MOVING
MOuntain Valorisation through INterconnectedness and Green growth

D7.1 POLICY ROADMAP:

Building a More Favourable Enabling Environment for "*Unlocking the Power*" of Mountain Product Value Chains

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Acronyms

AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System
ANC	Area with natural or other area-specific constraint
BB	Policy Building Block
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CMO	Common Market Organisation
COOP	Cooperation interventions of the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EIP-AGRI	European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
EEA	European Environment Agency
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ENVCLIM	Environmental, climate-related and other management commitment-related interventions of the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
EU	European Union
EUSALP	EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
GI	Geographical Indication
GIAHS	Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems
HEU	EU Horizon Europe framework programme for research and innovation
INVEST	Investment interventions of the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans
IPARD	EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
JTF	Just Transition Fund
KNOW	Knowledge exchange and dissemination of information interventions of the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale
LFA	Less Favoured Area
LIFE+	EU funding programme for projects contributing to environmental policy
LTVRA	European Union's Long-term vision for rural areas
MAP	Multi-actor platform
MPVC	Mountain Product Value Chain
MS	Member State
NAS/NAP	National Climate Adaptation Strategy/ National Climate Adaptation Plan
NBS	Nature-Based Solutions

NEMOR	Network for European Mountain Research
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OG	EIP-AGRI Operational Group
OQT	Optional Quality Term
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
PG	Producer Group
PGI	Protected Geographical Indication
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
PO	Producer Organisation
S3	Smart Specialisation Strategy
SCO	Simplified Cost Option
SES	Socio-ecological system(s)
SGI	Services of General Interest
SSP	Science-Society-Policy (interface)
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TIA	Territorial Impact Assessment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VC	Value Chain

Executive Summary

The MOVING Policy Roadmap is a strategic framework designed to help unlock the potential of Mountain Product Value Chains (MPVCs) to enhance the sustainability and resilience of mountain areas. The Roadmap is an output of the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation project, *Mountain Valorisation Through Interconnectedness and Green Growth* (MOVING).

The MOVING Policy Roadmap is a dynamic tool aimed at guiding policymakers, public authorities, civil society organizations, and researchers in shaping policies that support the sustainable development of mountain regions. The Roadmap's ultimate goal is to support the creation of a more favourable policy environment that helps MPVC actors leverage the distinctive natural, social, and cultural assets of mountain areas to foster economic development, environmental sustainability, and social well-being.

The MOVING project adopted a participatory approach, integrating socio-ecological system (SES) concepts with value chain analysis to evaluate how MPVCs can balance socio-economic development with natural resource conservation. This approach involved extensive stakeholder engagement, including 23 regional case studies and the involvement of approximately 1,000 stakeholders. The findings were used to co-create a set of 30 policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the positive impacts of MPVCs on the sustainability and resilience of mountain territories.

The Roadmap is structured around eight Policy Building Blocks, each addressing critical aspects of the inter-relationships between MPVC and mountain area development:

1. **Better Territorial Governance, Regulation & Public Services**: This block emphasizes the importance of effective governance as a foundation for sustainable development. It calls for improved territorial governance, better regulation, and enhanced public services tailored to the specific needs of mountain areas.
2. **Balancing Ecology & Society**: Focused on achieving a balance between ecological integrity and social well-being, this block advocates for integrated policy approaches that consider the socio-ecological dynamics of mountain regions.
3. **Fostering Collaboration & Networking**: This block highlights the need for fostering collaboration and networking among MPVC actors to enhance their influence and cohesion, ultimately contributing to the resilience and sustainability of mountain areas.
4. **Growing Skills, Knowledge & Innovation**: Recognizing the importance of human capital, this block calls for investments in education, training, and innovation to empower mountain communities and improve their capacity to engage in sustainable development.
5. **Ensuring Mountain Livelihoods**: This block focuses on revitalizing mountain communities by providing good jobs, stable incomes, and improving working conditions, thereby making mountain regions more attractive for residents and newcomers.
6. **Promoting Mountain Product Quality**: Emphasizing the importance of quality in mountain products, this block supports initiatives that enhance the recognition and marketability of mountain products, ensuring fair access to markets for producers.

7. **Sustaining the Use of Local Assets**: This block advocates for the sustainable use of local resources, ensuring that mountain areas can continue to provide valuable ecosystem services and maintain their cultural heritage.
8. **Preparing & Adapting for Change**: Addressing the need for adaptability in the face of environmental and social changes, this block calls for policies that enhance the resilience of mountain communities to sudden shocks and long-term trends.

The Roadmap outlines a flexible, context-specific approach to policy implementation, recognizing that mountain regions across Europe are diverse and require tailored solutions. It focuses on the use of over 100 Policy Leverage Points — strategic points within mountain socio-ecological systems where targeted interventions can drive positive change. These leverage points are linked to each of the recommendations clustered within Policy Building Blocks, thereby providing a coherent menu of potential for policymakers at all levels to support the development of MPVCs.

The Roadmap also integrates an "Intervention Logic" that connects the specific needs of mountain communities with potential policy actions. This logic is structured around six steps, from assessing local challenges and opportunities to constructing effective policy mixes and monitoring outcomes for continuous adaptation.

The MOVING Policy Roadmap provides a comprehensive and actionable framework for enhancing the sustainability and resilience of mountain regions through the strategic development of Mountain Product Value Chains. By fostering better governance, collaboration, innovation, and the sustainable use of local resources, the Roadmap aims to create thriving, resilient mountain communities that can adapt to and flourish in the face of future challenges.

1 MOVING Policy Roadmap: Scope and Ambition



1.1 What is a Policy Roadmap?

Policy Roadmaps are increasingly used as strategic tools for structuring, planning and communicating proposed actions and initiatives involving public policy (Miedzinski et al. 2019).

Roadmaps are action-orientated with a clear 'destination', timeline and relevant milestones. They tend not to focus on rigid policy recommendations but offer a flexible approach to supporting transformation and other development processes, especially those involving multiple policy domains. This is very relevant, for example, in the context of mountain area development.

Specific motivations for working with a Policy Roadmap include their suitability for:

- Delivering guidance to assist policymakers and other relevant officials in navigating specific complexities of policy development and/or implementation that need to be overcome to achieve a set of policy objectives or other goals over a specified period.
- Realizing visions and strategic options over extended timeframes, such as those developed through Participatory Foresight Exercises. Roadmaps can be both a) aspirational by stimulating positive expectations and b) operational by indicating how to facilitate the future they depict.
- Providing a structured, but dynamic framework, for decision-makers to work collaboratively towards the successful implementation of policies. For example, Policy Roadmaps are commonly used to facilitate consultative processes with key stakeholders to ensure they are informed, to gather input from them, to build their support, and to address their concerns.

Finally, 'roadmaps' offer a strong and simple metaphor for engaging local actors and stakeholders in addressing questions such as: *"where do we want to go, how do we want to get there, and when?"*

1.2 What is the purpose of the MOVING Policy Roadmap?

The preparation of the MOVING Policy Roadmap has involved synthesising the full range of the MOVING project's results, interpreting them in a contemporary policy context, and co-creating (with project partners and other stakeholders) a coherent framework of concrete policy recommendations for *"unlocking the power of mountain product value chains"* to enhance the sustainability and resilience of mountain areas.

The Roadmap is built upon recognition of the general need to **progress much further and faster** in embracing **alternative perspectives** on rural development that go beyond rural disadvantage to promote innovative rural actions that identify and exploit the opportunities inherent in rural areas and within rural communities (Dax and Machold 2024). This is a general issue but is **especially relevant** to the valorisation of the very place-specific assets of peripheral regions such as mountains.

The Policy Roadmap is **targeted at a specialist readership** consisting of:

- **Public authorities** at the EU, national and sub-national levels, including regional and local authorities that have legislative or programming powers
- **Civil society organisations and mountain stakeholder networks**, especially those advocating for the sustainable development of mountain areas
- **Researchers** working on similar issues[1]

The Roadmap aims to **build a body of informed opinion** amongst this readership regarding:

1. A compelling narrative for more targeted and integrated support via stronger local governance of mountain product value chains as agents of positive change for mountain territories;
2. Practical operational guidance on opportunities for the SHORT- to MEDIUM-TERM use of currently available policy instruments (2021-2027) to create adaptable and flexible policy interventions that address current needs and opportunities for improving the contribution of mountain product value chains to the sustainability and resilience of mountain areas, and;
3. Relevant recommendations for LONGER-TERM term improvements in future policies (to 2050) for improving the contribution of mountain product value chains to the sustainability and resilience of mountain areas

The Roadmap is not targeted at more grassroots 'mountain product practitioners' (producers, businesses, community-based organisations, rural development and innovation advisors etc.), although its content may be of interest to them. Instead, the Roadmap is accompanied by the **MOVING 'Quick Start' Policy Design Toolkit**[2] which is a hands-on, practical guide designed to help mountain stakeholders identify and develop their own context-specific needs for better and more effective policies. The Toolkit draws upon the participatory processes that were tried and tested in the MOVING project. It emphasises especially the benefits of co-creating a more favourable policy environment through Science-Society-Policy (SSP) interfaces, such as the multi-actor platforms (MAPs) established

[1] For example, other EU-funded mountain projects include H2020 MATILDE (https://matilde-migration.eu/), HEU MountResilience (https://mountresilience.eu/) and the MARGISTAR COST Action (https://margistar.eu/)
[2] D7.2 Policy Audit and Policy Design Toolkit is available on the MOVING website: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/library/

in the MOVING project. SSPs are especially helpful in a dynamic policy environment that is responding to a rapidly changing world.

1.3 General Context

Approximately one-third of the European land area (EU and non-EU) is covered by mountainous terrain. The most prominent and highest mountain ranges in Europe are the Alps (spanning across eight countries), the Pyrenees, the Carpathians, the Scandinavian Mountains (Scandes), the Apennines, the Dinaric Alps (Balkans), the Sierra Nevada, and the Scottish Highlands.

These areas play a crucial role in Europe's geography, ecology, and socio-economic dynamics. They contribute to biodiversity conservation, provide essential water resources, produce wholesome food, supply raw materials for the bioeconomy, and have a significant cultural and recreational value that underpins the well-being of millions of people. Agriculture and forestry are often responsible for maintaining these services and are the mainstay of the local economy in most mountainous areas.

However, mountain areas in Europe are traditionally seen as territories of disadvantage and considered to have permanent natural handicaps for which they require compensation. **This understanding of mountainous regions is outdated**. The terrain and climate of Europe's mountainous areas certainly create obvious challenges for their sustainable development, but these characteristics - and others, such as attractive landscapes, long-established cultural heritage, high-quality products, and high levels of biodiversity - also generate opportunities for territorial development, including through the valorisation of local natural, social and cultural assets.

Europe's mountain areas are **hugely diverse and have great potential to be "territories of opportunity"** (Euromontana, 2022) that can provide jobs, a good quality of life, a strong sense of community, and a vibrant local economy. These opportunities vary greatly from region to region and according to the key 2016 report on *Cohesion in Mountainous Regions of the EU* (Gløersen et al., 2016b):

> *"...tailor-made solutions adapted to local and regional needs and possibilities must be developed"*
>
> *"...while the EU's mountain areas are too diverse for one integrated European strategy, a framework for development strategies in mountain areas could be developed, and this should particularly consider the challenges and importance of mountain farming, natural resources, biodiversity, and climate change"*.

A new policy and institutional framework is clearly needed for mountain areas. It must be adaptable, fit for future challenges and able to foster new opportunities for the sustainable development of mountain areas while strengthening their resilience to the socio-economic and environmental challenges they face.

What these policies are and how to work with them at local/regional levels is, however, far from straightforward. As the H2020 PEGASUS project highlighted (Maréchal et al. 2016):

> *"It is not just the availability and design of the policy mix, but also the institutional and governance settings that are important to enable cooperation and collective actions to flourish as well as to encourage innovation in achieving environmental and social benefits"*.

It is in this context that the MOVING project adopted a participatory approach that integrated the socio-ecological system (SES) concept with a value chain analysis framework to evaluate whether mountain value chains can achieve a better balance between socio-economic development and natural resource conservation in mountain areas and thereby enhance the sustainability and resilience of mountain areas[3].

The core of the project consisted of 23 regional case studies and the "collective intelligence" generated through extensive engagement with approximately 1,000 stakeholders. The majority (21) of the case studies related to food, drink, and rural tourism products associated with various forms of mountain farming[4] and for this Roadmap, we describe these as **Mountain Product Value Chains (MPVCs)**.

MOVING activities did not seek to collect quantitative evidence of products' impacts and policy setting but rather to build exchanges and to co-create recommendations for the future of mountain regions which altogether have captured:

1. Stakeholder perceptions about the susceptibility of mountain areas and mountain value chains to the most significant threats
2. Experiences and learnings on the contribution of value chains to resilient and sustainable mountain area development
3. Extensive stakeholder feedback on 'enabling factors' from the extended analysis of the selected mountain product value chains
4. Identification of global upgrading strategies for the selected mountain product value chains
5. Clustering of mountain value chains according to key challenges, success and failure factors
6. Scenarios, archetypes, strategic options and policy needs from Participatory Foresight
7. Insights into the current status and direction of relevant public policies, notably those of the European Union (EU).

1.4 Brief History of mountain socio-ecological systems (SES)

The coexistence of humans with mountain environments in Europe has a long and complex history, spanning millennia. The earliest evidence of modern humans at the foot of the Alps dates back 43,500 years ago (Nigst et al 2014). These early inhabitants were hunter-gatherers and left traces of their ability to adapt to diverse and harsh environments. Several glaciations and major changes in forest covers led to the continuous adaptation of indigenous European tribes. From around 5,000 years ago, early herders were practising transhumance in accordance with seasons and elevations, leaving traces of deforestation (Bunce and Sal 2004). In the Iberian peninsula, early traces of forest burning are considered a possible onset for fire-resistant cork trees spreading and subsequent adoption of olive trees (Faisca 2020).

[3] See the MOVING project's Conceptual and Analytical Framework (CAF) here: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/D2.3-MOVING-Final-CAF.pdf

[4] Selected (focal) mountain value chains were studied in 23 mountainous regions around Europe located in 11 EU Member States, 3 EU candidate countries (North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey) - plus Scotland and Switzerland. The majority (21) of which related to mountain food, drink and rural tourism products associated with various forms of mountain farming, including 9 livestock products (meat, cheese and honey), 6 crop products (annual and permanent crops), 4 alcohol-based products (wine and whisky), and 2 rural tourism products.

The Roman times and Middle Ages brought more human impact such as roads, new agricultural practices, culture and trade. Mountains were significant sources of dairy products, wood, and wool for Europe. These products played an important part in European trade history but also in technology and innovation exchanges. For thousands of years, different cheese-making techniques were invented, exchanged, and adapted to preserve and transport the cheese according to local humidity and temperature (Kindstedt, 2012). The resulting typical cheeses are the products of co-evolution between weather conditions, transhumance practices, livestock breeding and human skills, all forming a unique terroir. From the 12th century at least, place names were used to name recognisable cheeses and famous examples are inevitably from mountain areas (Emmental, Gruyère, Montasio, Paški Sir).

This brief history highlights the interdependent and dynamic co-evolution of humans and the natural world in mountain areas. In recent times, **academics have come to understand these complex and often unique interactions as a form of 'socio-ecological system' (SES)** – where an SES is defined as an integrated system that encompasses the complex interactions between human society and ecological processes. The SES framework is not static but continues to evolve and be applied as a diagnostic tool to understand and manage the interdependencies between human activities and the natural environment (McGinnis & Ostrom 2014).

Mountain SES in Europe are exceptionally diverse, shaped by the specific geographical, climatic, and ecological features of local mountain areas, as well as the cultural, economic, and social dynamics of the people who inhabit these areas, including their characteristic local practices. Some mountain SES are iconic and host major economic activities, such as the alpine winter sports industry. Other mountain SES are increasingly diminished by social challenges, such as the ageing of the local population, equality and integration challenges, abandonment of farming and artisanship, slower growth and degradation of public services, etc – all of which are leading to the reduced capacity of mountain communities to act.

Mountain SES are also strongly and increasingly impacted by global drivers of change. For example, some mountain regions have seen significant changes in the modern era through the growth of (worldwide) tourism. Population growth, modernization of mountain agriculture and increased tourism have resulted in air and water pollution, erosion, and the degradation of natural habitats. Co-habitation with nature and preserving nature's influence in local cultural practices has become more difficult in mountain traditions facing the pressure of global drivers and governance challenges. Now, with mountains warming twice as fast as other regions, the effects of climate change are adding to the pressure by changing the capacity of mountain environments to provide the resources and settings for the practices to continue as before.

