should be able to read important information in English. The platform is linked to the main *Doren* website for easy accessibility.

Pillar 3 – Project “Digital Fit”:

The project “Digital Fit” addresses the following questions:

- How can the topic of digitalisation be made more accessible to people?
- How can older individuals be assisted with technical issues?
- How can individuals be sensitised to digitalisation?
- How can remote work be integrated into community life?
- How can a whole community benefit from a coworking space?

This project aims to make digitalisation and technology an omnipresent topic in the municipality. The project includes a contact person at the municipality who is not only in charge of the project, but is also available to assist with digital and technical queries. Additionally, attendees at any community event have the opportunity to ask questions about technologies and digitalisation. As part of this project which is managed by the administrative body of the municipality, the employees of the community’s citizen services will also be trained to assist with technical and digital issues.

From community to coworking

These three main pillars will help to strengthen the community and prepare them for digital topics. This will also pave the way for coworking in the centre of *Doren* at “Klein Wien”.

All these measures are implemented to make people frequent the *Doren* village centre, facilitating the emergence of a community space with coworking facilities.

Services: Offering a diverse range of services within and around “Klein Wien” creates a multifaceted environment that covers various needs and interests. This not only attracts a wider audience but it also encourages regular foot traffic, even from those who may not initially have a specific reason to visit “Klein Wien”. By providing workshops, events, gatherings, and other services, the coworking space also becomes a dynamic hub of activity, fostering a sense of community and engagement among residents and visitors alike. External services, such as vending machines and parcel stations, further enhance the convenience and accessibility

of the space, making it an appealing destination for a wide range of individuals.

Digitalisation of the community: In an increasingly digital world, it is crucial for a coworking space to be equipped to meet the evolving needs of its community, as well as the needs of the economy. This pillar ensures that residents are prepared for the digital age, allowing them to engage with the space and its offerings more effectively. An accessible website and knowledge base platform not only facilitate communication and information dissemination, but also empower individuals to navigate the digital landscape with ease. This inclusivity ensures that the space is welcoming to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Project “Digital Fit”: This project is pivotal in bridging the gap between technological advancements and community integration. It addresses the practical aspects of using technology, holds increasing significance in contemporary work environments. By providing a dedicated point of contact and training for technical inquiries, the community gains confidence in interacting with digital tools and resources. This empowerment enables individuals to maximize the benefits of the coworking space, whether for work, learning, or collaboration. The integration of remote work into community life expands the scope and relevance of the coworking space, making it a valuable asset for both local residents and digital nomads.

Overall, these pillars work synergistically to create a dynamic, inclusive, and technologically adept environment within and around “Klein Wien”. They not only enrich the offerings of the community and coworking space, but they also enhance the sense of belonging and engagement among the community members, laying a strong foundation for a thriving coworking ecosystem in *Doren* and even the whole region of *Bregenzerwald*.

In Italy

The key focus areas and proposed solutions contributed by the Italian team during this workshop were:

1. Stable and Fast Internet Connection: The Italian team emphasised the paramount importance of providing a stable and high-speed internet connection within the coworking spaces. Recognising the demands of the digital age, a reliable internet connection is fundamental for enabling effective remote work and collaboration. Ensuring seamless connectivity is central to the success of the coworking spaces envisioned in the Alpine region.
2. Creating Aesthetic and Functional Spaces: The Italians proposed a novel approach, suggesting that coworking spaces should not merely be functional but also aesthetically pleasing. Leveraging the natural beauty of the Alpine territory, the team proposed integrating the region’s scenic elements into the coworking spaces. This integra-

tion would not only enhance the working environment, but also reflect the unique cultural and environmental aspects of the area, thus creating a distinctive appeal for potential remote workers.

3. **Improving Local Mobility and Transportation:** Addressing the challenge of accessibility, the Italian group highlighted the need for enhancing local mobility and transportation infrastructure. Efficient transportation links are vital for ensuring that individuals can easily access essential services and amenities. By investing in local transportation networks, the region can become more accessible, making it convenient for remote workers to reach coworking spaces and other vital facilities.
4. **Providing Basic Equipment and Amenities:** Recognising the practical requirements of coworking spaces, the Italian team suggested equipping these spaces with essential amenities, including printers and other necessary office supplies. Providing a well-equipped workspace enhances productivity and offers a convenient environment for remote workers, further encouraging their participation in the coworking initiative.
5. **Establishing Public-Private Partnerships:** To ensure the sustainability and success of the coworking spaces, the

Italian group emphasised the importance of fostering partnerships between public and private entities. Collaboration between government organisations, businesses, and local communities can facilitate the efficient allocation of resources and expertise. Such partnerships create a supportive ecosystem that nurtures the growth of coworking spaces and promotes a thriving remote work culture.

The contributions made by the Italian team during the workshop underscore the comprehensive approach required for the successful implementation of coworking spaces in the Alpine region. By addressing key elements such as internet connectivity, aesthetics, local mobility, essential amenities, and collaborative partnerships, the project stands poised to transform the Alpine region into a hub for remote work, fostering economic growth and community development.

Next Steps: Moving forward, it is imperative that the collaborative efforts continue to refine these proposals, taking into account the perspectives of all stakeholders. Regular communication and coordination among the participating countries will be essential to ensure the seamless execution of the coworking spaces project. Through sustained dedication and cooperation, the vision of a vibrant and interconnected Alpine coworking community can become a reality.

PROPOSITION

In this final section, we propose to summarise the main actions that each country intends to undertake for a feasibility study in phase 1.4. Additionally, some countries may present ideas on how they would like to proactively approach the upcoming phase.

In France

Three main themes emerge from the proposed solutions:

- **Development of mobility:** within the region and beyond, enabling new populations to settle in and work remotely while maintaining accessibility to service and activity hubs, as well as collaborating with their colleagues
- **Expanding the range of jobs and spaces available for remote working** by raising awareness among companies and employees, as well as among local authorities, through the communication of existing spaces and the creation of new connected spaces
- **Improving welcome policies:** both for new arrivals and for those who are already attached to the area, by deploying a pathway enabling them to test their settlement in an area, from access to housing to access to cultural and leisure activities.

For the future, French partners plan to work on these three issues during the feasibility study phase to identify realistic developments, involving local players and decision-makers. At least two dates have already been identified:

- a meeting of the European partners of the AlpSatellites project in Austria in early November, attended by several elected representatives and technicians from the PETR region, to compare results from France with those from other countries
- the participation of ACSSQ and AMU in the PETR Mayors' Council on 17/11/23 in *St Crépin*, to present the project and gather feedback from the elected representatives present

Finally, a meeting is planned for early 2024 to present the trans-alpine results of the project to partners in France.

In Austria

After working on action 1.3, many ideas and possible solutions were gathered. To formulate a viable and smoothly operating pilot, decisions on several key elements must be finalised.