In light of these challenges, **actions to balance the maintenance of ecological processes with the socio-economic development of local communities are becoming increasingly essential for the governance of mountain SES**. As Brunckhorst (2002) clearly states:

> *"The foundation for a sustainable future is the continuation of ecological processes and functions across landscapes dominated by human activity, whether hunter-gathering, agriculture, pastoralism, suburban living, commercial and industrial centres or wilderness recreation."*
>
> *"Institutional change is required to develop new organizational forms, adjust policies and develop adaptive capacity to demonstrate restoration and maintenance of all forms of social, economic*

and ecological capital. No matter where on the globe, future sustainability will depend on the system of resource governance that mediates the relationship between the society and the economy and, in contrast, the continuation of ecosystem functional processes."

1.5 Why focus on Mountain Product Value Chains (MPVCs)?

A value chain is a set of actors (individuals or businesses) and activities engaged in various forms of interaction to create value along the life cycle of any product or service.

The term 'mountain product value chain' (MPVC) refers specifically to the actors and activities associated with the production, processing, and distribution of food, drink and rural tourism products that have their principal resource base - namely, all of the local territorial assets (natural, human, social and cultural) that can be utilised for generating value through economic activity – located in mountain regions.

Mountain products such as cheeses, wines, olive oil and tourism services are created by the collaboration of producers, processors, distributors, and consumers who engage with their region's environmental resources, culture, and societal context, to produce various types of values. The values generated from these interactions are expressed mainly in economic terms, with mountain products being primarily aimed at generating income and supporting livelihoods in areas where other economic opportunities are limited.

However, MPVCs also produce other values. Mountain products play a key role in preserving national culinary and cultural traditions, shaping distinctive landscapes, and enhancing the appeal of tourism destinations. For instance, in the context of traditional European unpasteurised cheeses and meat, the extensive pastures utilized for production contribute to biodiversity conservation, soil health, landscape variety, and soil carbon sequestration (Distel et al 2020 and Texeira et al 2019). Natural mountains pastures have also been found to enhance the taste and nutritional value of cheeses, as highlighted by Grandini et al (2022).

Nonetheless, the relationship between mountain products and the environment is not always positive. Certain practices, such as overgrazing or over-reliance on external resources like fertilizers, capital, and technology, can increase economic returns but damage and diminish local environmental resources through over-exploitation. In other cases, the capacity to generate positive economic value from mountain products is compromised because of open competition with areas better suited to benefit from economies of scales, efficiency and easier access.

Some MPVCs are small and very local. Although they may generate relatively little monetary return for local producers, they can have great cultural and environmental significance. Other MPVCs may be very large and profitable, with distribution and sales well beyond the mountain region in which they are produced and processed. Such value chains are not static, unchanging structures. They constantly evolve through the continuous connection and disconnection of different business entities and activities. Neither do they exist in isolation but are commonly linked with other value chains and consequently interact in numerous ways. For example, Moretti et al 2023 talk about the concept of "tele-coupling" between MPVCs, either within or beyond the boundaries of a mountain area.

MPVCs are, therefore, **characterized by a huge diversity**, which reflects the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the terrain, climate, and socio-economic conditions of mountainous areas found in the different parts of Europe. Being connected with a value chain can, therefore, be a source of wealth for a mountain area or a source of degradation and impoverishment, depending upon how the local natural, human, social and cultural assets of the region are engaged and governed.

Key concepts underpinning the study of the MPVCs in MOVING were that:

a) the value generated from the production, processing and distribution of an MPVC extends beyond the **economic outcomes** of profit, salaries, taxes etc. to include a range of **social and ecological outcomes** (e.g. human capital, cooperation, sustainable use of local assets, inclusiveness, adaptive capacity, ecological resilience, attractiveness and wellbeing) and

b) these outcomes have the **combined potential** (if appropriately balanced) to enhance the sustainability and resilience of the territories from which a mountain product originates.

The expression ***"unlocking the power of mountain product value chains"*** has emerged in the MOVING project as a specific reference to **enhancing the positive benefits of MPVCs** via the establishment of new mountain value chains and/or upgrading of existing mountain value chains that can:

- Help achieve a balance between ecosystem service delivery and socio-economic development in mountain areas, and
- Maintain and enhance the capacity of mountain communities to withstand and adapt to the multiple drivers of change they encounter, which (according to MOVING and other researchers such as Wyss et al 2022) will inevitably continue to increase.



2 MOVING Policy Roadmap: Approach

2.1 A more favourable Enabling Environment

A more favourable enabling environment for enhancing the positive contribution of MPVCs to the sustainability and resilience of mountain areas encompasses many elements that contribute towards creating better balance in the outcomes of mountain socio-ecological systems (SES). Building such an environment begins with recognizing the diverse challenges faced by these regions and the need for better governance – a factor which is globally recognised as the key to sustainability and human well-being in mountain SES (Tucker et al. 2021).

The pursuit of balance also requires an understanding of the interlinkages between socio-ecological transformation, economic changes, and demographic shifts (Dax 2022). Moreover, it entails acknowledging the importance of local conditions, economic development, and the preservation of natural resources in mountain regions. Achieving balance often involves building development strategies that leverage local assets, consider the influence of connection with other areas, and go beyond traditional narratives of rural and mountain development (Dax 2020). Overall, the pursuit of balance in mountain SES, therefore, necessitates a holistic approach that integrates local governance, economic activities, environmental preservation, and social development to ensure sustainability and well-being for both the environment and local communities.

There is no strategic political vision for the development of mountain regions in the EU. However, mountainous territories are a major part of Europe's rural areas and, therefore, fall within the scope of the EU's long-term vision for rural areas (LTVRA).

The LTVRA is a strategic framework developed by the European Commission to guide the development of rural areas in the European Union through until 2040 (European Commission, 2021). The vision seeks to address the challenges and harness the potential of rural areas, ensuring their sustainability, resilience, and well-being. It was officially adopted in June 2021 and is part of the broader EU policy framework.

The LTVRA reflects a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to rural development, addressing the specific needs and potentials of rural communities while contributing to the EU's overall sustainability and inclusivity goals. The vision was developed through comprehensive consultation with rural stakeholders and citizens across Europe[5]. This generated ten shared goals[6] which are summarised by four complementary "blocks" of action for rural areas to become[7]:

- **Stronger** - focus on empowering rural communities, improving access to services and facilitating social innovation
- **Connected** - to improve connectivity both in terms of transport and digital access

[5] https://rural-vision.europa.eu/rural-vision_en
[6] https://rural-vision.europa.eu/rural-vision/shared-goals_en
[7] https://rural-vision.europa.eu/action-plan_en

- **Resilient** - preserving natural resources and greening farming activities to counter climate change while also ensuring social resilience through offering access to training courses and diverse quality job opportunities
- **Prosperous** - to diversify economic activities and improve the value-added of farming and agri-food activities and agri-tourism

A key objective of the MOVING Policy Roadmap is to ensure the alignment of policy recommendations arising from the project with the LTVRA.

2.2 Structure of the Roadmap

The basis of the Roadmap is a total of thirty (30) diverse **Policy Recommendations** derived from the synthesis and systematic assessment of all MOVING project outputs (*the "collective intelligence" of approximately 1,000 stakeholders*).

These Recommendations are clustered into eight (8) discrete **Policy Building Blocks** that have been identified as the constituent elements of the favourable enabling environment (policy framework) required for "unlocking the power" of mountain product value chains (MPVCs). These are:

1) Better Territorial Governance, Regulation & Public Services
2) Balancing Ecology & Society
3) Fostering Collaboration & Networking
4) Growing Skills, Knowledge & Innovation
5) Ensuring Mountain Livelihoods
6) Promoting Mountain Product Quality
7) Sustaining the Use of Local Assets
8) Preparing & Adapting for Change

Each of these Building Blocks (BBs) are coherent 'bundles' of concrete **Policy Interventions** that can be strategically targeted via **Policy Leverage Points** at those components of a mountain SES where **outcomes** are generated which are relevant to addressing specific **challenges** or **opportunities** encountered by MPVC actors.

Policy Interventions are applicable at different **governance levels** (EU/national/regional/local) and may involve a broad range of institutional arrangements, legal provisions, strategic frameworks, financial mechanisms, etc., which foster **adjustments in the behaviour and activities** of value chain actors. These adjustments enhance the likelihood of desired value chain outcomes overcoming prevailing challenges and thereby contributing to improving the sustainability and resilience of the mountain area from which the MPVC originates.

The MOVING Policy Roadmap identifies a total of one hundred (100) Policy Interventions for implementing the Policy Recommendations, which in turn are supported with over 200 footnotes containing website links and/or details of **Contemporary Policy Tools** of relevance.

The Policy Building Block approach is a robust concept that can be found in many different policy domains and with many different interpretations and applications ranging (for example) from renewable

energy[8] to social inclusion in fragile post-conflict countries[9]. One particularly interesting and relevant example is the OECD's *Eight building blocks for coherent implementation of the SDGs*[10], in which the Policy Building Block approach is introduced in the context of *"...governmental commitment to meaningful targeted action"*. The Building Block approach was also applied in preparatory work for the implementation of the LTVRA on *"enabling factors for rural revitalisation"* that was undertaken by the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)[11]. The H2020 DESIRA project *(Assessing the socio-economic impact of digitalisation in rural areas)* also worked with the Building Block approach as the (analytical) basis of its Policy RoadMap[12].

A specific characteristic of the MOVING Policy Roadmap is the "**nesting**" of its Building Blocks (see Figure 1 below).

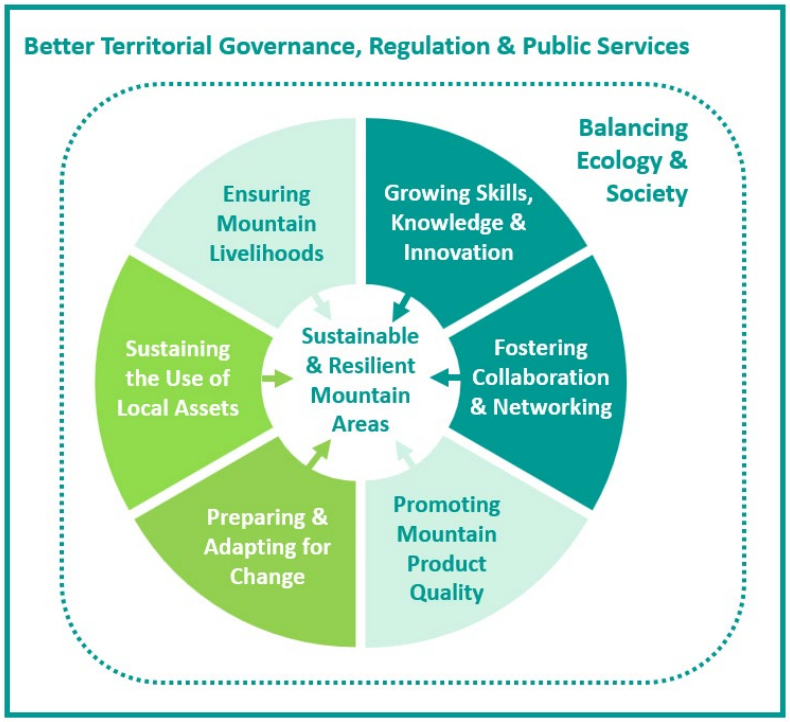


Figure 1: Visual representation of the "nesting" of Policy Building Blocks within the MOVING Policy Roadmap

The first Building Block (BB1), *'Better Territorial Governance, Regulation and Public Services'*, occupies an overarching position and is a **precondition for the effective implementation** of all other Building Blocks.

The second Building Block (BB2), *'Balancing Ecology & Society'*, is strongly governance-related and effectively a sub-set of the first Block. However, it is highlighted separately because it aims to enhance

[8] https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy12osti/54801.pdf
[9] https://ifit-transitions.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Three-Building-Blocks-to-Successful-Inclusive-Transitions.pdf
[10] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development-2018/eight-building-blocks-for-coherent-implementation-of-the-sdgs_9789264301061-5-en
[11] https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/sites/default/files/enrd_publications/enrd_report-enabling_factors_080622_final.pdf
[12] https://desira2020.agr.unipi.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/D4.1-POLICY-ANALYSIS-AND-ROADMAP.pdf

the supportive governance systems developed by Building Block 1 with a specific focus on the planning and implementation of a **more "balanced" enabling environment** for sustainability and resilience at the landscape level. This is inspired by the socio-ecological system (SES) approach adopted by MOVING and is especially relevant to a **landscape-level understanding** of how to achieve a balanced place-based mix of policy interventions relevant to Building Blocks 3 to 8.

The remaining six Building Blocks sit within the first two and address the main dimensions of sustainability and resilience – whereby:

- BB3 *'Fostering Collaboration & Networking'* and BB4 *'Growing Skills, Knowledge & Innovation'* mainly address the social dimension
- BB5 *'Ensuring Mountain Livelihoods'* and BB6 *'Promoting Mountain Product Quality'* mainly address the economic dimension, with the former also including some social
- BB7 *'Sustaining the Use of Local Assets'* and BB8 *'Preparing & Adapting for Change'* address both environmental and social dimensions.

The Building Blocks are intended to be universal and operational. In accordance with the principles established by OECD (2018), the MOVING Policy Building Blocks are intended to support improvements in policy design whereby they *"...facilitate improvements in policy coherence and are applicable to national/regional context regardless of their administrative and political traditions"*. Most importantly, the Policy Building Blocks, Policy Recommendations, Policy Leverage Points and Policy Interventions are all **intended to be mixed** in whatever combination is most locally/regionally appropriate to enhancing the contribution of MPVCs to sustainable and resilient territorial development.

These **Policy Mixes** can be articulated as programmes, schemes, measures, strategies or plans for the development of MPVCs within defined territories and be guided by the principles of **coherence**, **complementarity** and **synergy** (positive interaction), whilst also remaining alert to the risk of **counterproductivity** (negative interaction). The final key element of the Policy Roadmap is, therefore, a novel **Policy Intervention Logic** (see Section 2.4) to guide the selection process.

The 8 Building Blocks are elaborated in Section 3, and each contains the following details:

- The **Overall Aim** of the Building Block
- Relevant **MOVING Strategic Options**[13] (as derived from the Participatory Foresight exercises undertaken by the MOVING project)
- **Potential alignment** with the EU's long-term vision for rural areas (LTVRA), including the underlying sub-themes
- Tables of **Policy Recommendations** derived from the MOVING project results and stakeholder engagement processes, including:
    - Relevant **Policy Leverage Points**
    - **Target Group** for each Leverage Point (corresponding with different levels of governance)
    - Applicable **Policy Interventions**
    - **Timeframe** – *Short-term* (potential for immediate action using the policy tools currently available), *Medium-term* (during the remaining implementation of the current 2021-

[13] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

2027 EU policy programming period) and *Long-term* (into the post-2027 EU policy programming period and beyond)

- An **Implementation Example** illustrating at least one more of the Policy Recommendations.

All Building Blocks are enriched with **extensive footnotes** derived from a detailed audit of available policy tools of relevance.

2.3 The critical importance of Governance

Governance is the political decision-making process by which institutions, rules, strategies and interventions are established, interpreted, applied and revised to guide processes and shape behaviour in response to challenges and opportunities (European Commission, 2001).

Effective governance ensures that all stakeholders' needs and interests are addressed fairly and equitably. In the context of the MOVING Roadmap, this includes shaping the actions and behaviours of individuals and groups within social-ecological systems (SES) and how they interact with local resources. MOVING found that many different types of governance arrangements with varying degrees of effectiveness influence the contribution of mountain product value chains to the sustainability and resilience of mountain SES (for example, see Table below).

Serbia - Sjenica Lamb	Switzerland – Tete de Moine Cheese	UK-Scotland - Speyside Whisky
• Poor formalized cooperation, strong informal ties • Few independent slaughterhouses • Hierarchy, highly asymmetrical relations on both national and export markets	• "Inter-professional" organisation managing quality and volumes produced of cheese by assigning production volumes • PDO with quality control and a third-party certification system • System of direct payments, including those for ecosystem services	• Tourism organisations, • Knowledge and skills organisations • Catchment management • Environment strategies and organisations connected to the National Park and River Spey catchment area
Examples of different governance arrangements influencing three selected mountain product value chains (Source: Grando et al. 2024)		

Good governance is a consistent theme throughout the MOVING Policy Roadmap and many of the policy recommendations and policy leverage revolve around governance-related issues.

The first Building Block specifically addresses **territorial governance** as the essential foundation for building the more favourable policy environment needed to strengthen and/or support the creation of mountain product value chains (MPVCs) capable of creating beneficial values while also enhancing territorial sustainability and resilience.

MOVING (and many other studies) show that mountain area governance needs to be **flexible and holistic to cope with the complexity of the necessary transformative changes**. It also needs to be able to reach even the most marginalized areas and address their main needs and demands. By necessity, this includes a concerted approach to local and regional planning with the support of local

communities and regional, national, and EU authorities in the search for solutions that can address multiple challenges and adapt to rapidly emerging new circumstances.

Good governance should also be capable of supporting successful cooperation networks by facilitating (not hindering) collaboration and learning between all sectors, stakeholder levels and mountain regions and sub-regions.

Such multi-level governance needs to include all structures and institutions, both formal and informal, that play a role in guiding and regulating the use of mountainous landscapes and communities, as well as addressing the challenges and opportunities unique to such specific areas. Not surprisingly, this is complex! As Tucker et al. (2021) conclude, *"mechanisms to strengthen mountain governance remain elusive [but] benefit from approaches that fit local contexts while building equitable and creative collaborations among diverse, supportive actors within and beyond mountain communities"*.

Enabling mountain citizens to **more actively engage in policy- and decision-making** and to **take advantage of available funding opportunities** is essential. However, extensive consultation with stakeholders in the MOVING case studies (especially the participatory foresight exercises) highlighted a general sense of "powerlessness" and the feeling that they were forgotten about and left out of touch. In many cases, this is exacerbated by a lack of access to reliable information, fear of excessive bureaucracy, limited knowledge, experience and capacity of both local communities and authorities to make use of available interventions, etc.

For any rural transformation to be successful, it needs to be "owned" by local people and policies designed and implemented in a participatory way. Policies developed in a participatory way are known to have a much greater chance of success than top-down approaches. Start from local values and build on the local assets (natural and cultural heritage, human capital, skills, specific capacities, creativity, etc.) that are known and experienced by local mountain communities. According to Gløersen et al (2016), "*Policies need to build adaptive capacity by responding to local and regional specificities and by encouraging a diversity of strategies.*" This is especially important in mountain areas where the wide range of unique products and services offers many opportunities for sustainable and resilient local development but also risks of overexploitation and impoverishment of local resources. Nonetheless, participatory processes must be earnestly implemented, and the results genuinely reflect the needs of the communities. Superficial actions should be avoided at all costs, as they can significantly undermine trust in democratic processes.

The MOVING Roadmap does not attempt to address this complexity comprehensively but offers **multi-level recommendations** focused on different aspects of enabling and empowering regional and local actors, stakeholders, and institutions in mountain areas, which were highlighted through the collective intelligence of the MOVING multi-actor community.

According to MOVING's sister project SHERPA, *"Such empowerment requires the design and use of suitable multi-level governance structures which are characterised by open dialogue between institutions and stakeholders, and the inclusive participation of citizens, facilitated by newly available tools"* (Chartier et al. 2023). One such tool is the EU's Long-term Vision for Rural Areas (LTVRA), and almost all key questions raised by the recent report on 'key achievements and ways forward for the LTVRA' (European Commission, 2024a) concern governance issues that are relevant to this first Building Block of the MOVING Policy Roadmap.

Overall, there is no one-size-fits-all approach for enhancing the governance of mountain areas and MPVCs. It is important to remember that challenges and adapted responses greatly vary between mountain SES, that actors' responses also vary between individuals and groups within regions and that these issues are not isolated. Deriving general solutions and governance responses that can be applied in all mountain SES is neither possible or desirable since mountain peoples' identities are defined by their particular settings, as reflected in the SES interactions. These identities shape actors' responses, which impact the effectiveness of the governance part to work towards balance.

Despite these challenges, there are many ongoing efforts and successful initiatives from actors and governance institutions to balance human well-being with environmental concerns in order to prepare mountain SES for the future and continue to support future generations. By recognizing the interdependence of internal and external influences, mountain areas can improve governance mechanisms, foster beneficial interactions, enhance their socio-economic value, and avoid unbalanced results, ultimately contributing to the sustainability and resilience of these environments full of opportunities.

2.4 A novel Policy Intervention Logic

Synthesis and interpretation of the results of extensive engagement with approximately 1,000 stakeholders in the MOVING project clearly indicate the need for an improved policy framework for mountain product value chains (MPVCs) which:

a) **Focusses upon the local actors involved in mountain product value chains (plus other stakeholders)** by building on their interests and motivations, and by addressing their real needs;
b) **Builds trust and ongoing engagement with these local actors and other stakeholders** by embedding dialogue with them throughout all relevant policy cycles;
c) **Integrates capacity building along with other policy interventions** so that it acts as leverage for change and becomes mainstreamed as the norm rather than the exception
d) **Allows for and facilitates a more flexible and joined up mixing of policy interventions** that are better adapted to local needs
e) **Promotes all forms of collaboration and partnership** to increase engagement, commitment and effectiveness of policy interventions.

These needs are very much in line with the increasing shift towards new perspectives on policymaking for rural development that are evident in the literature (e.g. Dax and Machold, 2024) and recent EU research projects, including PEGASUS[14], SIMRA[15], DESIRA[16], POLIRURAL[17], and SHERPA[18].

The MOVING Roadmap therefore embraces the following five contemporary principles:

- **Evidence-based** - making the best use of comparable research results and data to identify and address specific challenges and place-based needs. Implementing science-policy

[14] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/633814/results
[15] http://www.simra-h2020.eu/
[16] https://desira2020.agr.unipi.it/
[17] https://polirural.eu/
[18] https://rural-interfaces.eu/

interfaces for policy formulation and long-term monitoring of policy impacts and learning for/from iteration and adaptation

- **Subsidiarity** - adopting an integrated multi-level governance approach through the policy cycle, including empowerment of local stakeholders and intermediates as well as active synergies and connection between levels.
- **Participative** - designing policy actions through a collective co-creation process involving authorities at all levels, social partners and organizations from civil society.
- **Outcome-oriented** – using a responsibility-based approach to target the adoption and pursuit of sustainability and resilience objectives
- **Operational** - prioritising simplicity, flexibility and synergies between levels, sectors and tools to promote adoption and implementation, including capacity building, stable processes and prioritising use of existing tools

The Roadmap contains a comprehensive framework of 100 practical **Policy Leverage Points** linked to 30 key **Policy Recommendations** organised within 8 inter-connected **Policy Building Blocks** that respond to specific needs for "unlocking the power of mountain product value chains". The additional key element for **operationalising** this framework and **guiding** the selection and application of potential policy actions in any given mountain territory is the **Policy Intervention Logic**.

The term 'intervention logic' will be familiar to anyone involved with the strategic programming or evaluation of CAP Pillar 2 programmes or the more recent National CAP Strategic Plans. It is used here simply to describe the rationale of the MOVING Roadmap as a chain of reasoning connecting mountain communities' specific needs and requirements (including MPVC actors) with potential policy interventions. An effective policy intervention logic:

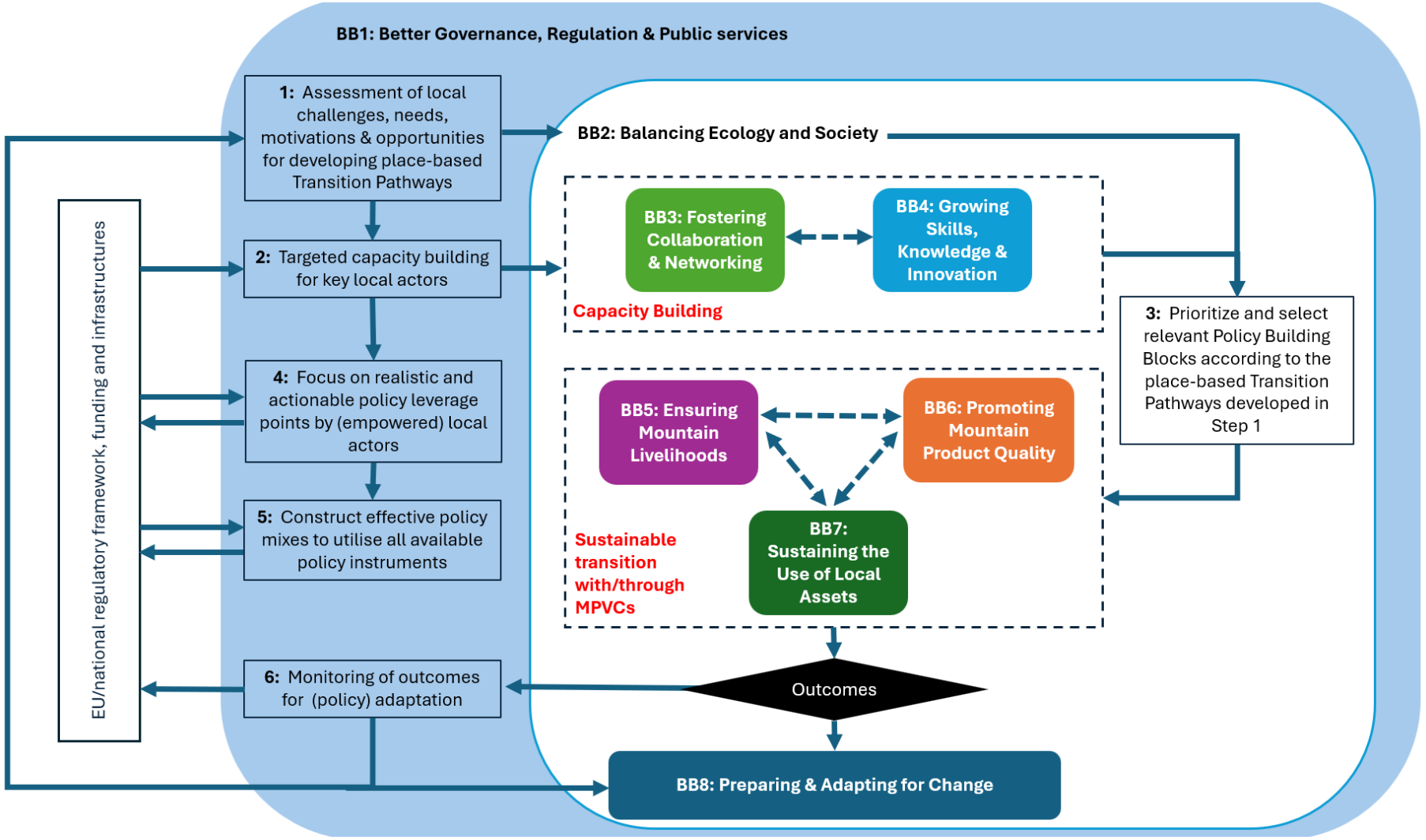
- **defines** the rationale used to select the most appropriate available policy actions in response to a specific issue/need – whether a challenge or opportunity
- **enables** the identification of policy actions that are capable of addressing multiple challenges through individual actions or combinations of actions (policy mixes)
- **ensures** flexibility and the ability to respond/adapt to new circumstances.

The MOVING Roadmap integrates a novel intervention logic consisting of **six 'steps'** that are suitable for embedding within any science-society-policy (SSP) interface[19] aiming to use the MOVING Policy Building Blocks to co-produce place-based policy interventions for strengthening the contribution of mountain product value chains (MPVCs) to territorial sustainability and resilience.

Figure 2 illustrates the potential interactions (arrows) of the six steps with the eight Policy Building Blocks (BBs) of the MOVING Policy Roadmap. Steps 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 should ideally be adopted and implemented as an integral part of the good governance and participatory processes advocated in BB1 *'Better Governance, Regulation & Public services'*, whilst Step 3 is embedded specifically within BB2 *'Balancing Ecology & Society'* which in turn is embedded within BB1. All steps can be led and implemented by public authorities and/or public-private partnerships at local, regional and national levels as appropriate, with support unlocked/leveraged from the EU level where necessary.

[19] The science-society-policy (SSP) interfaces established in each of the 23 case study regions of the MOVING project were described as 'multi-actor platforms' (MAPs)

Figure 2: Schematic representation of the MOVING Policy Intervention Logic



STEP 1 **Assessment of local challenges, needs, motivations and opportunities for developing place-based Transition Pathways** – this is a critical first step for strengthening the contribution of one or more MPVCs to the sustainability and resilience of the mountain territory from which they originate and the **MOVING Policy Toolkit**[20] provides a well-structured framework for the necessary participatory processes of:

- Stakeholder mapping
- Establishing and maintaining the SSP interface
- Identifying relevant mountain assets
- Identifying key elements of the mountain socio-ecological system (SES)
- Analysing vulnerability
- Foresight exercises and co-creation of scenarios
- Transition Pathways and strategic options for policy design

The concept of **Transition Pathways** is increasingly embedded in efforts to realise the vision and ambitions of the EU Green Deal[21]. Transition Pathways are context-specific and represent a deliberate and systematic approach to driving meaningful change and progress towards a desired future state. For example, in the context of the MOVING project, MPVC actors and stakeholders in the case study areas conducted Participatory Foresight Exercises[22] and co-created scenarios that gave indications about the local vision or strategy of MPVC actors. Three (3) generalised Transition Pathways[23] emerged from these exercises:

- 'Resilient growth through efficient and locally adapted production and the sharing of added value'
- 'Diversification and innovation, including niche-market products, a knowledge-based economy and services'
- 'Preservation of environmental services through the valorization of local (including cultural) resources'.

STEP 2 **Targeted capacity building for key local actors** – co-creating a favourable place-based policy environment for strengthening the contribution of MPVCs to local, territorial development depends on key actors and stakeholders, including local and regional institutions, having the **necessary capacity** to BOTH: i) effectively engage with each other in the policymaking process, and ii) implement the interventions and actions that are co-created for enabling the adaptation and upgrading of MPVCs.

[20] D7.2 Policy Audit and Policy Design Toolkit is available on the MOVING website: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/library/

[21] https://eurocid.mne.gov.pt/sites/default/files/repository/paragraph/documents/9193/reportsusttransiten.pdf

[22] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

[23] The Transition Pathways that emerged from the Participatory Foresight Exercises are defined as *"generalised expressions of the motivations, values and strategies for a better future of the value chain actors and their supportive environment"*

This second step establishes capacity building as an integral part of the place-based policymaking process by encouraging an immediate connection to the recommendations, leverage points and potential policy interventions contained within BB3 *'Fostering Collaboration & Networking'* and BB4 *'Growing Skills, Knowledge & Innovation'*.

STEP 3 **Prioritize and select relevant Policy Building Blocks according to the place-based Transition Pathways developed in Step 1** – combinations of Building Blocks (BBs) 2-8 are the basis for a first policy mix.

The participatory processes initiated in Step 1 should be continued with a preliminary selection of relevant Building Blocks – and associated Recommendations / Policy Leverage Points – according to the selected/proposed Transition Pathways for the given mountain territory. There is no pre-defined recipe for an adequate mix.

Furthermore, it is important to note that not every MPVC automatically generates beneficial economic, social and environmental values. Therefore, a key objective of the enabling policy environment may also be to encourage a diversity of MPVCs in any given territory, thereby providing a range of alternative options for delivering the desired positive outcomes for territorial sustainability and resilience.

STEP 4 **Within the prioritised Building Blocks, focus on the identification and selection of realistic and actionable Policy Leverage Points by (empowered) local actors** – further continue with the Step 1 participatory processes to work with all relevant MPVC actors and other stakeholders to identify the Policy Leverage Points that are most actionable and realistic for delivery with the available capacity – including that capacity developed in Step 2.

Systematic – and well-facilitated - consideration of the most appropriate and potentially effective Policy Leverage Points Step will inevitably lead to discussion about specific policy interventions and the potential for the construction of policy mixes in Step 5.

STEP 5 **Construct effective Policy Mixes to utilise the contemporary policy tools that are most relevant** – in a few cases, it is possible that only one policy intervention will be necessary to implement a specific Leverage Point and generate a desired outcome. In many cases, there will be potential for alignment and combination ("mixing") by two or more policy interventions to take advantage of the "added value" of their positive interaction. There are three possible interactions to look for:

1) **Complementary**: Policy tools reinforce each other's effect when used together (either at same time or in sequence)
2) **Synergistic**: Policy interventions reinforce *and* enhance each other.
3) **Counter-productive**: Building Blocks have a negative interaction with each other (to be avoided!)

STEP 6 **Monitoring of outcomes for (policy) adaptation** – this last Step of the Intervention Logic will take place over extended time periods as the results of Steps 4 and 5 generate outcomes.

The monitoring Step is particularly important to provide feedback on any need for adjusting actions relating to BB8 *'Preparing & Adapting for Change' and* for Step 1 to close the cycle with local actors and stakeholders involved in the co-creation process.

This Step is also particularly relevant in a multi-level governance context, where the results of place-based policymaking can also feed back into the EU and national levels for the ongoing adaptation of the general policy frameworks.

This interaction is shown in Figure *2* well arrows linking phases of the implementation logic with the block of EU/national policy framework left on the figure. For example, this would include providing funding and infrastructure for capacity building and interacting with local authorities to provide a supportive environment for them to make the best use of leverage points and policy mixes and also to co-create and learn back from local experiences, or through active lobbying from the regions, into the higher-level policy framework.