- **Build/strengthen the community**
Before a coworking space can be developed, it is crucial to build the necessary ecosystem for it. By assembling a variety of services around “Klein Wien” in Doren, social capital will be built. This will also make the municipality more appealing to outsiders contemplating future residence, such as remote workers.
- **Preparing the community for coworking**
Through the project “Digital Fit”, people will be provided with assistance in various digital matters. The entire municipality will also intensify its focus on digitalisation to equip its citizens for the digital age, including preparation for remote work and coworking.
- **Making “Klein Wien” an important hub in the region**

Through the entire project, it became very clear that there is a need for a space where people can gather, seek assistance, and engage in various activities. “Klein Wien” in *Doren* is the perfect space to fulfil this desire. It will be transformed into an important hub for people from the entire region, serving as a dynamic space where numerous activities take place. Various services, events, and other offerings will be accessible there. In the future, the Austrian partners will employ different models to assess the feasibility of the proposed

solution. This includes the development of a risk matrix to identify potential risks and corresponding avoidance strategies. Also, there are plans to develop a concept for the solution that can be applied by the municipalities in the region. The crucial point of the concept is to work on easily changeable parts, where suggested services are interchangeable with others. Therefore, focus will not be placed on single services but on the effect they have on the ecosystem.

In Italy

The theme that emerged in Italy is that co-working spaces must align with specific local requirements, adapting to the tourist or social needs of the diverse municipal contexts. In the lower valley municipalities, the co-working spaces should be designed with a particular focus on the realms of welfare and social impact. These spaces should be conceived as environments that encourage youth engagement, rather than merely serving as meeting spaces for other vulnerable or marginalized groups.

In tourist areas, particularly in the upper valley and within the Municipality of Ayas, establishing co-working spaces within facilities dedicated to providing services the tourism industry, such as a co-living space for workers in the tourism industry, will be more feasible.



CONCLUSION

The key takeaway from Action 1.3 is the recognition that each alpine territory is unique, requiring tailored solutions for remote work. Consequently, to conclude this report, we propose a tool that could help alpine territories in understanding which solutions are most suitable to work on based on their special features. For this purpose, it is essential to define the significant features of each studied territory. As we explained in the introduction of the report, our initial exploration of the three territories revealed variations in their coworking infrastructure. Within each territory, we noted some disparities between its sub-territories, particularly regarding transportation options, housing costs and availability, and internet connection quality. The table below presents the main features of each territory.

and the creation of coworking spaces could facilitate the settlement of remote workers (Italy)

We will conclude by outlining progress areas tailored to each type of territory that could enhance their ability to attract and retain remote workers. Alpine territories already well-equipped with a number of coworking spaces can study their strengths and weaknesses on the specific topic of remote work. Neglecting these considerations might lead to dissatisfaction among remote workers, even with coworking spaces available. Often, these issues will concern social ties, transportation, housing, internet or support procedures for remote workers. Alpine territories with few or absent coworking spaces should continue developing new spaces,

	French territory	Austrian territory	Italian territory
Coworking infrastructure	Many coworking spaces Few coliving spaces	Few coworking spaces Few coliving spaces	No coworking spaces No coliving spaces
Difficulties for remote workers	Housing costs and availability	Maintaining social ties Law	Internet connection quality

- This table allows us to identify the two primary distinguishing features of our territories: the quantity of existing coworking infrastructure and the specific challenges encountered by remote workers. Additionally, we suggest categorising these three territories as: An alpine territory with enough coworking infrastructure but where remote workers are facing others difficulties, such as housing (France)
- An alpine territory where coworking spaces already exist but the integration of remote workers can still be improved (Austria)
- An alpine territory where the internet connection is poor

considering the needs of remote workers. Local actors in these territories can also adopt a broader perspective, addressing the ultimate needs of remote workers by creating spaces that anticipate future remote workers issues (i.e., social ties, transportation, housing, internet or support procedures for remote workers). Finally, alpine territories without any existing coworking spaces can create spaces specifically tailored for remote workers by involving them and other stakeholders from the outset, asking questions like, “Where should it be?” or “How should it works to ensure it aligns as closely as possible to their needs.



ANNEX

Territory overview: Similarities, Differences, Barriers, and Possible Solutions

Introduction

In order to co-create solutions and work together all partners needed to get to know each other. For this reason, we designed a map of each territory including characteristics, barriers, important key facts as well as good practices. During the project this helped us to better understand the difficulties and challenges the other territories are facing. At the same time everyone could also look for good practices in other countries to consider for their own territory. Following, each country is presented separately and after that focus is put on all three countries together, working on similarities, barriers and possible solutions.

Territorial Overview

Italy

Since the Unité des Commune Valdôtaine Évançon is a small area often there were not enough data regarding just this area. Therefore, in the following section data and information about Aosta Valley were also collected.

Characteristics of the target area: Unité des Commune Valdôtaine Évançon and Aosta Valley

The *Unité des Communes Valdôtaines Évançon* (hereinafter Unité Évançon) is part of the Aosta Valley Region which is located in northwestern Italy. Aosta Valley Region includes 74 municipalities, 60% of which have fewer than 1.000 inhabitants. The entire surface area of the region covers 3,263.25 square kilometers and in 2022 is home to 123,360 residents. The territory of the Aosta Valley ranges from 343 meters above sea level in the valley floor to 4,810 meters at the summit of Mont Blanc (average altitude of 2,106 meters above sea level), with 60.6% of the territory situated at an elevation above 2,000 meters above sea level.

With a Regional Law No. 6/2014, the Aosta Valley Region established eight territorial organization called “Unités des Communes Valdôtaines.” According to this law, each of the eight Unité groups together municipalities that share a territory and common development objectives. The Unités are local entities with legal personality under public law and have regulatory and statutory powers. They are established for the collaborative exercise of municipal functions and services. The Unités are responsible for the exercise of municipal functions and services in the following areas of activity: single desk for local authorities (SUEL); services for individuals, with a particular focus on home care and micro-communities; assistance for the indigent; assistance for minors and adults; middle school and nursery school; vacation stays for the elderly people; teleassistance; transportation for the elderly and disabled people; services related

to waste management; the Region establishes guidelines for the management of the waste cycle, exercising a coordinating role; services in the field of innovation and digital transition; service for assessment and voluntary collection of tax revenues. The Unité Évançon was established on June 8, 2015. It includes ten municipalities: Arnad, Ayas, Brusson, Challand-Saint-Anselme, Challand-Saint-Victor, Champdepraz, Emarèse, Issogne, Montjovet, and Verrès. The reported population is 11547 inhabitants (data updated as of 2021) in an area of 376,42 Km². The Unité Évançon develops mainly longitudinally between the municipality of Verres up to the last village of the community which is Saint Jacques (32 km distance).

Main economic indicators (Aosta Valley Region)

According to the ISTAT (2021), the per capita GDP of Aosta Valley amounts to approximately 38.800 euros and confirms itself as one of the highest in Italy. Meanwhile, the percentage of families in Valle d’Aosta that found themselves in a situation of relative poverty in 2020 has increased to 5.4%. The cost of living in Aosta Valley is generally higher compared to other Italian regions, primarily due to its enclave situation and the high presence of second homes. Specifically, housing, energy, and transportation costs are often higher than the national average. The real estate market is not very active, and the supply of houses for sale is relatively limited. Additionally, it is influenced by various factors, including geography, demographics, and the economy of the region. Aosta Valley, characterized by its small size, high altitude, and harsh climate, is not very appealing to some people. Nevertheless, thanks to its natural beauty and recreational opportunities, it is among the most desired destinations for those looking for a second home.