3 MOVING Policy Roadmap: Policy Building Blocks

Summary List

BUILDING BLOCK 1: **Better Territorial Governance, Regulation & Public Services**

Aim: *To improve the quality of governance, regulation and public services for mountain areas and thereby establish the foundation for a more favourable enabling environment for the creation and/or strengthening of mountain product value chains (MPVCs)*

Recommendations:

[1] Explicitly acknowledge and apply good governance as an essential public service to mountain communities, including its central role in directing, protecting, coordinating and supporting the provision of public services and ecosystem services for well-being and a sense of identification with the territory

[2] Facilitate the development of more place-based and partnership-based policies that reflect the specific scales of governance encountered in mountain areas and that are designed to address local needs

[3] Ensure access to more diversified and integrated use of available public funding by 'mainstreaming' the development of mountainous areas into relevant territorial and sectoral policies at EU, national and sub-national levels

[4] Improve the accessibility and delivery of 'Services of General Interest' (SGIs) as an essential precondition for the sustainable development of mountain regions

[5] Reduce the administrative burden upon mountain farmers, businesses and communities

[6] Support mountain territories with a facility for the development, monitoring and adaptation of policy interventions in the context of increasing uncertainty and change

BUILDING BLOCK 2: **Balancing Ecology & Society**

Aim: *To support the achievement of a better balance between ecological integrity and social well-being in mountain areas*

Recommendation:

[7] Adopt the use of integrated, holistic policy-making approaches and processes that are better suited to the contemporary challenges of transitioning to more sustainable and resilient mountain areas

BUILDING BLOCK 3: **Fostering Collaboration & Networking**

Aim: *To foster cohesion and influence (agency) amongst MPVC actors through collaboration and networking*

Recommendations:

[8] Build formal and informal relationships within and between MPVC actors to foster collaboration for the benefit of all related actors

[9] Establish regional multi-actor structures (e.g. at the level of individual massifs) for informal and formal collaboration and exchange, and to foster cohesion and identity for the benefit of thriving local communities and MPVCs

[10] Organise exchanges at a macro-regional level between mountain area representatives to facilitate and enable more inter-territorial cooperation projects

BUILDING BLOCK 4: **Growing Skills, Knowledge & Innovation**

Aim: *To build human capacities (including agency) amongst MPVC actors and other key stakeholders in mountain areas through skills, knowledge and innovation*

Recommendations:

[11] Ensure that mountain communities, including MPVC actors and all related stakeholders, have the necessary information, capacity and agency to successfully implement the most appropriate Transition Pathways towards greater sustainability and resilience

[12] Focus on the importance of the cross-cutting objective (CCO) of the 2023-2027 CAP to mountain areas and MPVCs, especially regarding the obligation to strengthen Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKISs)

[13] Use all available funding opportunities to support education and professional and vocational training for mountain communities, including the development and testing of new approaches to skills and knowledge for mountain areas

[14] Increase support for long-term scientific research, higher education and innovation projects in mountain regions

[15] Focus on empowering the communities associated with MPVCs by fostering and multiplying social innovation in mountain areas

BUILDING BLOCK 5: **Ensuring Mountain Livelihoods**

Aim: *To revitalize mountain communities by providing good jobs and stable incomes for all*

Recommendations:

[16] Provide infrastructure and shared facilities necessary for the establishment, upgrading and/or diversification of MPVCs

[17] Facilitate the access of small-scale producers to essential resources, such as land, credit, and technology, that are the basis for the establishment, upgrading and/or diversification of MPVCs

[18] Ensure that the general policy framework, governance and participatory processes are sensitive to and consider gender equality and ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

[19] Increase the attractiveness of mountain jobs by improving working conditions and motivating people to stay or migrate to mountain regions

[20] Promote and prioritise maintaining cultural capital by supporting the organisation of inclusive cultural events, festivals, and exhibitions to celebrate and preserve local culture, enhancing community pride, cohesion and synergies with tourism

BUILDING BLOCK 6: **Promoting Mountain Product Quality**

Aim: *To increase the promotion, recognition and valorisation of mountain product quality*

Recommendations:

[21] Support farms and food artisans that drive high-quality value chains from mountain ecosystems to have fair access to markets and generate livelihoods while facing global challenges

[22] Integrate quality brands, MPVC schemes and institutional initiatives to build thriving 'communities of quality' around collaborative strategies and common visions for the role of MPVCs in local/regional transformation

[23] Upscale the influence of local institutions as direct participants in MPVCs via the public procurement of mountain products

BUILDING BLOCK 7: **Sustaining the Use of Local Assets**

Aim: *To sustain the use of local territorial assets and resources (social, cultural and environmental) without over-exploitation or the risk of damage*

Recommendations:

[24] Strengthen legal and strategic frameworks for the protection and regeneration of nature, natural resources and biodiversity in mountain regions and beyond

[25] Implement specific legal frameworks for the sustainable management of common mountain resources, especially those affected by climate and demographic change

[26] Provide integrated packages of support for mountain pastoralism, including remuneration for ecosystem services in the form of easily accessible and manageable schemes with simplified administrative procedures

[27] Integrate knowledge and practices from MPVCs into actions for a Circular Mountain Economy

BUILDING BLOCK 8: **Preparing & Adapting for Change**

Aim: *To build capacity for adaptation to changing environmental and social circumstances/challenges in mountain areas, including resilience to sudden shocks*

Recommendations:

[28] Mainstream climate-change readiness and adaptation measures for mountain regions into EU and national Climate Adaptation frameworks

[29] Address urgent issues related to the impact of climate change on the local mountain environment and its provision of resources, ecosystem services and public goods

[30] Strengthen mountain communities' adaptive capacity to face socio-economic changes and environmental changes, trends and shocks

Building Block 1: Better Territorial Governance, Regulation & Public Services

Overall Aim:	**To improve the quality of governance, regulation and public services for mountain areas and thereby establish the foundation for a more favourable enabling environment for the creation and/or strengthening of mountain product value chains (MPVCs)**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[24]:	• Swiss Local Food Competition (CH) • Terra Thessalia (EL) • Wine as a key product for an integrated territorial project (IT) • Integrated territorial project (MOVING European Foresight workshop)	
Alignment with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes)*:	**STRONGER**	• Enabling citizens to take an active role in policymaking • Access to public and private services • Community empowerment • Land use and spatial planning • LEADER/CLLD • Smart Villages
	CONNECTED	• Improving transport infrastructures • Rural-urban linkages

[24] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Policy Recommendations

[1] Explicitly acknowledge and apply good governance as an essential public service to mountain communities, including its central role in directing, protecting, coordinating and supporting the provision of public services and ecosystem services for well-being and a sense of identification with the territory			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Ensure that structures and processes are in place to regularly and systematically engage mountain communities, including MPVC actors and other relevant stakeholders, in participatory policy processes. Appropriate channels must be in place for their ongoing participation in all related policy processes of interest/relevance to them. Depending on the level of governance, various formats are possible, ranging from very formal to informal. **Involve all stakeholders (including young people)** in shaping long-term visions for the sustainable and resilient development of their mountain territories. Consider involving not only local actors from within MPVCs but also those beyond the local scale, including fostering interactions with the most connected urban area(s).	National, Regional and Local authorities	Good governance is at the heart of the LTVRA and Rural Pact, and there is a considerable body of ideas, recommendations, and practical solutions that are relevant to mountain areas[25]. See the *MOVING 'Quick Start' Policy Design Toolkit* [26] for practical guidance on proven participatory methods for ensuring that policy-making processes are relevant to the needs and expectations of local stakeholders. The *Toolkit* emphasises the benefits of co-producing policies through science-society-policy (SSP) interfaces, which are especially helpful in the current changing policy environment.	Short-, Medium- and Long-term depending upon the specific intervention

[25] https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/publications/making-rural-pact-happen-member-states_en#section--resources

[26] D7.2 Policy Audit and Policy Design Toolkit is available on the MOVING website: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/library/

Apply the principle of 'active subsidiarity' which states that effective policymaking for territorial development should involve the dynamic engagement of all relevant stakeholders at the lowest level of governance possible, with higher levels of governance (only) providing support and intervention when necessary. Active subsidiarity promotes the idea that local communities should have the authority and responsibility to manage their own affairs, especially in areas where they have the most expertise and stake, such as local land use, agriculture, and resource management	EU and National authorities	The concept of 'active subsidiarity' is actively promoted by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and has recently (June 2024) been proposed as a fundamental principle[27] within the frame of the EU's Better Regulation agenda	Medium- to Long-term
Enhance the use of grassroots democracy tools that exist in / are applicable to mountain areas at local and regional levels. Traditional forms of direct democracy, such as village assemblies and town meetings, are common in mountain areas across Europe. These gatherings allow community members to discuss and make decisions on local issues, such as land use, natural resource management, and local development projects. There is much potential to improve and enhance their functionality and effectiveness by connecting with contemporary EU policy mechanisms.	National, Regional and Local authorities	Existing EU policy mechanisms of relevance: • LEADER/CLLD • Development of Smart Village strategies[28] • Thematic groups to increase engagement of local stakeholders in national policy-making processes[29] • Participatory budgeting to promote inclusive democracy[30] • Tailor-made governance mechanisms within EU macro-regional strategies e.g. AlpGov[31]	Short-, Medium- and Long-term depending upon the specific tool

[27] https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-5624-2023
[28] https://www.smartrural21.eu/wp-content/uploads/Guide_EN.pdf
[29] https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/sites/default/files/enrd_publications/methodological-case_stakeholder-involvement_se.pdf
[30] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573894/EPRS_BRI(2016)573894_EN.pdf
[31] https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/finalpublication.pdf

Adopt the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto and implement local/regional programmes to ensure the involvement and empowerment of young people as a source of ideas and inspiration for decision-makers in mountain communities, including the governance of Protected Areas. A group of youth from across seven countries first created the Manifesto in 2018 to draw the attention of local authorities, environmental organisations and rural communities to the challenges they faced in Protected Areas.	Local and Regional authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations	The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto was originally developed in a LEADER transnational project and is currently supported with LIFE+ funding. Further details, including good practice examples can be found on the EUROPARC website[32]	Short- to Medium-term
Consider implementing the concept of Functional Rural Areas (FRA) to identify "non-functional" areas or "deserts of public functions/services" in mountain areas. Use participatory processes with local communities to identify the best pathways for the "re-functionalisation" of these areas.	National and Regional authorities	The overall aim of the FRA concept[33] is to move beyond existing rural typologies and better inform rural policies on issues of demographic change and access to services. This is highly relevant to addressing the unique challenges of mountain areas which require tailored local development strategies.	Medium- to Long-term

[2] Facilitate the development of more place-based and partnership-based policies that reflect the specific scales of governance encountered in mountain areas and that are designed to address local needs			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Acknowledge and address the full range of governance scales that exist in mountain areas, from transnational massifs (e.g., the Alps and Carpathians) to	EU, National, Regional and Local authorities	Of relevance to more targeted use of place-based instruments such as:	Medium- to Long-term

[32] https://www.europarc.org/young-people/youth-manifesto/
[33] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC135599

individual mountain localities, and the necessity of working across national, regional, and local administrative boundaries. **Develop an alternative common framework and programming approach**[34] that enriches the classical SWOT analysis and needs assessment typically used for strategic programming of EU and national funds and more appropriately characterises the specific challenges and opportunities for territorial development existing at these different mountain governance scales.		• Interreg (see the recent report on participatory governance of mountain areas from Interreg Central Europe)[35] • Integrated Territorial Investments • Smart Specialisation Strategies • CLLD/LEADER, • Smart/Start-Up Villages	
Develop and implement more flexible multilevel governance arrangements to facilitate both horizontal coordination within and vertical coordination between the different scales of mountain governance[36]. This is particularly relevant to connecting governance structures adapted to mountain areas' geographical characteristics with the implementation of regional development funding programmes at the NUTS 2 level.	National, Regional and Local authorities	Numerous examples exist and there is no 'one size fits all' approach available. See the recent report on participatory governance of mountain areas from Interreg Central Europe[37]	Medium- to Long-term

[3] Ensure access to more diversified and integrated use of available public funding by 'mainstreaming' the development of mountainous areas into relevant territorial and sectoral policies at EU, national and sub-national levels			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Explicitly acknowledge the specific needs of mountain areas in all strategic documents shaping the direction of EU policies of direct relevance to mountain areas, thereby more effectively targeting the development of	EU authorities	EU funds subject to the obligations of Article 174 TFEU are:	Medium- to Long-term

[34] See pp. 53-56 of Gløersen, E. (2016b): https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/573420/IPOL_STU%282016%29573420_EN.pdf
[35] https://www.interreg-central.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Central-Mountains-Joint-Strategy-Report.pdf
[36] See p. 59 of Gløersen, E. (2016b): https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/573420/IPOL_STU%282016%29573420_EN.pdf
[37] https://www.interreg-central.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Central-Mountains-Joint-Strategy-Report.pdf

mountain regions in accordance with Article 174[38] of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). For concrete examples of how Cohesion Policy Funds (ERDF, ESF+, CF and JTF) have been used in mountain areas, see: https://www.montana174.org/. There is currently no equivalent website for rural development funding.		• European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) • European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) • Cohesion Fund (CF) • European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) • European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) • Just Transition Fund (JTF)	
Earmark funds for mountain areas at national/regional level against strategic policy objectives. This includes: • Linking with the operationalisation of national legislation on mountain area development where it exists (e.g. there are existing Mountain Laws in France[39], Romania[40] and the Spanish Region of Catalonia), and; • Creating specific Operational Programmes dedicated to mountain areas. Past experiences with such mountain-specific programmes have contributed to better address the needs of mountain areas. In addition, programmes covering a whole mountain massif can help to overcome administrative boundaries and respond to the global challenges of a massif spanning several regions (also see Recommendation 2).	EU and National authorities	At EU level, progress has been made in the 2021-2027 programme period with the creation of the new Cohesion Policy Objective 5 "A Europe closer to its citizens"[42] which aims to respond to the needs of territories and supports the uptake of tools such as ITI and CLLD. However, these funds are not specifically targeted at rural and mountain areas. At national level, agreements for the use of EU funds are set out in	Medium- to Long-term

[38] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu_2008/art_174/oj

[39] Recent information on the French Mountain Law is available here: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Mountain-Politics-in-France-Thomas-Bunel-ANCT.pdf

[40] Further information on the Romanian Mountain Law is included as the Implementation Example for Building Block 1

[42] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/how/priorities_en

The European Parliament has recently called for more earmarking of funds for mountain areas in its December 2022 report on the EU long-term vision for rural areas (LTVRA)[41].		Partnership Agreements[43] between the European Commission and individual EU countries.	
Make innovative use of ESIF Financial Instruments to attract private investors to profit-generating activities (e.g. broadband infrastructure) in mountain municipalities that have high demands for finance but limited public expenditure budgets.	National and Regional authorities	The FI-Compass portal[44] provides more information on the potential use of ESIF Financial Instruments in rural areas	
Recognise and address the specificities of mountain areas at all key stages in the strategic programming of EU funds at national and/or regional level. This is particularly relevant when developing the intervention logic (definitions, analyses, SWOT and needs assessment and priorities) of National CAP Strategic Plans[45] and ERDF Regional Development Plans	National and Regional authorities	For example, the needs of mountain areas should always be analysed in the preparation of National CAP Strategic Plans, not just "where relevant"[46]	Medium- to Long-term
Ensure mountain-specific measures and support actions in future cross-border, interregional, and transnational Interreg Operational Programmes to avoid the risk of leaving any mountain area behind.	National, Regional and Local authorities	Interreg Operational Programmes	Medium- to Long-term
Make innovative use of local tax regimes at relevant levels of fiscal administration. This might include policies such as licensing for second home rentals and increasing council tax on second homes to generate funds for affordable housing, especially for MPVC workers' families.	National and Regional authorities	Potential opportunities range from tax incentives for mountain residents and businesses (strongly linking any tax benefits to local	Medium- to Long-term

[41] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0436_EN.html
[43] Details of all EU-Member State Partnership Agreements for 2021-2027 are here: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/partnership-agreements-eu-funds-2021-2027_en
[44] See the FI-Compass portal for advisory services on the use of financial instruments under EU-shared management: https://www.fi-compass.eu/
[45] Details of National CAP Strategic Plans for 2023-2023 for all EU Member States are here: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans_en
[46] As is currently stated in Article 108(d) of Regulation (EU) 2021/2155: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115/oj

Alternatively, use reduced taxation on economic activities in sparsely populated areas and lower taxes on high-altitude lands to make it more economically viable for landowners to maintain their residential properties for farmworkers etc.		identity and conditions to avoid misuse by external businesses relocating and/or exploiting cheap local labour or resources) to the development of 'local development funds' financed by (over-)tourism taxes, energy production taxes etc.	