Labor market dynamics (Aosta Valley region)

According to ISTAT, the activity rate is 55.3%, almost 3 percentage points above the corresponding value for Italy; the employed represent 50.8% of the population (age group from 15 to 64 years), compared to the national average of 45.6%. On the other hand, the unemployment rate is significantly lower (8% in Aosta Valley and 13.1% in Italy). The labor market exhibits a significant gender imbalance. The male employment rate is at 56.1%, more than ten points higher than the female rate; the unemployment rate is 7.3% for men and 8.9% for women, respectively. Many workers are employed in the public administration sector.

Jobs and economic activities (Aosta Valley)

The economy of the Aosta Valley is primarily based on tourism, agriculture, and industry. Tourism - The Aosta Valley is a very popular tourist destination thanks to its mountains and rich history and culture. The region offers numerous natural attractions as well as

multiple outdoor activities. The region is also known for its cuisine, with traditional dishes including Fontina cheese and polenta.

Industry - The Aosta Valley has a strong presence of manufacturing industries, with a particular specialization in mountain equipment production. The region also has a significant food industry, producing high-quality wines and dairy products.

Trade - The region has numerous commercial and artisanal activities that contribute to the local economy. In particular, the tourism sector encourages the establishment of shops, restaurants, and hospitality-related businesses, providing employment and attracting visitors.

Energy - The Aosta Valley is working to increase the production of renewable energy and reduce dependence on fossil energy sources. The region has significant hydroelectric potential due to its rivers and streams throughout the territory. Additionally, it is experimenting with solar energy production and promoting energy efficiency in construction.

Technological infrastructure (Aosta Valley)

The coverage of optical fiber in Aosta Valley is continuously expanding, but it is not yet complete across the entire region. According to data from Open Fiber (September 2021), the main optical fiber network operator in Italy, the optical fiber coverage in Aosta Valley was at 43.1% of the population, with over 33,000 properties reached by the optical fiber network. Specifically, in the Evançon Unit, the municipalities covered by optical fiber are as follows: Verrès, Champdepraz, Arnad, Ayas, Brusson, Emarèse, Issogne, and Montjovet. The municipalities of Challand-Saint-Anselme and Challand-Saint-Victor are therefore excluded. In 2019, a new digital strategy was defined for Aosta Valley, with the goal of promoting broadband diffusion, the development of e-government, the training of digital skills, and innovation in the fields of tourism and agriculture. This strategy also includes the creation of a regional agency for digital innovation with a budget of 2 million euros.

Services present in the area (Aosta Valley)

Regarding public services, Valle d'Aosta is characterized by a centralization of services in the capital city. Among the services available in Valle d'Aosta, the following can be mentioned:

Transportation - With no airports, few train (starting from December 2023 the railway will be closed because of renovation) and bus, the Aosta Valley remains an isolated territory because of the mediocrity of its communication infrastructures and because of its geographical location. Valle d'Aosta has a public transportation network, with buses and trains connecting both the major urban centers of the region and the Aosta-Turin railway line (as for the Unité Evançon, the only railway station is in Verrès). Furthermore, the region is connected to highway and road networks, making it easy and fast to reach other destinations only by car.

Healthcare - The region has a public healthcare system that

provides assistance to residents and tourists. Healthcare in Aosta Valley, like in many other Italian regions, has faced pressures and challenges in recent years due to factors such as the aging population, reduced public funding, and shortages of medical and nursing staff. However, the region has made efforts to improve healthcare services and invest in new infrastructure and technologies to enhance the efficiency and quality of healthcare. The region also has primary healthcare services, including general practitioners, pharmacies, health centers, and trauma centers. However, some areas in Valle d'Aosta, especially mountainous areas, may experience shortages of general practitioners and other healthcare resources.

Education - The region has a network of public and private schools, including primary schools, secondary schools, and high schools. Education is provided in both Italian and French. Additionally, there are several vocational and technical training institutions, as well as a university located in the capital regional city.

Geographical features (Aosta Valley)

The area has a low population density, with only 38 inhabitants per square kilometer. The presence of high mountain ranges, including Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn, creates a microclimate with significant temperature differences between the valleys and the mountains. In general, the region has an Alpine climate with cold winters and mild summers, but temperature and precipitation can vary considerably depending on the altitude and valley. The region is characterized by significant snowfall in winter, especially in the higher areas, which has been decreasing in recent years due to climate change. Aosta valley also has numerous glaciers, although their size is diminishing over time.

Potential spaces for coworking (Aosta Valley)

According to ISTAT, in 2020, the region recorded a 15.5% rate of workers who used remote work, a significantly higher figure compared to the national average (8.7%). This suggests that remote work is a widespread phenomenon in the region. The creation of coworking spaces could represent an interesting solution for workers seeking a peaceful work environment with access to professional infrastructure and services. Furthermore, thanks to its scenic beauty, Aosta Valley could be the ideal destination for remote work surrounded by nature. Currently, for those who wish to work remotely, the region hosts the following spaces: Aostaworkingspace, which includes two locations (one in Aosta, specifically in the "Centro direzionale Le Miroir," and the other at the "Centro Direzionale La Rotonda"). These locations provide physical and virtual offices and a meeting room suitable for various types of events such as conferences, workshops, meetings, corporate events, and temporary showrooms. In addition to these two locations, there is a large coworking space in Quart called Ecoworking. More and more hotels, B&Bs, and other types of accommodations are offering specific services for remote workers, such as high-speed Wi-Fi,

dedicated workspaces in rooms and meeting rooms.

Attractiveness for tourist (Aosta Valley and the Unité Évançon)