[4] Improve the accessibility and delivery of 'Services of General Interest' (SGIs) as an essential precondition for the sustainable development of mountain regions			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Ensure investment in 'Services of general interest' (SGIs) in mountain areas. SGIs are basic services like mobility, digital accessibility, postal services, energy supply, education, health care, and social care. These are of vital importance for mountain areas but are still often lacking or of sub-standard quality in many regions despite having long been recognised as playing a major role in ensuring social, economic and territorial cohesion[47].	National, Regional and Local authorities	SGIs are defined as public service obligations which can be provided either by the state or by the private sector and, therefore, multiple policy interventions/funding opportunities of relevance. There are many recommendations to improve the access and delivery of SGIs in mountain areas in a Euromontana position paper (2011)[48] and EUSALP Think Tank Paper (2020) [49].	Medium- to Long-term

[47] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0724:FIN:en:PDF
[48] https://euromontana.sky-t.bm-services.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2011_Positionpaper_SGI_Summary_EN2.pdf
[49] https://servicepublic.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Think_Tank_AG5_Thesis_Paper_rev_May_2020.pdf

[5] Reduce the administrative burden upon mountain farmers, businesses and communities			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Reduce bureaucracy in spatial planning policy to facilitate greater diversification of economic activity in mountain areas, but without losing the key function of the planning system to protect key environmental assets (e.g. to avoid construction of mass-tourism or intensive agriculture facilities).	National, Regional and Local authorities	Specific guidelines and best practices for spatial planning in mountain areas are available on the Alpine Convention website[50]	Medium- to Long-term
Facilitate greater access of smaller beneficiaries to EU funds in mountain areas by adopting simplified cost options (SCOs), such as flat rate financing indirect costs, standard scales of unit costs and lump sums, that reduce administrative burden and allow organisations to focus more on the achievement of objectives.	National and Regional authorities	SCOs are relevant to a variety of CAP and Cohesion Policy measures important for mountain areas, including LEADER and CLLD. Detailed guidance for national and regional authorities is available[51]	Short- to Medium-term depending upon Member State

[6] Support mountain territories with a facility for the development, monitoring and adaptation of policy interventions in the context of increasing uncertainty and change			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Establish national level 'Mountain Observatories' to increase the collection and dissemination of disaggregated data on economic, social, environmental *and* meteorological issues of relevance to the following specific aims of:	National authorities	In accordance with the obligations of Article 175 of the TFEU[53] to put in place specific tools to support the implementation of Article 174 on the	Long-term

[50] https://www.alpconv.org/en/home/topics/spatial-planning/
[51] The most recent Commission Guidance notes (May 2021) are here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XC0527(02)
[53] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016E175

a) monitoring the development of mountain areas with an appropriate set of simplified indicators, including alignment with the more comprehensive approach to measuring prosperity and well-being proposed by the EU 'Beyond GDP' initiative[52] ; b) supporting better evidence-based policies and strategy-making for mountain areas, including the monitoring and evaluation of existing policy actions, and; c) boosting the implementation of Territorial Impact Assessment / 'Rural Proofing' for mountain areas to identify and analyse the potential impacts arising from new regulations, plans or programmes. Ideally these 'Mountain Observatory' systems should include accessible and interactive detailed EC spatial mapping at below NUTS3 level and cross-border scale. All data should be made available to the Rural Observatory (launched in December 2022) and Eurostat.		strengthening of economic, social and territorial cohesion and the reduction of disparities in less favoured regions, including mountain areas.	
Use all available geographical tools and data repositories to undertake relevant analyses that reflect the full range of scales of governance encountered in mountain areas (from transnational mountain ranges to individual mountain localities) to support strategic programming of future CAP and Cohesion Policy funds and subsequent evaluations.	EU, National and Regional authorities	Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA)[54], plus evaluations (ex-ante / on-going / ex-post) of National CAP Strategic Plans[55] and Cohesion Policy funds	Short- to Medium-term

[52] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/economy-and-finance/alternative-measures-progress-beyond-gdp_en#

[54] https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/Territorial-Impact-Assessment.aspx

[55] Guidelines and a toolbox for the design of Member States evaluation plans for 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plans are here: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/publications/guidelines-design-evaluation-plans_en. Further useful insights into the challenges of addressing data gaps for evaluation are available from a good practice workshop organised by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/addressing-data-gaps-evaluate-cap-strategic-plans_en

Building Block 1 - Implementation Example

Better Governance for the Sustainable and Inclusive Development of the Romanian Carpathian Mountains
The Romania Carpathians cover a total of 91,336 km^2 (38.3% of national territory) and encompass 4.8 million people (approximately 25% of total population). In common with other mountainous regions of Europe, they face specific challenges for effective governance. To help overcome these challenges and to provide a legal framework for promoting the sustainable and inclusive development of the mountain areas, the Romanian Government introduced a new Mountain Law in 2018[56]. This was inspired by the 1985 Mountain Law of France[57], which established the concept of decentralizing and differentiating mountain policies based on the recognition that mountain massifs are unique and separate territorial units each with specific needs. Based on the French experience, one specific feature of the Romanian Mountain Law is the 're-organisation' of mountain area governance at the level of 9 *"mountain groups (massifs)"* – each of which form a single distinct geographic, economic and social entity sharing similar characteristics. A Massif Committee is organised for each of the 9 mountain massifs to advise on the implementation of policies and strategies for the development and protection of the mountain economy and environment. Each Massif Committee is represented in a national government consultation body which is established under the office of the Prime Minister and mandated to liaise with other relevant Ministries and government agencies as necessary. The 2018 Mountain Law does not include any specific provision to enhance community participation – either directly or indirectly - in the governance of mountain areas in Romania. This is a weakness of the current legislation and consideration should be given to updating the Mountain Law (as recently done in France). Nonetheless, the Law does acknowledge the importance of developing the competencies of all public officials with responsibilities for executive decision-making, administration and advisory roles in mountain area development. Consequently, it advocates participation in regular training/specialisation/refresher courses provided by the National Agency for Mountain Areas[58] that functions as an executive agency of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. A major challenge facing the Romanian government has been how exactly to operationalise the ambitions of the 2018 Mountain Law and to transpose its policy objectives into practical action. In 2022, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development initiated (with the support of the World Bank and

[56] https://azm.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Legea-Muntelui-nr.-197-din-20.07.2018.pdf

[57] Recent information on the French Mountain Law is available here: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Mountain-Politics-in-France-Thomas-Bunel-ANCT.pdf

[58] https://azm.gov.ro/

European Social Fund 2014-2020) the preparation of a new *Integrated Strategy for the Development of Romania's Mountain Area*[59] that aimed to significantly expand the current level of support to mountain area development and to increase its effectiveness.

The Strategy is constructed around a vision ("A Living Mountain Area" / "O Zonă Montană vie") to 2035[60] and is focused on addressing 5 key challenge areas:

1. Demographic Decline and Low Living Standards
2. Isolation and Connectivity: Limited Quality of Public and Private Services in Mountain Area Communities
3. Lack of Economic Competitiveness and Sector Challenges
4. Pressure on Natural Resources and Environmental Management Systems
5. Weak Governance and Low Institutional Capacities to Access Funding and Service Mountain Communities

All related documents are available online in English and Romanian[61].

[59] https://www.madr.ro/docs/poca/2024/A4.4-EN-Draft-Integrated-Strategy-MA.pdf
[60] This time horizon aligns with the end of the forthcoming EU programme period of 2028–2034. A longer-term vision to 2025 is also invoked, but not prioritised.
[61] https://www.madr.ro/proiecte-cu-finantare-nerambursabila/proiect-poca-zona-montana.html

Building Block 2: Balancing Ecology & Society

Overall Aim:	**To support the achievement of a better balance between ecological integrity and social well-being in mountain areas**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[62]:	• Towards a triple sustainability, economic, environmental and social (ES) • Mountains as connectors between humans and nature (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • Diversity and inclusion (MOVING European Foresight workshop)	
Alignment with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes)*:	**STRONGER**	• Rural revitalisation – village renewal • Access to public and private services
	CONNECTED	• Improving transport infrastructures • Rural-urban linkages
	RESILIENT	• Soil health • Green farming activities • Land use and spatial planning • Women empowerment & entrepreneurship/gender equality • Social inclusion (migrants, people with disabilities, minorities, LGBTQ+) • Care services (incl. childcare) • Health and safety at work
	PROSPEROUS	• Economic diversification (developing new sectors) • Entrepreneurship & SMEs (making rural areas more attractive for them) • Increasing employment opportunities for young people, including in farming • Developing short supply chains • Labelling and geographical indications

[62] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Policy Recommendations

[7] Adopt the use of integrated, holistic policy-making approaches and processes that are better suited to the contemporary challenges of transitioning to more sustainable and resilient mountain areas			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Reintegrate the European Agricultural Fund for Agriculture (EAFRD)[63] within the legal framework of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) regulating the governance of those EU funds whose delivery is shared with Member States and regions. This would enable EU-MS Partnership Agreements[64] to better coordinate the national-level integration of EAFRD and Cohesion Policy funds targeted at Article 174 areas mountain areas, including the facilitation of more integrated, multi-funded LEADER/CLLD initiatives in mountain areas.	EU authorities	Post-2027 drafting of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)[65]	Medium- to Long-term
Adopt a Socio-Ecological Systems (SES) approach for creative place-based policymaking, including the further development of novel governance frameworks that support the evolving contribution of sustainable human-nature interactions with place-based, holistic and participatory approaches at the landscape level. Use these frameworks to foster multi-actor collaboration, innovation, and collective learning, while leveraging positive externalities and mitigating negative ones, particularly in resource-sensitive mountain environments.	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary organisations	The FAO GIAHS is an especially inspiring example (*see Implementation Example below*). The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme[66] and World Heritage Sites[67], as well as some national nature parks or biosphere programmes that follow an SES approach, are also good examples.	Medium- to Long-term

[63] The EAFRD was integrated with the European structural and investments funds for 2014-2020, but was not included in the CPR for the 2021-2027 programme period

[64] Partnership Agreements between the European Commission and individual EU countries establish the framework for the use of EU funds at national/regional levels. Details of all EU-Member State Partnership Agreements for 2021-2027 are here: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/partnership-agreements-eu-funds-2021-2027_en

[65] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1060

[66] https://www.unesco.org/en/mab

[67] https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/

Use communication campaigns and other publicity activities to raise awareness among MPVC actors of the socio-ecological systems (SES) approach and its relevance to their businesses. For example, promote recognition of the value of traditional practices such as grazing systems and transhumance for the preservation of landscapes, marketing high-quality products, and basis of business models such as Certified Ecotourism. This is an important complementary action to the development of novel governance frameworks and place-based policymaking for mountain areas (see Building Block 1), plus the development and funding of national and regional initiatives for branding local mountain products and services (Building Block 6).	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary organisations	See Building Blocks 1 and 6 There are numerous policy interventions of relevance, as well as examples of good practice[68]	Short- to Medium-term
Support the development of more holistic local strategies and action plans with the use of available diagnostic tools for assessing regional and landscape-level sustainability, vulnerability, and resilience.	National, Regional and Local authorities	See the MOVING Vulnerability Assessment Tools[69]; the FAO SHARP tool[70], and; the UN SDG Indicator Dashboard[71].	Medium- to Long-term
Follow the existing examples of EU Member States that have adopted holistic strategies, action plans or programmes for rural development.	National and Regional authorities	An interesting example is the National Strategy for Inner Areas[72] in Italy that goes beyond farming and agricultural production to address a wide range of rural issues including education, digitalisation, culture and well-being	Medium- to Long-term

[68] For example, see the EUROMONTANA Booklets of good practices for the development of mountain areas (2018 -2024): https://www.euromontana.org/publications-en/?_sfm_type_of_publication=Booklets%20of%20good%20practices

[69] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/vulnerability-tools/

[70] https://www.fao.org/in-action/sharp/sharp-tool/en/

[71] https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/chapters/part-2-the-sdg-index-and-dashboards

[72] https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/sites/enrd/files/tg_smart-villages_case-study_it.pdf

Consider alignment with the EU 'Beyond GDP' initiative[73] that aims to develop a more comprehensive approach to measuring prosperity and well-being and ensure that new indicators are integrated into decision-making processes at the national and EU levels.	EU and National authorities	Mountain areas are especially appropriate for implementing beyond-GDP policymaking since they are arguably the places that are least adapted for GDP-oriented policies, thereby turning them into lighthouses for future-fit policies.	Medium- to Long-term
All recommendations and leverage points in this Policy Roadmap are equally valid for consideration in a) the accession process of EU candidate countries with mountain territories, including North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey, and; b) international agreements with border countries typically sharing mountain ranges with EU Member States.	EU and National authorities	EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)[74], bilateral agreements, and trans-border agreements. The IPARD Plan for North Macedonia[75], for example, already gives extensive consideration to the development of the country's mountainous areas	Medium- to Long-term

[73] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/economy-and-finance/alternative-measures-progress-beyond-gdp_en#
[74] https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/overview-instrument-pre-accession-assistance_en
[75] https://ipard.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/IPARD-PROGRAMME-2014_2020-V-th-modification-ENG.pdf

Building Block 2 - Implementation Example

FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Programme

The concept of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) is defined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations as *"agroecosystems inhabited by communities that live in an intricate relationship with their territory"*[76]. This is distinct from, and more complex than, a conventional heritage site or protected area/landscape. According to the authors of the GIAHS conceptual and strategic framework, *"GIAHS are social-ecological systems in which their **stewards (the populations who have co-created and sustain them)** have had to continuously adapt and innovate just to keep up with shocks, disturbances and change of all types – ecological, economic, political and cultural"* [77].

The FAO GIAHS programme is an excellent example of a novel governance system that aims to balance ecological preservation and social well-being in the context of traditional agricultural production systems, including in mountain regions. The Programme identifies and safeguards such systems and their associated landscapes, agricultural biodiversity and knowledge systems through **intervention strategies** at three distinct levels:

- At the **Global level**, it promotes international recognition of the GIAHS concept and disseminates lessons learned and best practices from pilot project activities at national and local/site levels.
- At the **National level**, it organises activities in pilot countries that aim to mainstream the GIAHS concept in national sectoral and inter-sectoral plans and policies
- At the **Local/Site level**, it implements practical project activities that deliver practical conservation and adaptive management at the community level.

The GIAHS programme goes beyond simple conservation by actively promoting the socio-economic development of local communities. It encourages the continuation of traditional knowledge and practices while also introducing sustainable innovations that can improve livelihoods. This approach helps to prevent rural exodus, preserve cultural identity, and ensure the long-term viability of these unique agricultural systems.
Since 2005, 86 production systems in 26 countries have been recognised as GIAHS sites. In Europe, six (of ten) GIAHS are located in mountain areas:

- The Sub-alpine Pastures of Andorra – GIAHS since 2023[78]

[76] https://www.fao.org/giahs/en/
[77] https://www.fao.org/4/ap025e/ap025e.pdf
[78] https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/europe-and-central-asia/supraforestal-pastures-andorra/en/

- Traditional Hay Milk Farming in the Austrian Alpine Arc – GIAHS since 2023[79]
- Agro-Silvo-Pastoral System of the León Mountains, Spain – GIAHS since 2022[80]
- Olive Groves of the Slopes between Assisi and Spoleto, Italy – GIAHS since 2018[81]
- Barroso Agro-Sylvo-Pastoral System, Portugal – GIAHS since 2018[82]
- Malaga Raisin Production System in La Axarquía, Spain – GIAHS since 2017[83]

To establish a GIAHS, regional authorities should first identify agricultural systems of historical and cultural significance, gather documentation, and develop a comprehensive Conservation and Management Action Plan. Engaging local communities and forming partnerships with relevant stakeholders (farmers and foresters, other value chain actors, NGOs, local communities, etc.) is crucial for securing support. Once the proposal is prepared, it should be submitted through appropriate national channels (government ministry or committee) to FAO.

Typical governance structures for a GIAHS include local development associations, municipalities, farmers' associations, and civil society organisations. They may also include outside actors related to academia, tourism, and agricultural local or national departments. These public and private stakeholders must work together as a committee to identify the needs and concerns of local communities based on the idea of "adaptive management."

Traditional and family farming communities living in and around the GIAHS are the primary actors to involve. Local and national support should contribute to strengthen socio-political (governance) and economic processes (eco-tourism, niche markets, off-farm income, etc.) that help the farmers to address the main challenges and to make the most of the available economic opportunities, whilst at the same time maintaining the agro-ecosystem goods and services.

An Executive and Monitoring Committee, including representatives of the private and public stakeholders involved should be established to keep the Action Plan dynamic, monitor and evaluate progress with the Action Plan, and deal with possible conflicts that may arise.

For further information see the FAQ page of the GIAHS website[84].