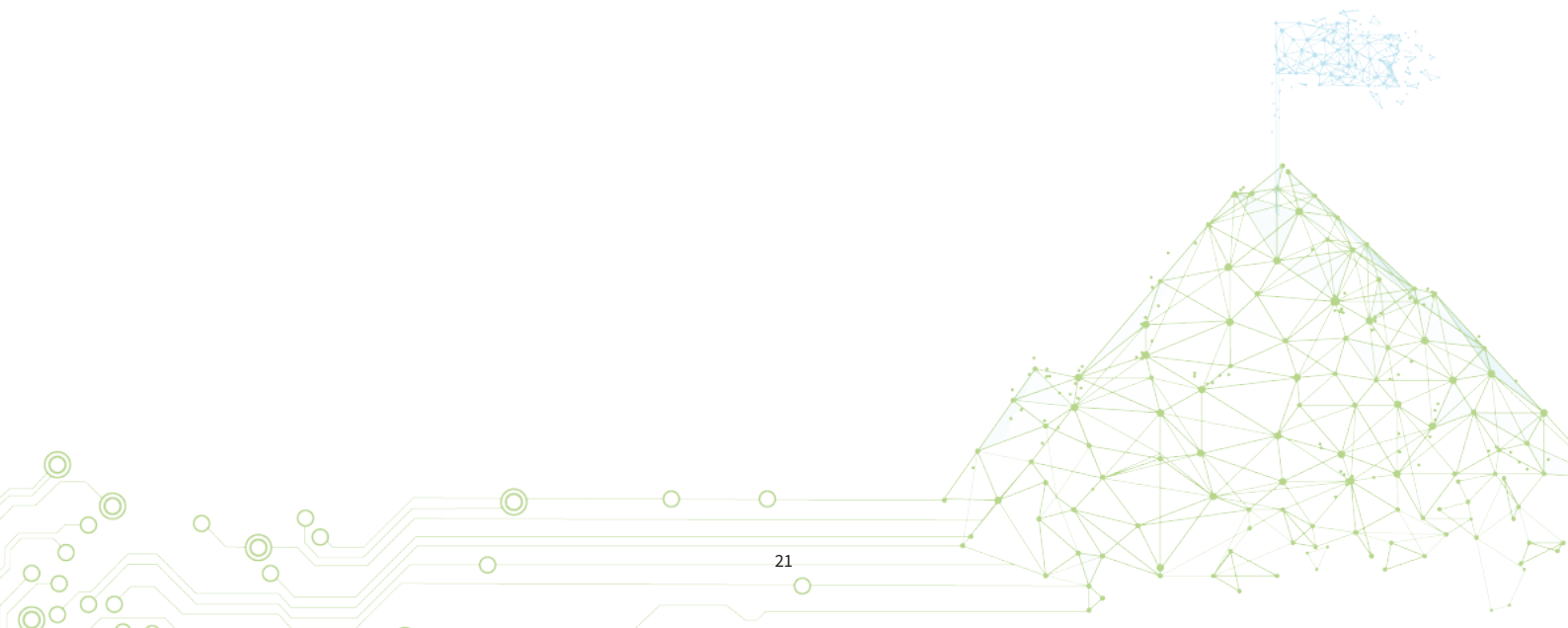
With 27 areas designated as Sites of Community Importance and 5 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Aosta Valley is the European region with the highest concentration of protected areas. With its mountainous landscape and abundant natural resources, it offers numerous outdoor activities such as hiking, trekking, skiing, and climbing. Furthermore, it is known for its rich history and cultural heritage, with numerous castles, churches, and other historical monuments scattered throughout the region. The Unité Évançon and the Val d'Ayas encompass a land of glaciers and vast forests, villages, and castles. The waters of the Évançon stream divide this valley from Verrès to Champoluc. Challant-Saint-Victor and Challant-Saint-Anselme are the main centers in the lower part of the valley, from where you can admire the enchanting environment of the Becche di Challant and the Graines Castle, which provides access to Brusson. Brusson, dominated by Mount Zerbion, is ideal for hikes, during which you can enjoy its alleys, beautiful medieval residences, and, above all, the numerous fountains.

Champoluc, from where you can admire the Monte Rosa, is the starting point for excursions, climbing, and skiing slopes, depending on the season. Besides its wonderful natural heritage, the town combines an interesting historical heritage linked to Walser culture. The heart of the village is the parish church of Sant'Andrea, the patron saint of the town. Antagnod is reached after a few minutes of scenic ascent that offers breathtaking views of the upper valley and the Monte Rosa. It is here that the massif presents its most beautiful

view. Antagnod is a land of traditional activities, including livestock farming and wood processing (e.g. the sabot). At the entrance to the Ayas Valley, you'll find Verrès, which is the largest municipality in the region and the location where the Unité Évançon is based. The history of this village is connected to its castle, which serves as an example of a feudal fortress used as a residence by the Challant family, a noble Valdôtaine family, and their court. The castle also provides a grand backdrop for the historical carnival, which every year celebrates four days of historical reenactments, dinners, and dances at the castle, as well as parades in the town center. In Verrès, you can also admire the Collegiate Church of Saint-Gilles (a complex that includes the monastery and the parish church built between the 11th and 18th centuries) and the Murasses (buildings surrounded by a city wall, once used as stables for the Challant family and now housing the Unité Évançon and the district library).

France

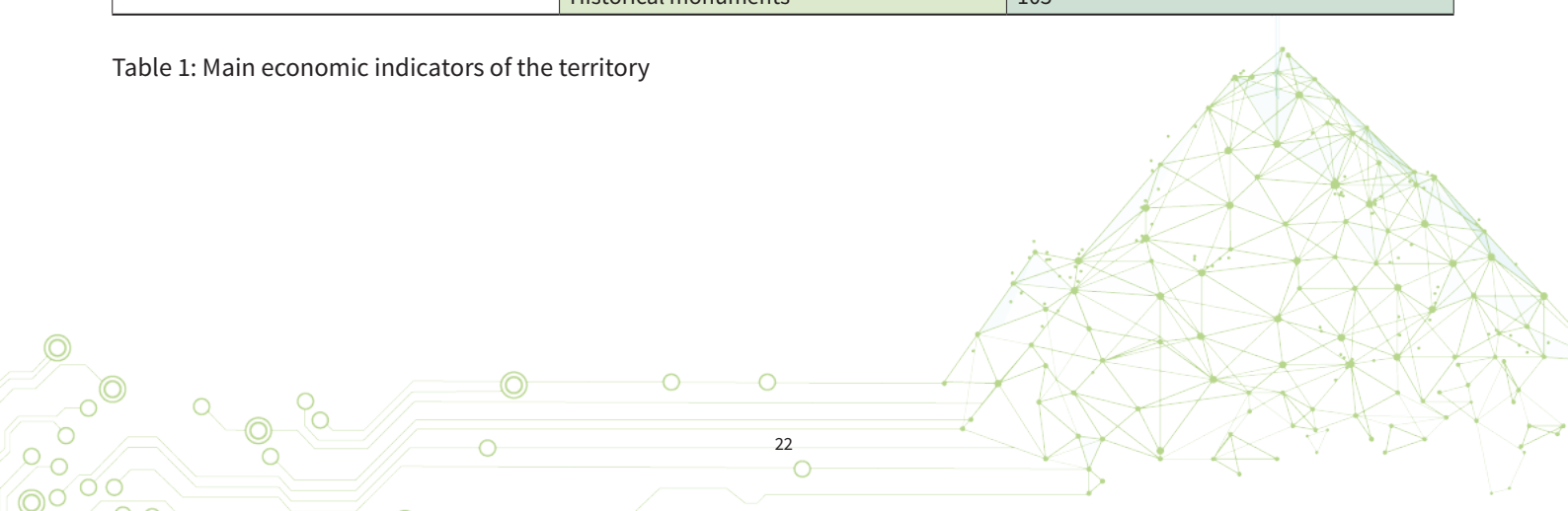
Located in the south-est of France, the region called *Pays du Gran Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyra* it's 36 municipalities grouped in 3 inter-municipals communities for a total of 35279 inhabitants and a 2 138 km² area. The table below presents some of the main indicator for the territory regarding 10 topics: population dynamics and characteristics, main economic indicators, labor market dynamics, jobs and economic activities, technological infrastructures, services present in the area, geographical features, potential spaces for coworking, public laws and HR policies and attractiveness for tourists. Then, each point is explored in greater depth. The presentation of the study carried out in France is divided in the following sections:



Characteristics of the target area: Pays du Gran Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras

Topic	Indicator	Value/Rate/Tendency
Population dynamics and characteristics	Active population	85%
	Job pluriactivity rate	50%
	Population age	Increasing
Main economic indicators	Second homes	80%
	PIB	30 864 € per inhabitants
	Poverty rate	13.4%
Labor market dynamics	Tourism jobs among others	30%
	Evolution of the agricultural sector	Decreasing
	Unemployment rate	8.8%
Jobs and economic activities	Main source of income	Economic activity(from Tourism)
	Seasonality of work	Strong
	Opportunity for development	High
Technological infrastructures	Satisfaction of internet users	50%
	Regional Citizen Internet Area	12
	Fiber investments	Reached 80M euros
Services present in the area	Quality of public transportation	Bad
	Training offer	To be increased
	Accessibility to care	Complicated
Geographical features	Altitude	An average altitude above 1,800 m
	Snow level	Decreasing
	Population density	15 inhabitants per km2
Potential spaces for coworking	Vacant apartments and houses	5%
	Number of existing coworking spaces	Low
	People from the region who find it difficult to work from home	53%
Public laws and HR policies	Remote working agreement nature	Voluntary
	What companies should provide to remote workers	Financial contribution and maintenance for equipment
	Coworking spaces statues	ERT/ERP
Attractiveness for tourists	Protected parks	2 (1 of them is national)
	Sport diversity	High
	Historical monuments	105

Table 1: Main economic indicators of the territory



Population dynamics and characteristics

This region shows a strong demographic dynamism and 85% of the population is active. However, half population had to diversify their competences because of employment seasonality. Generally, working for tourism companies, they're not high graduated but specialized in specific tourism activities. In contrast, graduated young people tends to leave the region for bigger cities to find more qualified jobs just after school and even if some of them return older, there is a lack of active youths in this area. That is why, for several years now, the population age is increasing, and the number of retired people is too. However, current new inhabitants, coming from other regions, can be high qualified as remote workers working for big firms or healthcare workers but also season workers. They generally came to increase their quality of life or to raise their child in a better environment.

Main economic indicators

The region is not poor with a GDP of 30 864 € per inhabitants. Consequently, the poverty rate (13,4%) is under regional's and national's levels. However, in this area, people usually fight to find a place to live. You must know that 80% of houses and apartments are second homes. This, and other facts as region landlocked situation, participates to the increasing of rents, houses prices but also food's and energy's costs. For example, domestic energy expenditure exceeded €2,600 per household and per year in the region, while in France, this expenditure amounted to an average of €1,500.

Labor market dynamics

The *Pays du grand Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras* is an active area with 8.8% of unemployment. This rate shows that, even if the agricultural sector which was the most important in the past is decreasing, the current tourism activity maintains good employment rates for the region. In fact, 30% of the area jobs depend on tourism activity. The region managed a transition of activity from an agricultural one to a tourism one. And if new generations had to get use to this new labor market dynamics, it seems that they have reached this goal.

Jobs and economic activities

Economic activity is the main source of income for residents - with services - while it is marked by a strong seasonality (winter and summer) which might be inconvenient for individuals who wish to live in the mountains all year round. This territory also has a dense and dynamic associative fabric, important forest resources, and many artisan businesses. All these characteristics present opportunities for development to be supported and enriched to offer this territory a more diversified and balanced economy, a successful energy transition, and better living conditions for its holdings (accessibility, quality housing, jobs, leisure, etc.).

Technological infrastructures

In the region, optical fiber arrived in 2015 and is still spread-

ing thanks to 80M euros of investments. With 2 businesses digital incubators, new telehealth services and 12 regional citizen internet areas, the *Pays du grand Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras* tries to participate to digital transition of his companies and citizens. On another side, only 50% of local internet users are satisfied of the quality of the internet service. They still encounter difficulties with internet speed, the lack of e-service offered by municipalities, etc.

Services present in the area

With no airports, few train and bus, the *Pays du grand Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras* remains a landlocked territory more because of the mediocrity of its communication infrastructures than because of its geographical location. Also, public services tend to be more centralized into big cities far from the area. For example, the nearest university campus is 1h far from the region. Regarding healthcare services they are low in the area because of medical desertification. For example, in some municipalities it's quite impossible to find a new family doctor if you look for one.

Geographical features

The territory is not highly occupied with 15 inhabitants per km². Climatically, the narrowing of the valleys above *Embrun* facilitates the rise of warm winds from the Provence to the foot of *Pelvoux* mountain. The territory therefore receives very little rain and a strong sunshine which makes the south-facing slopes almost steppe. 1500- 2000m above sea level, the climate cools and the ground are often snowy, but the snow limit eternal is higher than in the Northern Alps. That is why snow level has been decreasing for years.

Potential spaces for coworking

In 2020 a survey aimed to study remote working conditions for *Pays du grand Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras* inhabitants. This survey showed that 53% of the remote workers of this area find it difficult to work from their home. The reasons can be the presence of other family members at home or the difficulty to stay focused. Unfortunately, only few coworking spaces already exist in this area. However, with 5% of vacant apartments and houses and a real desire to promote remote working from deciders, it seems that the region shows a great potential for coworking spaces creation.

Public laws and HR policies

Since 2020, the "Accord National Interprofessionnel" gives companies and their workers a setting frame for remote working implementation. For example, it provides companies with a list of things they should do to make remote workers comfortable at home in providing them with equipment or maintenance services. It also says that remote working should stay a voluntary way of work. Finally, coworking spaces are legally companies.

Attractiveness for tourists

With two protected parks (one national, the *Ecrins*, 76,776 ha, located in the *Pays du Grand Briançonnais*; the other regional, the *Queyras*, 66,330 ha, located in the *Guillestrois-Queyras*), the *Pays du Grand Briançonnais*, *Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras* region offers a nice place to stay or live with regards to its high level of quality of life. Also, with 105 historical monuments and a medieval city, the enhancement of his heritage largely ensures the cultural offer on the territory. In contrast, living culture is little present daily, except seasonally, and poorly coordinated. To attract people, this region can also count on a high diversity of sportive practices (ski, bike, alpinism, canoe, etc.).

Austria

Characteristics of the target area: Municipality of Doren

The municipality Doren is located in the region Bregenzerwald. The Bregenzerwald is one of eight territories in Vorarlberg and consists of 24 municipalities. In total 32.336 people have their main residence in the Bregenzerwald and are spread on 550km². Since Doren is rather small often there were not enough data regarding just the municipality. Therefore, data about either the region Bregenzerwald or the whole of Vorarlberg has been collected. Nevertheless, the same dynamics apply to Doren, the Bregenzerwald and Vorarlberg.

Topic	Region	Indicator	Value/Rate/Tendency		
Population dynamics	Vorarlberg	Population absolute main residence	405,000 (2022) (<i>Land Vorarlberg – Bevölkerungsstatistik</i> , n.d.)		
	Bregenzerwald	Population absolute main residence	32,336		
	Bregenzerwald	Population by age	0 < 15	5,590	17.6%
			15 < 60	19,131	60.2%
			>= 60	7,076	22.3%
Work	Vorarlberg	Working population Employed population Unemployed population	202,890 167,196 11,625 -> 6.5% unemployment rate (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)		
	Vorarlberg	Cross-border commuter	17,076 (CH and FL)		
	Bregenzerwald	Companies Worksite Jobs (workstations)	3,064 3,351 12,101		
	Bregenzerwald	Three biggest sectors	Trade and crafts, tourism, commerce (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)		
Economic indicators	Vorarlberg	GDP per capita	51,700 € (2021) (<i>Vorarlberg - BIP pro Kopf 2022</i> , n.d.)		
	Vorarlberg	Economic growth	2021 +4.1% (Basisdaten.Pdf, n.d.)		
	Vorarlberg	Start-ups in 2021	1,607 (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)		
	Vorarlberg	Overnight stays tourists	7,953,122 summer season 21 and winter season 21/22 (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)		
	Vorarlberg	Production of material goods	Material goods production value per inhabitant: 36,450€		
	Vorarlberg	Industry	Strong in machinery and metal products (62%)		
Technological infrastructure	Vorarlberg	Satisfaction of available connections (land line, cellular, ...)	Varying: >50% are satisfied <50% are partially or not at all satisfied -> some municipalities are clearly undersupplied (Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung Allgemeine Wirtschaftsangelegenheiten, 2022)		

Geographical features	Vorarlberg Bregenzerwald	Area Area	2602km ² 550km ² (divided into Vorderer and Hinterer Bregenzerwald) (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)
	Bregenzerwald	Mountain	Biggest mountain 2,649 m Braunarlspitze
	Doren	Elevation	711 m (lowest point 460m, highest point 960m)
	Vorarlberg	Alps Waters Forrest	23% 2.8% 36% (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)
Housing	Vorarlberg	New completed dwelling houses Approved dwelling houses	953 (2020) 3,279 (2020)
	Vorarlberg	Rent	686.5€ per month -> highest amount in whole Austria (federal capital Vienna 606.7€ per month) (Österreich - Miete Hauptmietwohnungen nach Bundesland 2022, n.d.)
	Vorarlberg	Ownership ratio	56.9% 35.2% (Österreich - Miet- und Eigentumsquote nach Bundesland 2022, n.d.)
	Vorarlberg	Cost of housing	People in the region spent an average of 3,250€ per month -> 24.4% of it are used for housing and energy (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)
Public transport	Austria	Preferred mode of transport	66% car, 20% plane, 10% train, 3% Bus, 2% other
	Vorarlberg	Public transport	14% of transport performance 104 million passengers 2016 →Extreme increase in general (e.g plus of 26,500 sold one-year tickets and a plus of 44% student tickets) (Verkehrsberichte, n.d.)

Geographical indicators

Vorarlberg is located in the very west of Austria with borders to three countries: Germany, Switzerland and Lichtenstein (external border of the EU to Switzerland). Size as well as population wise Vorarlberg is the second smallest state of the country (2602km²). 23 percent of the region are alps and 36 percent are forest being the reason why the state has some particularly high populated areas (mainly the lowlands). The municipality Doren (550km²) is located in the region Bregenzerwald in the more alpine part of Vorarlberg. Its village centre lies at an elevation of 711 meters.

Population

Population growth in Vorarlberg is forecasted to rise around

6.6 percent until 2025 mounting to a total of approximately 430,400 inhabitants. However, the growth concentrates on the regions Rheintal, Walgau and Leiblachtal, which are Vorarlberg's biggest lowlands. Furthermore, these are already highly populated areas. Outstanding growth is forecasted for the district Dornbirn and Feldkirch. Some mountain areas, also the Bregenzerwald, will experience a slight below-average growth (Sonnweber, 2022).

The population in the Bregenzerwald is distributed as follows: 17.6% are kids to the age of 15 (excluding 15), 60.2% are adults from the age of 15 to 60 which represents 19,131 people. Currently 22.3% of the population in the region are elders from the age of 60 (including 60) (Sonnweber, 2022).

Labour market

The whole state Vorarlberg has a working population of 202,890 people. Since the state borders to three other countries many people also commute, mainly to Switzerland and Lichtenstein (in total 17,076 people) (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022). The unemployment rate is currently rather low with 6.5% (11,625 people) and in the region Bludenz-Bregenzerwald the rate is even lower at 4.1% (*Arbeitsmarktdaten Österreich » aktuelle Berichte | AMS, n.d.; Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022*). Even though many political steps have already been taken in order to create a more women friendly labour market, the unemployment rate of women is still slightly higher than the one of men. In comparison to the whole of Austria, Vorarlberg has the biggest gender gap (on average a difference of 605€). In general the labour market is despite the current political and economic situation robust and will likely not change drastically, yet making forecasts is rather difficult at the moment (*Arbeitsmarktdaten Österreich » aktuelle Berichte | AMS, n.d.*). A trend that is steadily developing not only in Vorarlberg but the whole of Austria is the growing number of older people, the wave of retirements in the upcoming years (especially from the baby boomer generation) and the low-birthrate generations that are in or enter the labour market. This creates an imbalance in the labour system which not only makes it difficult for the working population to compensate this uneven distribution of people but also contributes negatively to the skill shortage. All these factors call for changes and developments in the current labour market. (*Arbeitsmarktdaten Österreich » aktuelle Berichte | AMS, n.d.*) Regarding the possibility to work from home „Homeoffice“, Vorarlberg still does not offer many opportunities. After the pandemic only 19.1% of employees had the opportunity to work from home (*Standort-Rating 2023 AK Vorarlberg, n.d.*). There are huge differences however depending on the educational attainment, the higher the qualification the higher the possibilities for remote work. However, remote work possibilities in Vorarlberg are significantly lower than in the rest of Austria (*Standort-Rating 2023 AK Vorarlberg, n.d.*). In general Austria and especially Vorarlberg have a huge backlog demand when it comes to facilitating work from home.

Economic indicators

The state Vorarlberg has a strong economy with a GDP per capita of 51,700€ (2021) (Vorarlberg - BIP pro Kopf 2022, n.d.). During 2021 around 1,600 start-ups have been registered representing the strong drive for innovation and development in the region. Regarding the huge difficulties because of the global pandemic Covid-19, the values of economic growth in Vorarlberg are rather good with a growth rate in 2022 of 5,2 percent (Rücker et al., 2022, p. 7). The most influential and strongest branches currently are trade and crafts, industry, commerce, and tourism (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022). The region Bregenzerwald follows a similar pattern only with a less strong industry, since the big industrial companies and factories are first and foremost located in the lowlands. More important for the Bregenzerwald however is the tourism industry that profits from the summer as well as the winter season. In

the whole of Vorarlberg, a total of 7,95 million overnight stays during the season of 21/22 have been recorded. The region however is very diverse and does not only depend on tourism. Especially the production of material goods such as machinery and metal products constitute an important factor in the industry. (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022)

Housing market and income/spending

The housing market in Vorarlberg is steadily growing because of the high demand for more living space. In 2020 alone 953 dwelling houses have been completed and more than 3,200 new projects have been approved (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022). Because of the strong economy and the proximity to Switzerland and Lichtenstein (fostering e.g. many commuters), Vorarlberg is an expensive state to live in. This gets reflected among others in the high prices for rent. Vorarlberg has the highest costs for rent in the whole of Austria with an amount of 686.5€ per month. In comparison to that the rent in the federal capital Vienna amounts to 606.7€ per month (*Österreich - Miete Hauptmietwohnungen nach Bundesland 2022, n.d.*). The prices for houses in Vorarlberg are even twice as high as the average in Austria (*Standort-Rating 2023 AK Vorarlberg, n.d.*). Living in Vorarlberg therefore requires a good income in order to be able to pay for the high living costs. On average people spend 3,250€ per month of which they use 24% only for housing and energy (Mitterlechner & Weber, 2022). Another huge matter of expense are groceries and beverages which account for 20.4% of a households monthly spendings.