[79] https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/europe-and-central-asia/hay-milk-farming-austria/en/
[80] https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/europe-and-central-asia/mountains-of-leon/en/
[81] https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/europe-and-central-asia/olive-groves-of-the-slopes-between-assisi-and-spoleto/en/
[82] https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/europe-and-central-asia/barroso-agro-slyvo-pastoral-system/en/
[83] https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/europe-and-central-asia/malaga-raisin-production-system-in-la-axarquia/en/
[84] https://www.fao.org/giahs/faq/en/

Building Block 3: Fostering Collaboration & Networking

Aim:	**To foster cohesion and influence (agency) amongst MPVC actors through collaboration and networking**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[85]:	• Swiss Local Food Competition (CH) • Terra Thessalia (EL) • Place-based and Thematic Partnerships (GB) • Local Innovation Partnership (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • Local community revitalization (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • Strengthening cooperation in local beef production (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • A cross-border approach to VC development: product and production process (FR) • Political bottom-up advice groups (MOVING European Foresight workshop)	
Synergy with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes):*	**STRONGER**	• Research & innovation for rural communities • LEADER / CLLD • Smart Villages
	RESILIENT	• Developing short supply chains • Women empowerment & entrepreneurship/gender equality
	PROSPEROUS	• Social economy • Developing short supply chains • Strengthening producers' organisations

[85] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Policy Recommendations

[8] Build formal and informal relationships within and between MPVC actors to foster collaboration for the benefit of all related actors			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Enhance the bargaining power and competitiveness of mountain farmers by supporting the creation and strengthening of formal cooperative organisations, including the setting up and support of mountain Producer Groups (PGs) and Producer Organisations (PO)[86]. Where appropriate, mobilise CAP support for established POs under a relevant common market organisation (CMO) or with transitional support in sectors/regions where the organisation of producers is low (as is likely to be the case in many mountain regions). Such formal cooperative structures can greatly strengthen the collective bargaining power of farmers by concentrating supply, improving marketing, providing technical and logistical assistance to their members, helping with quality management, and transferring knowledge.	National and Regional authorities	In accordance with Article 77[87] of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, measures in the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans can provide assistance for setting up PGs, POs and other forms of collaboration. A comprehensive overview of EU support for POs is available on the DG AGRI website[88], together with various related links, including the legal bases governing POs and CMOs in agricultural products.	Short- to Medium-term
Make full use of the flexibility of the cooperation (COOP) measures in the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plans, including actions for: ● Establishing and managing short supply chains ● Promoting and supporting the use of quality schemes by farmers ● Improving the collective management of common resources, such as mountain pastures	National and Regional authorities	Article 77 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 is very flexible, and a broad range of collaborative actions can be supported under the COOP measures of the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans.	Short-term

[86] A useful model for mountain products is the Interprofessional Systems in PDO/PGI schemes with measures in place to support collaboration and networking skills e.g. through the use of skilled facilitators

[87] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

[88] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/agri-food-supply-chain/producer-and-interbranch-organisations_en

[9] Establish regional multi-actor structures (e.g. at the level of individual massifs) for informal and formal collaboration and exchange, and to foster cohesion and identity for the benefit of thriving local communities and MPVCs			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Support the creation and strengthening of mountain agri-food clusters that bring together producers, processors, and other useful stakeholders (e.g. researchers and consultants) to promote regional development, innovation, and sustainability through local products. There are several existing examples in Europe of agrifood clusters that serve mountain areas and mountain products. One prominent example is the *FOOD+i Cluster* in Spain (see Implementation Example for this Building Block). Others include *Les Terres d'Auvergne* (France)[89] which facilitates cooperation among 33 local cheese producers, promotes their use of quality labels (including organic), and supports innovation and marketing efforts to enhance their competitiveness.	Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations	The sources of funding used for setting up and running agri-food clusters are diverse and depending upon their scale and scope may include national/regional governments, ERDF (Interreg), EAFRD (COOP interventions), the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme – plus private sector funding from cluster partners	Medium- to Long-term
Safeguard (and/or revive) physical meeting places that serve as unofficial incubators of collaboration, networks and (social) innovations for mountain farmers. Examples include cattle markets, fairs, associations' offices, local processing facilities, communal facilities for cleaning, storing, selling etc. It is very important to provide opportunities for MPVC actors to informally meet in-person, to interact and create exchanges and synergies that build cohesion and agency.		Funding is most commonly provided by regional/local authorities, plus local CSOs, private businesses etc.	Short- to Medium-term

[89] https://www.terres-auvergne.fr/

[10] Organise exchanges at a macro-regional level between mountain area representatives to facilitate and enable more inter-territorial cooperation projects			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Promote learning and exchange of experience between MPVC actors through LEADER inter-territorial and transnational cooperation between mountain regions.	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations	LEADER cooperation is programmed in the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans in accordance with Article 77[90] of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115	Short- to Medium-term
Actively support the engagement of MPVC actors with relevant networks and their networking activities. Formal networks with a specific interest in connecting to actors and stakeholders in peripheral regions, such as mountains, include the Rural Pact, ELARD[91], Ecolise[92], National and EU CAP Networks[93], Euromontana and the Network For European Mountain Research (NEMOR)[94].		At the European level, this could be part of the EU CAP Network[95] or part of the new Rural Pact community platform[96]	
Actively support the engagement of MPVC actors in relevant macro-regional strategies covering mountain territories and in Interreg interregional and translational projects, including opportunities for international cross-visits and informal networking.		EUSALP[97], Interreg Alpine Space, Carpathian Civil Society Platform[98], Interreg POCTEFA, Interreg Europe etc.	

[90] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115
[91] https://elard.eu/
[92] https://ecolise.eu/who-we-are/about/
[93] Simple interventions can be very effective e.g. the travel voucher offered by the Finnish CAP network to support participation in national and international networking events
[94] https://nemor.creaf.cat/
[95] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/index_en
[96] https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/index_en
[97] https://alpine-region.eu/
[98] https://www.karpatokalapitvany.hu/en/tartalom/carpathian-civil-society-platform

Building Block 3 - Implementation Example

A Technology Centre and Agrifood Cluster serving mountain areas in Spain

Cluster Food+i is a large agrifood cluster located in the Ebro Valley, Spain[99]. It covers the regions of La Rioja, Basque Country, Aragon, Navarre, and Catalonia and was established with the goal of enhancing the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the agrifood sector in these regions.

The cluster was initiated by a local technology centre (Ctic-Cita[100]) and is now co-funded by the La Rioja Government. It brings together a diverse group of stakeholders, including agrifood companies (from SMEs to large corporations), research and innovation centres, universities, farmers' associations, and public authorities. By fostering collaboration among these entities, *Cluster Food+i* aims to create a robust innovation ecosystem that enhances the productivity, sustainability, and market reach of local agri-food products.

Cluster Food+i plays an important role in supporting the valorisation of local mountain products. The mountain regions adjacent to the Ebro Valley are characterized by their unique agroecological conditions, which influence the type of agricultural products that can be produced, often leading to the cultivation of high-quality, niche products such as specialty cheeses, wines, and organic produce. The cluster promotes the development and commercialization of these mountain products by facilitating access to innovation, new technologies, and market strategies that are essential for overcoming the logistical and economic challenges faced by producers in these areas. By integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices, the cluster helps maintain the authenticity and heritage of mountain products while ensuring their competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

Moreover, *Cluster Food+i* supports sustainable agricultural practices that are well-suited to the mountainous terrain, such as organic farming and low-impact production methods. These practices not only preserve the environmental integrity of the mountains but also enhance the appeal of the products as environmentally friendly and high-quality, which is increasingly valued by consumers. The cluster's activities also include the promotion of mountain products through participation in European networks and projects[101], thereby increasing the visibility of these products and integrating them into broader value chains. This is crucial for local mountain communities, where agriculture forms the backbone of the local economy, providing employment and sustaining rural livelihoods. For more information, see: https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/cluster-foodi-setting-up-of-a-supra-regional-agrofood-cluster

[99] https://www.clusterfoodmasi.es/en/home-foodi/
[100] https://fudin.es/en/home/
[101] The Cluster has implemented more than 30 collaborative projects in the past 8 years and currently (August 2024) has 17 on-going projects (including 7 European projects) with a combined budget of EUR 34.2 million

Building Block 4: Growing Skills, Knowledge & Innovation

Aim:	**To build human capacities (including agency) amongst MPVC actors and other key stakeholders in mountain areas through skills, knowledge and innovation**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[102]:	• Global Competence for Whisky Centre (GB) • Seeds' Valley Ecological Farm at Terény (HU) • COZZANO, Smart Village (FR) • Alternative Knowledge/System of Sustainable Living (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • Open Platform/ AI & New Technologies (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • Bieszczady Multiactor Platform (PL) • Triple helix of capacity building for nature-based business in mountain areas (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • Agricultural trainings (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • ERASMUS ALTITUDE Capacity building & knowledge exchange for elected people and professional technicians (MOVING European Foresight workshop)	
Synergy with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes):*	**STRONGER**	• Research & innovation for rural communities • Education, training, youth, sport & volunteering in rural areas
	CONNECTED	• Development of digital technologies • Improvement of digital skills
	RESILIENT	• Women empowerment & entrepreneurship/gender equality • Social inclusion (migrants, people with disabilities, minorities, LGBTQ+)
	PROSPEROUS	• Increasing access to digital education and training • Entrepreneurship & SMEs (making rural areas more attractive for them) • Increasing employment opportunities for young people, including in farming

[102] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Policy Recommendations

[11] Ensure that mountain communities, including MPVC actors and all related stakeholders, have the necessary information, capacity and agency to successfully implement the most appropriate Transition Pathways towards greater sustainability and resilience			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Develop a multi-lingual EU-level platform for helping mountain communities, including their local authorities, to 1) navigate the numerous opportunities offered by the CAP and Cohesion Policy and 2) have the tools and guidance for successfully making use of these funds. This could be an extended version of the existing Montana174 platform[103].	EU authorities	Such a platform could be introduced as an integral part of the Rural Toolkit[104] that the European Commission has developed to support the LTVRA	Short-term
Provide training and resources to improve the policy formulation and implementation skills of local and regional policymakers and administrators, including LEADER Local Action Group managers in mountain areas. This should include methodological and financial support for local communities to develop local strategies, including the use of foresight exercises (or other similar methods) for determining their own Transition Pathways. Capacity building of local and regional policymakers and public administrators is especially important also in the context of pre-accession and should not be overlooked in the candidate countries of North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.	National authorities	See available resources like the EU Better Regulation Toolbox[105] and publications of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP[106]. The *MOVING 'Quick Start' Policy Design Toolkit* [107] provides practical guidance on proven participatory methods for ensuring that policy-making processes are relevant to the needs and expectations of local stakeholders.	Short- to Medium-term

[103] https://www.montana174.org/library/
[104] https://funding.rural-vision.europa.eu/?lng=en
[105] https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox/better-regulation-toolbox_en
[106] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/support/evaluation/good-practice-workshops_en
[107] D7.2 Policy Audit and Policy Design Toolkit is available on the MOVING website: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/library/

		ESF+ can be used for strengthening public administration. For example, the Romanian ESF Operational Programme 2014-2020 was used to build the capacity of the National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM).	
Strengthen the presence in mountains and the role and funds of intermediary organisations with responsibility for capacity building for territorial development (including mountain areas) that organise and deliver training and information campaigns, networking, experience exchanges etc.	National authorities	Existing examples include the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) in France[108], National Union of Mountain Municipalities (UNCEM) in Italy[109] and National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM) in Romania[110]	Medium- to Long-term

[12] Focus on the importance and relevance of the cross-cutting objective (CCO) of the 2023-2027 CAP to mountain areas and MPVCs, especially regarding the obligation to strengthen Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKISs)			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Develop a strategic AKIS approach in future National CAP Strategic Plans that is specific for mountain areas. This should be planned as a transformative process involving strong collaboration and networking between all key AKIS actors (education, training, research and public/private advisors) working in mountain territories. Knowledge and innovation have a key role to	European, National and Regional authorities	Article 114 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[111] currently requires that Member States include a strategic AKIS approach in their National CAP Strategic Plan for supporting the	Medium-term

[108] https://agence-cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/
[109] https://uncem.it/
[110] https://azm.gov.ro/
[111] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

play in helping mountain farmers and communities meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Involve the younger generation AKIS actors (e.g. young farmers, advisors, researchers). Young people are overall more open-minded, transition enthusiastic and often more likely to get involved in innovation projects.		"modernisation" of the agricultural sector. This should include mountain farming.	
Provide targeted support to organisations and individuals providing advisory and innovation support services in mountain areas. This should include programmes of continuous professional development to local/regional advisors (public and private) to ensure they are updated on mountain-adapted technologies, extensive production methods, and modern applications of traditional farming practices		Article 15 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[112] currently requires that Member States support farm advisory services that cover *"economic, environmental and social dimensions, taking into account existing farming practices, and deliver up-to-date technological and scientific information developed by means of research and innovation projects, including the provision of public goods"*. Article 78 (KNOW interventions) makes provision for the setting up and funding of farm advisory services, together with many other forms of knowledge exchange and information actions.	Short- to Medium-term
Earmark a specific financial envelope for AKIS activities in mountain territories in the National CAP Strategic Plans and ensure that such a mechanism is adopted as obligatory in the 2028-2034 CAP.			Short- to Medium-term
Make full and effective use of the EIP-AGRI in mountain territories, including available funding for Operational Groups (OGs) and projects[113], the 'innovation	National and Regional authorities	Article 77 (COOP interventions) of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 makes provision for the setting up of	Short-term

[112] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115
[113] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/operational-groups_en

strand' of the National CAP Networks[114] and linkage to the Horizon framework programme for research and innovation[115]. This includes the possibility of using large-scale EIP-AGRI OGs to develop and pilot new policy tools, such as innovative agri-environment-climate measures[116]. Over 80 mountain-related OG projects were financed in 2014-2020[117] and according to DG AGRI, the Member States have programmed funding for over 6000 new OGs in 2023-2027, so there are many opportunities for mountain areas! See the results of the recent EIP-AGRI Focus Group on 'Competitive and resilient mountain areas'[118] for ideas and inspiration regarding potential new mountain OGs. Cross-border OGs can also be funded in the 2023-2027 programme period. According to the multi-actor project approach in Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe (HEU), *"it is strongly recommended that interactive innovation groups, such as EIP-AGRI Operational Groups"* are involved in HEU projects[119]. This includes one call (most recently: HORIZON-CL6-2023-GOVERNANCE-01-18) that is focused on broadening the outcomes of OGs through means of thematic networks.		EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and the preparation and implementation of interactive innovation projects in accordance with Article 127(3) of the same regulation. Article 126(4) requires that the National CAP Networks play a role in supporting Operational Groups, including their establishment, networking and connection with Horizon Europe multi-actor projects.	