Infrastructure & Connection

Vorarlberg has its own strategic plan for developing and evolving the infrastructure for landline and cellular network. According to the Breitbandatlas, an open government dataset, Vorarlberg has a very heterogeneous mains supply. Especially in the highly populated regions Rheintal and Walgau the infrastructure and connection are good. However, in less populated, more mountainous and rural regions land line as well as cellular network infrastructure decrease (see figure 1 and 2) Taking a closer look on the region Bregenzerwald two slightly different pictures arise. The landline connection varies in the region from the highest rate >1.000 Mbit/s to the lowest rate <10 Mbit/s. Overall, the land line infrastructure however is quite comprehensive (annex figure 1). The cellular network supply in the Bregenzerwald is more or less comprehensive. More than half of the region as a radio reception between >100 Mbit/s and <1.000 Mbit/s. However, there are some rather big spots in the region that exhibit only the lowest Mbit/s rate of less than 10Mbit per second (annex figure 2). Both the state Vorarlberg and the municipalities will work together with the mobile network operators in order to enable the earliest possible area coverage with 5G in urban and especially also in rural areas. According to the Broadband Atlas, Vorarlberg has a high broadband supply in the Rheindelta and Walgau regions. However, in rural areas, the broadband supply is lower (Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung, Abteilung Allgemeine Wirtschaftsangelegenheiten, 2022).

Land Line Vorarlberg

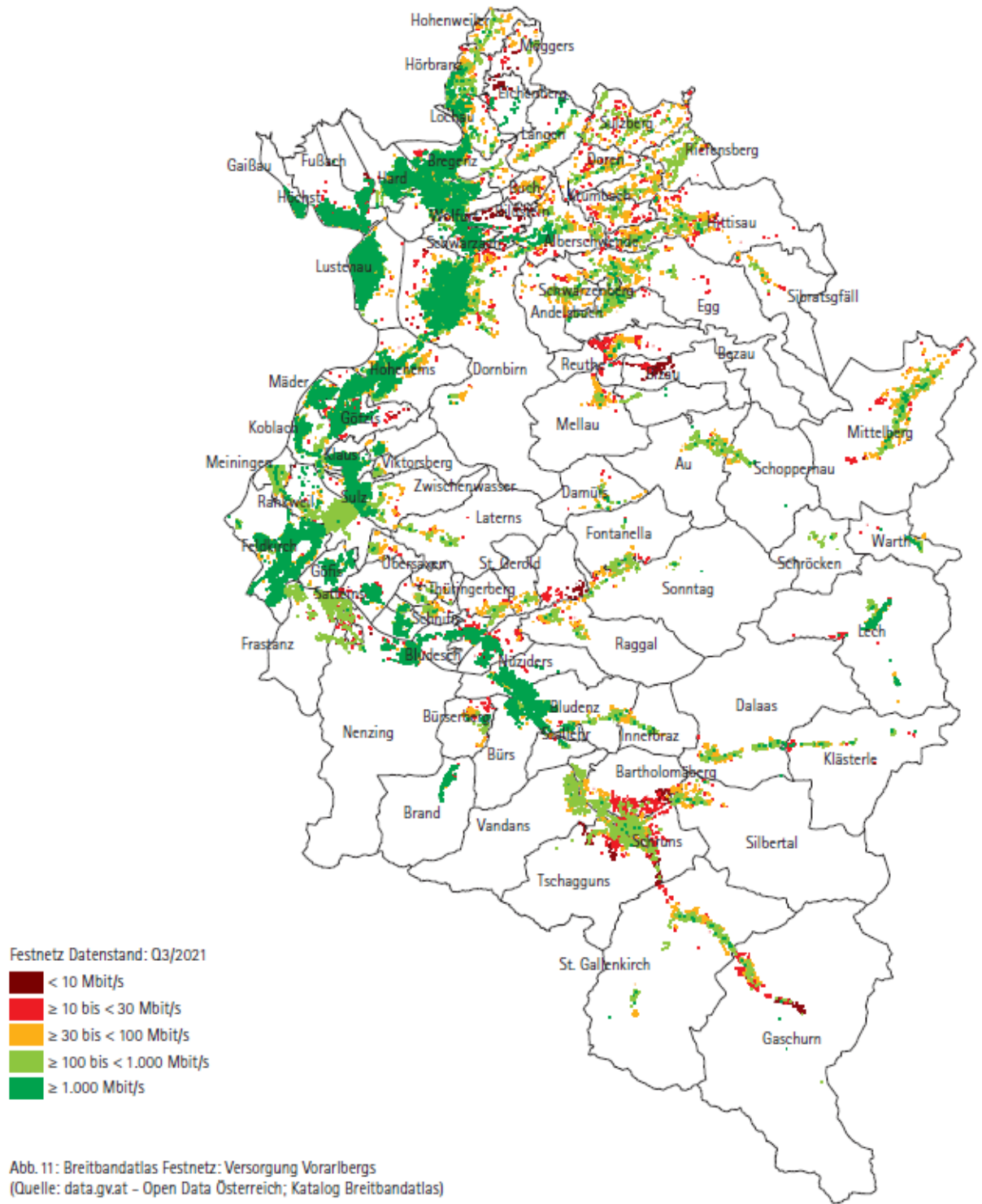


Figure 1: Land Line Vorarlberg
Original source of data: data.gv.at – Open Data Österreich;
Katalog Breitbandatlas
Source Illustration: (Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung
Allgemeine Wirtschaftsangelegenheiten, 2022)

Cellular Network Vorarlberg

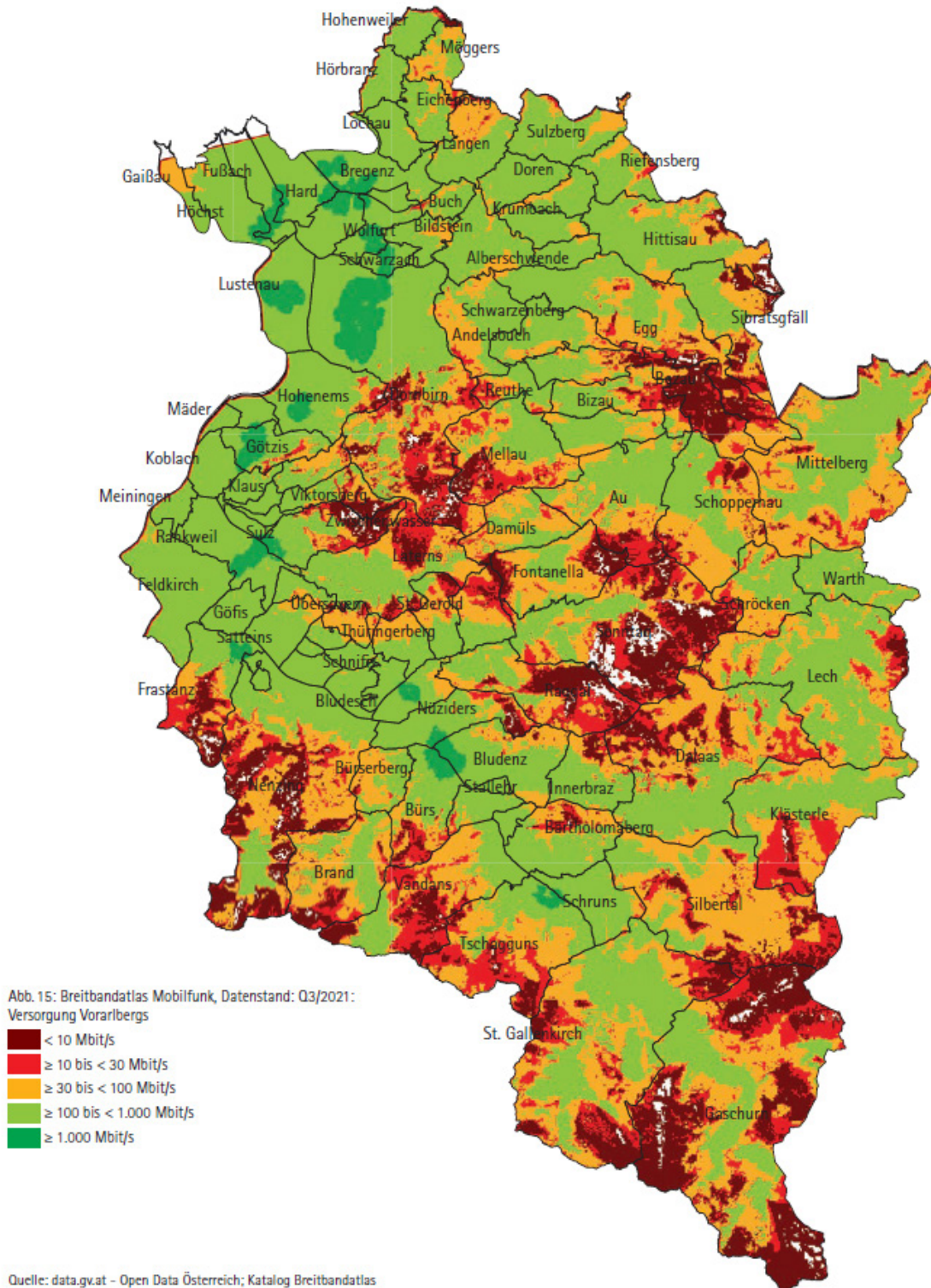


Figure 2: Cellular Network Vorarlberg
Original source of data: data.gv.at – Open Data Österreich;
Katalog Breitbandatlas
Source Illustration: (Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung
Allgemeine Wirtschaftsangelegenheiten, 2022)

COMPARING THE COUNTRIES

The three countries mentioned in the initial passage (Italy, France, and Austria) share some common characteristics and challenges:

Characteristics

Mountainous Terrain: All three countries have regions characterized by mountainous terrain. The Aosta Valley in Italy, the Pays du Gran Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyra in France, and the Bregenzerwald in Austria are all situated in mountainous areas.

Tourism-Dependent Economies: These regions heavily rely on tourism as a key economic driver. They attract tourists due to their natural beauty, outdoor activities, cultural heritage, and historical sites. Tourism provides job opportunities, and the seasonality of the work is a common feature in these mountainous regions.

High Cost of Living: The cost of living in these mountainous regions tends to be higher compared to other areas in their respective countries. Factors such as second homes, high energy and housing costs, and limited real estate supply contribute to the elevated cost of living.

Demographic Trends: All three regions face demographic challenges, including an aging population and a decreasing number of young residents. Younger generations may leave these areas in search of better job opportunities in larger cities, while new inhabitants may move to these regions to improve their quality of life.

Challenges in Healthcare Services: All three regions experience difficulties in providing adequate healthcare services, with some areas facing medical desertification. The centralized nature of healthcare services in larger cities can be a challenge for residents in more remote areas.

Technological Infrastructure: While there have been efforts to improve technological infrastructure, such as the expansion of optical fiber, residents in all three regions may still encounter issues with internet quality and access to e-services.

Interest in Remote Work: The regions have shown an interest in promoting remote work and coworking spaces. In all areas, a significant percentage of remote workers find it challenging to work from their homes, making the creation of coworking spaces a potential solution.

Natural Beauty and Outdoor Activities: All three regions are known for their natural beauty, protected parks, and a wide range of outdoor activities, making them attractive destinations for tourists and remote workers seeking a high quality of life.

Cultural Heritage: The regions boast rich historical and cultural heritage, with numerous historical monuments, castles, and medieval towns. This cultural richness adds to their attractiveness for residents and tourists.

Commonalities and Challenges regarding remote work

The three regions – Pays du Gran Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras in France, Doren in Austria, and Bregenzerwald in Vorarlberg, Austria – share several commonalities and challenges regarding remote work, as well as potential solutions:

Commonalities:

Challenging Internet Connectivity: All three regions face issues related to internet connectivity. They may have undersupplied or varying internet services, which can be a significant challenge for remote work. A potential solution is to advocate for improvements in broadband and mobile network infrastructure, especially in underserved areas.

Seasonal Work Patterns: These regions often rely on seasonal industries, such as tourism. Remote workers may face variations in their workloads, and this could lead to challenges with income stability. One solution is to diversify your skillset or income sources to accommodate these seasonal shifts.

Limited Coworking Spaces: These areas may have limited coworking spaces, making it difficult for remote workers to find suitable work environments. A solution could be the development of more coworking spaces, taking advantage of vacant apartments and houses, as seen in Pays du Gran Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras.

High Housing Costs: The cost of housing is often higher in these regions due to their scenic locations. Remote workers should anticipate higher living expenses and consider this when planning their budgets. Solutions include seeking more affordable housing options or working with companies that provide housing subsidies for remote employees.

Problems and Challenges:

Communication and Collaboration: Remote work often involves collaboration with colleagues or clients. In regions with limited public transportation and remote workspaces, face-to-face interactions can be challenging. Innovative solutions may include the use of virtual reality or augmented reality for more immersive remote meetings.

Work-Life Balance: The stunning natural landscapes and outdoor activities in these regions may make it difficult to

maintain a work-life balance. Remote workers may find it hard to “switch off” work mode. Solutions include setting clear boundaries and schedules and creating dedicated workspaces.

Career Progression: The lack of local career opportunities and networking events can hinder career progression. Solutions include seeking online professional development opportunities, attending industry conferences virtually, and joining remote work-focused professional groups.

Isolation and Loneliness: The isolation of remote work can be compounded in regions with a lower population density. To address this, consider joining online communities, engaging in local cultural events, and participating in remote work-related webinars.

Ideas and possible Solutions

Digital Skills Training: Encourage local initiatives or government support for digital skills training. This can help locals become more qualified for remote work opportunities, as seen in Pays du Gran Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras.

Promote Remote Work: Local governments can promote the benefits of remote work and attract remote workers

by highlighting the regions’ unique attractions, such as the high quality of life, natural beauty, and cultural heritage.

Tech Investments: Invest in technology infrastructure and digital services to improve internet connectivity. This includes fiber optic network expansion and increasing network coverage.

Housing Initiatives: Consider creating affordable housing projects or offering housing subsidies to remote workers as an incentive to live and work in the region.

Partnerships with Companies: Local businesses and communities can collaborate with companies that offer remote work opportunities to create mutually beneficial arrangements. This might involve promoting local tourism to remote workers or providing incentives for remote employees to settle in the region.

Balanced Development: Regions can work on a balanced approach to development, aiming to boost the local economy and job opportunities while preserving the natural beauty and cultural heritage.

In summary, while these regions share common challenges with remote work, they also present opportunities for innovation and solutions. By addressing connectivity, promoting the region, and fostering digital skills, remote work can be a viable and fulfilling option in these picturesque areas

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