[114] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/national-networks_en
[115] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe-creating-knowledge-and-innovation-sustainable-agriculture-forestry-and-rural_en
[116] See the Hen Harrier OG project (Results-based Farming for Ecosystem Services) from Ireland: http://www.henharrierproject.ie/
[117] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/projects/search_en?fulltext=mountain&f[0]=main_funding_source%3Ardp_2014_2020_og
[118] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/focus-group-competitive-and-resilient-mountain-areas_en
[119] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-9-food-bioeconomy-natural-resources-agriculture-and-environment_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

[13] Use all available funding opportunities to support education and professional and vocational training for mountain communities, including the development and testing of new approaches to skills and knowledge for mountain areas			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Prioritise young entrepreneurs and their key role in revitalising mountain areas by actively supporting generational renewal and the entry of young people into mountain farming and other related local businesses associated with the production, processing and distribution of mountain products. This should include a specific focus on "responsible entrepreneurship" and increased awareness and consideration of environmental and social responsibilities in all day-to-day and strategic decision-making by businesses.	National and Regional authorities	Article 75 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[120] makes provision for the setting up of young farmers and new farmers, plus rural business start-ups (INSTALL interventions), with the possibility of increased aid intensity in mountainous areas. The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is a highly versatile tool that can be used strategically to enhance skills and education in mountain areas. Relevance actions that could be included in national or regional Operational Programmes include: • Improving access to education and training through the funding of distance learning platforms or mobile training units • Tailoring vocational training to specific local needs	Short- to Medium term
Tailor training resources for farmers and other skilled MPVC workers that focus on the use of mountain-adapted technologies, extensive production methods, production and preservation of heirloom crops and animals, and modern applications of traditional farming practices. For example, the FAO Mountain Partnership maintains a very interesting global database[121] of mountain training courses which is a rich source of inspiration and learning. It is essential that vocational/educational training dealing with mountain ecosystems and products remain in mountain areas. It should also include facilitating the transfer of knowledge from experienced individuals to newcomers to ensure continuity and improvement in practices, including the continuation of traditional knowledge and skills through retro-innovation.			
Provide access (locally or distance-learning) to training for more generic skills essential for MPVC actors upgrading efforts (marketing, e-commerce,			

[120] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115
[121] https://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/mountain-education-database/mountain-courses/en/

logistics, etc), collaboration skills (collaboration, facilitation, coordination, etc), trans-sectoral understanding (health, tourism, energy) and investing in non-production skills that give more agency to mountain actors. This includes adapting educational and training approaches to the specific need for building a future-oriented, digitally literate workforce embracing sustainability, innovation and collaboration, considering a place-based and participatory definition of the "balance of skills" needed in the future, not forgetting secondary-school youth and young adults potentially returning after going to University or abroad.		• Supporting lifelong learning and upskilling, including continuous professional development and intergenerational learning • Strengthening local educational and vocational training institutions by improving their curriculum design and delivery methods • Fostering entrepreneurship with specialist training and the establishment of innovation hubs and incubators • Facilitating mobility, exchange programmes and work placements in other regions or countries, including cross-border cooperation projects	
Make significantly more use of Erasmus+ for cross-mountain knowledge exchange. For example, an "ERASMUS Altitude" could greatly accelerate the exchange of knowledge between all mountain ranges. It would aim to enable physical and virtual exchanges and to strengthen knowledge based on the exchange of experience between peers in the various mountain ranges and territories.	EU and National authorities	Erasmus+ is programmed at both the European and national levels, with a structure that allows for centralized and decentralized management to effectively address the diverse needs of participating countries and stakeholders. Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning Mobility of Individuals – is probably most suitable for cross-mountain exchange[122]	Short- to Medium term

[122] https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-1/key-action-1-learning-mobility-of-individuals

[14] Increase support for long-term scientific research, higher education and innovation projects in mountain regions			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Invest in the modernization of mountain research infrastructures, especially in lagging mountain regions where research infrastructure has been neglected for many years. This includes traditional agricultural experimentation fields and nurseries (mountain olives, wines, chestnuts, carobs, grain, etc.), as well as new applied research and innovation centres, focused on contemporary challenges such as living with predators, drought-resistant mountain crops, retro-innovation, transhumance, natural disasters etc. It is crucial to make research more place-based, multi-actor and focused on fostering innovation driven by local needs – as well as significantly better connected with the national/regional AKIS (see Recommendation 12). Good existing examples are the *Centre of Applied Studies for the Sustainable Management and Protection of Mountain Areas* (GeSDiMont) in Italy[123] and the *Forest Science and Technology Centre of Catalonia* (CTFC)[124], plus the recently established *CEDD-Agro-Eco-Clim* in Switzerland (see Implementation Example for this Building Block).	EU, National and Regional authorities	National/regional funds may be available depending on the country. Potential EU funding opportunities for investing in the modernization of research infrastructures include: • Horizon Research Infrastructures Programme[125] • Policy Objective 1 (Research and Innovation) of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund[126], including actions to enhance research and innovation capacities in Regional Operational Programmes and Smart Specialisation Strategies[127] • InnovFin (EU Finance for Innovators) of the European Investment Bank[128]	Medium- to Long-term
Build the capacity of researchers in mountain research centres and universities to develop their networks and skills for accessing the funding			

[123] https://www.unimontagna.it/en/about-us/crc-ge-s-di-mont/
[124] https://www.ctfc.cat/en/
[125] https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-research-infrastructures_en
[126] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1058
[127] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/communities-and-networks/s3-community-of-practice/about_en
[128] https://www.eib.org/attachments/thematic/innovfin_eu_finance_for_innovators_en.pdf

opportunities under national research programmes and the Horizon Europe framework programme for research and innovation. Where appropriate, actions should contribute to using and strengthening the Network for European Mountain Research (NEMOR) and delivering the strategic research agendas developed by the Mountain Research Initiative (2016)[130] and Euromontana / Network for European Mountain Research (NEMOR) (2024)[131].		The Horizon Europe *Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence*[129] sub-programme offers numerous opportunities for building research and innovation capacity in lagging countries, including the candidate countries of North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.	

[15] Focus on empowering the communities associated with MPVCs by fostering and multiplying social innovation in mountain areas			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Provide targeted and active support for fostering social innovation in mountain areas within the national/regional AKIS. Social innovation is often community-based and focused on 'social well-being' rather than the 'economic well-being' (productivity, profitability, efficiency etc.) of enterprises. It also commonly involves very diverse groups of local people working in partnership to mobilize their creativity, benefit from mutual learning and generally take advantage of the positive social dynamics that exist amongst them. Many agricultural and other rural advisors have limited capacity to engage effectively with social innovations, and they should be trained in participatory processes and kept up to date with new knowledge and relevant social innovations. This includes capitalising on the results of EU-funded research and	National and Regional authorities	Article 15 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[136] currently requires that Member States support farm advisory services that cover *"economic, environmental and social dimensions"*	Short- to Medium term

[130] https://mountainresearchinitiative.org/flagship-activities/completed-flagship-activities/mountains-for-europes-future/
[131] https://nemor.creaf.cat/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024_Priorities-for-mountain-research-1.pdf
[129] https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-widening-participation-and-spreading-excellence_en
[136] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

innovation projects such as H2020 SIMRA[132] and HEU ESIRA projects[133], as well as those generated by OGs within the EIP-AGRI. The SIMRA project remains an especially useful source of information, including a Social Innovation Practice Guide (in 5 languages)[134] and an evaluation manual for assessing the impact of social innovation in rural areas[135].			
Focus on working with LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs), EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs) and the Smart Village[137] concept to promote grass-roots social innovations in mountain areas, including those specifically relevant to MPVCs. LEADER remains a key building block of innovation support within the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plans, and every opportunity should be taken for closer integration of LEADER with the EIP-AGRI and, where appropriate, the establishment of Smart Villages. Mountain areas could provide a territorial focus for the 'piloting' of such alignment and collaboration and thereby contribute not only to their sustainability and resilience, but also the revitalisation of the LEADER approach.	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations	Funding for LEADER Local Action Groups, EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and Smart Villages is provided for Article 77 (COOP interventions) of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[138]	Short- to Medium-term

[132] http://www.simra-h2020.eu/
[133] https://www.esira.eu/
[134] http://www.simra-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SIMRA_SI_Practice_Guide_interactive.pdf
[135] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eW3Z5rE8x7hMTRCZd7QHgilmb6hlbYDw/view
[137] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development/supporting-smart-village-strategies_en
[138] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

Building Block 4 - Implementation Example

A specialised Competence and Excellence Centre for Sustainable Mountain Development in Switzerland

The *CEDD-Agro-Eco-Clim*[139] is a recently created centre of excellence and competence for the development of sustainable agroecological systems in the Jura region of north-west Switzerland. The Swiss Jura is a medium-altitude mountainous region, culminating at 1 720 m above sea level. It consists of five cantons - Vaud, Neuchâtel, Jura, Bern and Solothurn - and it shares a large border with France, where the Jura massif continues.

The region's primary agricultural output is cattle milk production and traditional PDO cheeses like Tête de Moine. This premium cheese has become a luxury product in Switzerland with significant that generating 370 jobs and an annual turnover of 70 million Swiss Francs. However, the production system is under pressure since the local limestone landscape is particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in rainfall or high temperatures. It has already experienced severe summer droughts affecting pastures and forests, with a high loss of fodder production.

The *CEDD-Agro-Eco-Clim* is a collaboration between the Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne (FRI) – an extension and applied education centre - and the University of Neuchâtel (UniNE) plus relevant administrative services from the local cantons. The Centre aims to address sustainable development issues in the Jura Arc and serve as an interface between academic research and the practical needs of rural actors, providing expertise and facilitating knowledge transfer promoting sustainable agricultural practices tailored to the unique challenges of the Jura region. The Centre has 4 key missions:

- Assess and monitor the main challenges facing the region, notably in the context of climate change.
- Identify priority intervention areas and best practices.
- Generate, value, and share the acquired knowledge.
- Raise awareness among the population and political authorities at both regional and national levels.

The *CEDD* currently (August 2024) employs four people plus some shared staff between the two partner institutions. Initial funding is from private foundations and potential public contributions. The structure is designed to be competitive and adaptable, with the possibility of securing additional funding from national and international research promotion organizations.

The *CEDD-Agro-Eco-Clim* activities will be regularly evaluated through annual reports validated by both the FRI and UniNE. Additionally, a thorough review will be conducted after the first four years, with subsequent evaluations every six years, involving both internal and external experts[140].

[139] "The Centre of Excellence and Competence for the Development of Sustainable Agroecological Systems in the Jura Arc in a Context of Climate Change"
[140] More information is available here: https://www.unine.ch/files/live/sites/unine/files/Recherche/CEDD-Agro-Eco-Clim/CEDD-Agro-Eco-Clim_Vision-mission.pdf

Building Block 5: Ensuring Mountain Livelihoods

Aim:	**To revitalize mountain communities by providing good jobs and stable incomes for all**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[141]:	• Swiss Local Food Competition (CH) • Global Competence for Whisky Centre (GB) • Community interests: Tomato Festival (TR) • Valposchiavo (CH) • Mountains as connectors between humans and nature (MOVING European Foresight workshop) • Guesthouse Villa Hermani (RO) • Adopting destination management approach for strengthening rural tourism capacity and value chain (MK)	
Synergy with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes):*	**STRONGER**	• Rural revitalisation – village renewal • LEADER / CLLD
	RESILIENT	• Women empowerment & entrepreneurship/gender equality • Social inclusion (migrants, people with disabilities, minorities, LGBTQ+) • Care services (incl. childcare)
	PROSPEROUS	• Economic diversification (developing new sectors) • Entrepreneurship & SMEs (making rural areas more attractive for them) • Increasing access to digital education and training • Developing short supply chains • Increasing employment opportunities for young people, including in farming • Sustainable bioeconomy, including forestry • Strengthening producers' organisations • Labelling and geographical indications

[141] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Policy Recommendations

[16] Provide infrastructure and shared facilities necessary for the establishment, upgrading and/or diversification of MPVCs			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Ensure strategic investment in <u>shared infrastructure and facilities</u> that is specific to the needs of MPVCs and is beyond necessary improvements in the accessibility and delivery of 'Services of General Interest' (SGIs) – see Recommendation 4 in Building Block 1. This includes investment in facilities used/shared by multiple producers, such as: Agricultural machinery rings, Mobile abattoirs, Collective storage facilities (including cold storage for perishable products), Cooperative processing units (e.g. small-scale dairy processing plants, wine and olive oil presses, honey extraction facilities etc.), Sheepfolds and animal shelters on shared grazing land, Marketing and sales facilities (including e-commerce platforms), Shared renewable energy facilities (e.g. shared biogas plants), Collective animal health clinics for shared veterinary services etc. Foster cooperation between VC actors to utilise these shared facilities and to leverage them for the establishment, upgrading and/or diversification of local /regional MPVCs. Access to these facilities should be guaranteed for all, including women, young people and minority groups.	National, Regional and Local authorities	There are multiple funding sources appropriate for such strategic investments, including the allocation of national funds. Recommendation 3 in Building Block 1 is relevant, plus Recommendation 8 in Building Block 3. Some specific opportunities are: • In accordance with Article 73 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[142], INVEST interventions in the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans can provide up to 100% support for *"infrastructure in agriculture and forestry, as determined by Member States"* • Article 8 of the Just Transition Fund Regulation (EU) 2021/1056[143] allows for	Short- to Medium-term

[142] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115
[143] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1056

		investments to support initiatives that aim to revitalize affected regions through sustainable economic practices, especially those affected by climate change. This could encompass projects like shared infrastructure for mountain products within a broader regional development strategy	

[17] Facilitate the access of small-scale producers to essential resources, such as land, credit, and technology, that are the basis for the establishment, upgrading and/or diversification of MPVCs			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Facilitate access to shared infrastructure and facilities for small-scale mountain farmers, including new entrants	National, Regional and Local authorities	See Recommendation 16 in this Building Block	Short- to Medium-term
Facilitate access to investment or low-interest credits and micro-credits for small-scale mountain farmers, including new entrants		Access to finance and land for small-scale farmers are complex issues and best addressed in the specific national/regional context. Nonetheless, there are consistent challenges (e.g. banks becoming increasingly restricted in provision of credits) which are generating local innovations with potential for replication in other regions /	
Facilitate access to land for small-scale mountain farmers, including new entrants			

		countries. For example, 2007-2013 LEADER funding was used in a mountainous region of Sweden to establish a totally new and innovative crowd-sourcing concept with a local financial intermediary serving as a link between rural entrepreneurs with new innovative ideas and private funders.[144]	

[18] Ensure that the general policy framework, governance and participatory processes are sensitive to and consider gender equality and ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

Relevant Policy Leverage Points	Target Group	Applicable Policy Interventions	Timeframe
Ensure compliance in <u>mountain areas</u> with the new gender equality provisions of the 2023-2027 CAP. In accordance with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025[145], the CAP now has a stronger focus on promoting women's participation in the socio-economic development of rural areas, with special attention to farming. CAP funds and other funding sources should be used to support: • Investments in infrastructure and services for social inclusion of women • Provision of incentives for local employment opportunities for women • Enhanced support and incentives for female farmers • Improving the access to loans for women for entrepreneurial activities	National and Regional authorities	In accordance with Objective 8 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[146]: *"Gender equality should be an integral part of the preparation, implementation and evaluation of CAP interventions. Member States should also strengthen their capacity in gender mainstreaming and in the collection of data disaggregated by gender."*	Short- to Medium-term

[144] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-06/gp_se_local_capital_web_1.pdf
[145] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en
[146] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

• Empowering women in decision-making			
Showcase initiatives and inspirational women entrepreneurs for inspiration and support mentoring programmes for young women in (vocational) education.	National and Regional authorities	The importance of gender equality in rural development is reflected in the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme with three projects currently working to support women-led innovation in rural areas: FLIARA[147], SWIFT[148] and GRASS CEILING[149].	Short- to Medium-term

[19] Increase the attractiveness of mountain jobs by improving working conditions and motivating people to stay or migrate to mountain regions			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Develop and support youth entrepreneurship schemes to create job opportunities and foster economic growth in rural areas.	National and Regional authorities	See Recommendation 9 in Building Block 3	Short- to Medium term
National and regional authorities should enforce compliance with the new CAP social conditionality rules as fully and effectively as possible in mountain agriculture. The introduction of social conditionality in the 2023-2027 CAP is a major step towards improving working conditions in agriculture, including mountain farming. At the same time, some issues require clarification and may need	EU, National and Regional authorities	In accordance with Article 14 of CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[151], Member States are required to link adherence to legislation on working conditions and occupational health and safety with CAP payments. If	Short- to Medium-term

[147] https://fliara.eu/
[148] https://swiftproject.eu/
[149] https://www.grassceiling.eu/
[151] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

reform[150]. For example, the rights and status of landless workers, such as shepherds, and their involvement in seasonal work on mountain pastures, such as cheese making and slaughtering, which may qualify as processing rather than production.		farmers fail to comply with these basic conditions for their farm workers, they risk a reduction in their area-based farm subsidies. This system should be established from the beginning of 2025 at the latest.	
Improve the status and prospects of people working in production and processing in MPVCs by offering attractive packages of local/regional vocational training and continuous professional development. Aim to attract tertiary-educated people to implement digital, communication, marketing, and management skills for MPVCs.	National and Regional authorities	See Recommendation 9 in Building Block 3	Short- to Medium term

[20] Promote and prioritise maintaining cultural capital by supporting the organisation of inclusive cultural events, festivals, and exhibitions to celebrate and preserve local culture, enhancing community pride, cohesion and synergies with tourism			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Embrace cultural and recreational activities, along with community engagement, as key elements of the development of sustainable and resilient areas that are enjoyed and valued by everyone, and where both people and nature thrive together. This approach can greatly enhance the valorisation of local natural assets, for example by the careful integration and development of synergies between tourism, nature protection and gastronomy actors in protected areas. However,	Regional and Local authorities	This highlights very clearly the importance of better territorial governance in mountain areas (see Recommendations 1 and 2 in Building Block 1), together with the value of the *MOVING 'Quick Start' Policy Design Toolkit* [154] for practical guidance on proven participatory methods for	Short- to Medium-term

[150] https://www.arc2020.eu/cap-social-conditionality/

[154] D7.2 Policy Audit and Policy Design Toolkit is available on the MOVING website: https://www.moving-h2020.eu/library/

it is essential to ensure that MPVC actors and other relevant community stakeholders are aware of and actively involved in shaping such holistic visions. There are many inspiring examples of community-based visions and strategies for such integrated development, including the *Cairngorms National Partnership Plan 2022-2027* [152]. The Cairngorms[153] is the UK's largest national park at 4,528 sq km (6% of Scotland's land mass) and is home to 25% of the UK's rare and endangered species. Around 18,000 people live in the National Park, with a further two million visitors enjoying the Park every year. The National Park has four distinct aims as set out by the Scottish Parliament: • To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural value of the area • To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area • To promote understanding and enjoyment (including recreation) of the special qualities of the area • To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities		ensuring that policy-making processes are relevant to the needs and expectations of local stakeholders.	
Improve cultural and recreational facilities such as sports and culture clubs, community associations etc. in mountain areas. These facilities are essential to promote community interaction, recreation and well-being. They enhance living conditions and consequently help retain people as key contributors to the mountain economy and active members of resilient local communities.	Regional and Local authorities	Given their importance for community cohesion, relevant authorities should interpret cultural and recreational facilities as 'Services of General Interest' essential to the well-being of mountain communities and, thus, apply/seek appropriate funding. See Recommendation 4 in Building Block 1	Short- to Medium-term

[152] https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Cairngorms-National-Park-Partnership-Plan-full-version-FINAL.pdf
[153] https://cairngorms.co.uk/

Building Block 5 - Implementation Example

Swiss Regional Development Programme
The Swiss Regional Development Programme / Programm zur Regionalen Entwicklung (PRE)[155] is an inspiring policy initiative designed to enhance the well-being of mountain regions and their populations. The Programme was launched in 2007 as part of Switzerland's 'New Regional Policy'[156] and addresses the unique challenges faced by mountainous areas, such as geographical isolation, limited access to services, and economic vulnerabilities. Local stakeholders, including farmers, small businesses, and community organizations, typically initiate PRE projects. These groups can submit project proposals to their respective cantonal authorities. The scale of PRE projects varies, but they generally involve multiple partners and sectors within a defined geographic area. To be accepted, projects must meet several criteria, including demonstrating economic viability, promoting regional value creation, and aligning with sustainable development principles. Approved projects can receive financial support for up to six years, with the possibility of extension based on performance and continued relevance. A significant portion of PRE funding is allocated to infrastructure development and processing facilities[157]. This focus aims to improve the competitiveness of local products and services while creating sustainable employment opportunities. For example, the PRE has supported the construction of small-scale cheese production facilities, allowing farmers to process and market their milk products locally, thus increasing their income and preserving traditional practices. The programme emphasizes collaboration among various stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, and community organizations, to create tailored strategies that promote economic growth while preserving the region's natural and cultural heritage. By connecting different sectors, the PRE facilitates cross-sectoral synergies that can lead to the development of new markets, the promotion of local products, and the creation of sustainable jobs. Multiple federal offices and cantonal authorities are involved to ensure coherence between policies. Moreover, the PRE prioritizes the involvement of local populations in decision-making processes, ensuring that their needs and aspirations are taken into account. This participatory governance model empowers communities to take ownership of their development trajectories and fosters a sense of agency among residents. By investing in capacity building and providing resources for local initiatives, the program helps to strengthen social cohesion and enhance the overall well-being of mountain populations.

[155] https://www.blw.admin.ch/blw/de/home/instrumente/laendliche-entwicklung-und-strukturverbesserungen/laendliche-entwicklung.html (German language)
[156] https://regiosuisse.ch/en/new-regional-policy-nrp
[157] According to the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture, between 2007 and 2021, over 180 PRE projects were implemented across Switzerland, with a total investment of around 135 million Swiss francs

Building Block 6: Promoting Mountain Product Quality

Aim:	**To increase the promotion, recognition and valorisation of mountain product quality**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[158]:	• Swiss Local Food Competition (CH) • Terra Thessalia (EL) • Towards a triple sustainability, economic, environmental and social (ES) • Valposchiavo (CH) • Guesthouse Villa Hermani (RO) • BioVallée (FR)	
Synergy with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes):*	**STRONGER**	Under this action area, rural areas benefit from support to empower communities and have access to services to facilitate social innovation, spatial planning and youth involvement. • Rural revitalisation – village renewal • Research & innovation for rural communities • Education and training in rural areas
	CONNECTED	• Rural-urban linkages • Improvement of digital skills
	RESILIENT	• Soil health • Green farming activities • Land use and spatial planning • Women empowerment & entrepreneurship/gender equality • Social inclusion (migrants, people with disabilities, minorities, LGBTQ+)
	PROSPEROUS	• Economic diversification • Entrepreneurship & SMEs (making rural areas more attractive for them)

[158] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

		• Strengthening the producers' position on the market • Increasing employment opportunities for young people, including in farming • Developing short supply chains • Labelling and geographical indications

Policy Recommendations

[21] Support farms and food artisans that drive high-quality value chains from mountain ecosystems to have fair access to markets and generate livelihoods while facing global challenges			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Reinforce market observation and regulations to better watch for market dynamics and the distribution of power and margins among actors along MPVCs. This includes creating partnerships and collaboration with distributors to promote mountain products and/or to lower their margin on the final product. Observations on MPVCs and the effects of markets on MPVCs should be included in the new AgriFood Value Chain Observatory which aims to better understand the functioning of the supply chain and bring increased transparency on prices, structure of costs and distribution of margins and added value, while respecting confidentiality and competition rules.[159]	EU and National authorities	The Single Market Strategy is the European Commission's plan to unlock the full potential of the single market and to fully and effectively enable the free movement of people, services, goods and capital.[160]	Short- to Medium-term
Effectively implement and fund the European regulatory framework and tools that protect and promote the PDO, PGI, organic and Optional Quality Term (including mountain products) schemes. This is essential for smaller players facing oligopoly structures and critical for many MPVCs.	National authorities	A new regulation for geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed	Short- to Medium-term

[159] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=3949
[160] https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/single-market-strategy_en

The labelling of agricultural and food products of mountain farming requires communicating to consumers the natural constraints and added value of food products originating in mountain areas.[161] The Optional Quality Term (OQT) 'Mountain Product' addresses this need at EU level and all EU Member States (and candidate countries) and/or regions with mountainous areas that have not yet adopted the OQT are encouraged to do so. This involves incorporating the OQT into their national/regional legislation and adapting or upgrade their institutional capacities. MOVING has analysed the implementation of the OQT in 3 EU countries and the conclusion can be found in the final report.[162]		and the optional quality terms for agricultural products, entered into force in May 2024 in Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 – this amends the previous Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012. More information is available on the DG AGRI website[163].	
All relevant EU Member States should utilise the EU Promotion Policy to enhance awareness of mountain products among consumers and encourage producers and cooperatives to apply for relevant quality schemes, including by covering the certification costs or new registration costs. The new HEU GI-SMART[164] project is anticipated to create momentum for broader adoption of quality schemes across Europe. It aims to enhance the design and implementation of the GI system to support sustainable agriculture, healthy and sustainable food and farming in line with the objectives of the EU Farm to Fork strategy.[165]	National authorities	The EU farm products promotion measures are designed to open new market opportunities for EU farmers and the wider food industry, as well as help them build their existing businesses. The promotion measures are part of the CAP have a €185.9 million budget in 2024 to fund promotion activities for sustainable and high-quality EU agri-food products in the EU and worldwide.[166]	Short- to Medium-term

[161] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/654ff744-0649-44d7-a0b1-afbeb3c23da9
[162] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/MOVING-Report-Analysis-of-the-implementation-of-the-EU-optional-quality-term-mountain-product.pdf
[163] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes-explained_en
[164] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101136364
[165] https://origin-for-sustainability.org/en/geographical-indications-contribution-to-smart-territorial-development-and-sustainability-gi-smart-kicks-off-2/
[166] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/market-measures/promotion-eu-farm-products_en

Improve the definition and control of the criteria and use of OQT, PDO and PGI quality schemes for mountain products. This is very important for the credibility of the schemes and confidence/trust of users, as well as for generating positive outcomes. Besides strictly defining the mountain area where labelled products originate from (whether OQT, PDO or PGI), Member States should strengthen control measures at the national level to combat misleading use of the term "mountain" by competitors. Criteria should be in alignment with quality policies in non-EU countries (e.g. Switzerland) for equivalence requirements and fair competitiveness. Criteria for the origin of ingredients in the MPVC should consider as many inputs (incl. feed) as possible, limit possible exceptions, and include processing to retain more of the added value in the mountains.	National and Regional authorities	EU Regulation 1151/2012[167] introduced the OQT concept, which was further operationalised with conditions of use by the EU Delegated Regulation 665/2014[168]. Regulation (EU) 1143/2024 provides the definition and control criteria for the PDO and PGI quality schemes.[169] EU Regulation 2018/848 establishes the regulatory framework for organic production.[170]	Medium- to Long-term
Establish territorial quality market policies at national and regional levels to support the balancing of production quality with market demands and sustainable economic growth instead of intensification or abandonment. These certifications also help ensure quality and safety because they integrate the whole VC, thereby enhancing marketability and consumer trust		Territorial markets are the backbone of food systems in many European countries and regions, ensuring access to seasonal, diverse, more nutritious foods and diets. Policy shifts are needed for unlocking the full potential of territorial markets.[171]	

[167] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32012R1151
[168] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014R0665
[169] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R1143
[170] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/848/oj
[171] https://ipes-food.org/report/food-from-somewhere/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=6b087c7e31-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_10_4_2023_15_24_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_302e2e7b80-6b087c7e31-1433034260

Build territorial strategies around regional (traditional) products to help leverage their reputation for a 'quality-based' and place-based approach in the economy and promote connected sectors such as (local) rural tourism and gastronomy, thus contributing to job creation and maintenance of rural areas' attractiveness. This could include: • A local strategy for clearer distinction of local mountain products from cheaper alternatives through labelling (quality certification, regional/local branding) and positioning within supermarkets, local markets, events, in public procurement and encouraging local tourism actors to position products in their gastronomic offers. • Supporting the "relocalisation" of MPVCs, including accessible local processing and distribution infrastructure – see Recommendation 16. • Partnerships with public caterers – both private restaurants and local public institutions to actively support the consumption of products from local MPVCs – see Recommendation 23.	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations	The Handbook of *Territorial and Local Development Strategies*[172] is a useful tool for designing, implementing and monitoring strategies that build resilience, prosperity and democracy in non-urban areas. It covers both territorial focus and cross-sectoral integration and is therefore very relevant for MPVC-related strategies. The CAP funding promotion campaigns of quality products under Regulation (EU) 1144/2014[173] should be adapted to allow for smaller projects aimed at local area campaigning.	Medium- to Long-term
Advocate for allowing better consideration of mountain specificities, including small-scale and traditional and innovative processing within the general food safety and processing regulations, including Regulation 178/2002 and the "Hygiene Package". Also "MPVC proof" other relevant food and hygiene regulations, including in tourism, to avoid putting disproportionate bureaucratic and practical barriers on small-scale mountain processors, while still guaranteeing safe and high-quality products.	National and Regional authorities	EU Regulation 178/2002 first described procedures regarding food safety.[174] The food 'Hygiene Package', adopted in 2004 and applicable since 2006, subsequently merged, harmonised and simplified detailed and complex hygiene requirements.	Short- to Medium-term

[172] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC130788
[173] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R1143
[174] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32002R0178

		A 2009 Commission Report[175] identified that Member States were not taking advantage of the flexibility offered in the legislation regarding small farmers, and 15 years later, more awareness and promotion of this flexibility is still needed at the national level!	

[22] Integrate quality brands, MPVC schemes and institutional initiatives to build thriving 'communities of quality' around collaborative strategies and common visions for the role of MPVCs in local/regional transformation			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Improve the competencies and knowledge of mountain communities and their local/regional authorities regarding the quality of local mountain products and their connection to their origin. Support the promotion of local Terroir by funding cultural events such as "Sustainable pleasures", terroir fairs, tastings, and competitions of (certified) local products. Implement publicly funded marketing campaigns to raise consumer awareness about quality and sustainability and thereby actively support local mountain area development through the image of traditional food products.	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations	The MOVING report *Analysis of the Implementation of the EU OQT "mountain product"* provides information and recommendations regarding the promotion of the 'mountain product' label amongst mountain producers and national/regional authorities.[176] The Swiss Local Food Competition is a great example of an event that promotes local mountain areas	Short- to Medium-term

[175] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0403

[176] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/MOVING-Report-Analysis-of-the-implementation-of-the-EU-optional-quality-term-mountain-product.pdf

		through traditional high-quality food products.[177]	
Test local/regional combinations of quality schemes (i.e. PDO/PGI + organic + mountain product) and their interaction with other territorial designations/regulations (e.g. for protected areas), whilst taking care not to create excessive bureaucratic burden for small-scale producers.		The MOVING report *Analysis of the Implementation of the EU OQT "mountain product"* also information on the complementary combination of quality schemes.	Medium- to Long-term
Recognise that quality schemes (GIs, organic, mountain product, hay milk etc.) can be key factors in obtaining a UNESCO World Heritage label. It is recommended to explore whether cultural heritage can help add value to agricultural value chains and thus to the whole economy of the territory.		UNESCO World Heritage is a universal concept whereby World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located.[178]	Medium- to Long-term
Use strategic foresight or other participatory processes to work with MPVC actors and other stakeholders to explore the flexibility in implementing standards and controls for maximizing the collective benefits of certification. Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) can serve as a tool for ensuring (rather than certifying) the quality of new or small-scale value chains. This approach has proved particularly relevant for organic schemes, where the group certification process, as outlined in Regulation (EC) 2018/848[179], has been adapted to meet the economic and collective trading needs of small-scale farms and communities in mountainous areas. Pilot projects (e.g. EIP-AGRI OGs) could further contribute to further regulatory development in this area.	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations local	Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange.[180]	Short- to Medium-term

[177] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf
[178] https://whc.unesco.org/en/about/
[179] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/848/oj
[180] https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/standards-certification/participatory-guarantee-systems

Actively promote the full spectrum of short supply chain models that can be used for mountain products, including direct sales channels, community-supported agriculture, consumer cooperatives and subscriptions, community markets etc. Typical examples of mountain product short supply chains, include: • Node Verde, Romania[181] • Käsestraße Bregenzerwald (Cheese route Bregenzerwald), Austria[182] • Giglance on Adlegg Stiftung, Germany[183] • The Tuscan Traditional Agri-Food Products (TAPs) interactive label, Italy[184] • "100% Valposchiavo", Switzerland[185]	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations local	EU Regulation 1305/2013[186] defines short supply chains as "supply chains that involve a limited number of economic operators, are committed to co-operation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between producers, processors and consumers".[187] Short-supply chains can contribute greatly to returning the value of high-quality mountain products back to mountain communities, thereby ensuring the livelihoods of mountain producers. Article 77 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[188] includes provision to support the setting up and running short supply chains under the COOP measures of the 2023-2027 National CAP Strategic Plans	

[181] https://nodverde.ro/
[182] https://www.kaesestrasse.at/
[183] https://www.adelegg-stiftung.de/
[184] https://www.regione.liguria.it/homepage-fondi-europei/cosa-cerchi/interreg-liguria/interreg-italia-francia-alcotra/interreg-alcotra-2014-2020/cooperazione-alcotra-pitem-piter2018/pitem-biodivalp/ole.html
[185] https://www.valposchiavo.ch/en/experience/100-valposchiavo/logos/247-100-valposchiavo
[186] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R1305
[187] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R1305
[188] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

[23] Upscale the influence of local institutions as direct participants in MPVCs via the public procurement of mountain products			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Strengthen the EU Procurement Directives Review with "buy local" provisions and stronger enforcement mechanisms. This will help encourage financially supportive partnerships between MPVCs and local public institutions (schools, hospitals etc.) in mountain regions, as well as contribute local food strategies and enhance awareness of local communities (including school children) of the local products available to them.	EU authorities	EU Directive 2014/24 frames the public procurement at EU level.[189] Public procurement is a great tool for creating a predictable market for high-quality food products and for ensuring safe and nutritious food for vulnerable groups.	Regulatory Funds VC integration

Building Block 6 - Implementation Example

Revitalising a declining mountain economy and culture through high-quality mountain products
Thessaly is a mountainous geographical territory where the main economic activity has been pastoral livestock. In common with other European mountain regions, Thessaly has faced multiple challenges, including difficult terrain which limits the scope of agricultural activities, and significant depopulation. However, after 50 years of decline, the region is now undergoing a dynamic recovery and is recognised as an important High-Nature Value area with a productive multifunctional agricultural system. Inhabitants that migrated in the past are coming back, activating the socio-cultural and economic (i.e. control of the dairy value chain) ties that the region is keeping with the diaspora[190]. The LACTIMED EU programme[191] is the initiator of two important initiatives in Thessaly linked to the promotion of high-added quality mountain food products. In 2016, the *Terra Thessalia Association* was founded. The Association is a territorial dairy cluster, reuniting 7 small dairy territories from

[189] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32014L0024

[190] http://www.hnvlink.eu/download/GreeceBaselineAssessment.pdf

[191] LACTIMED EU programme is a European Union-funded initiative aimed at promoting and enhancing the dairy sector in the Mediterranean region. The programme primarily focuses on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) involved in the production of traditional dairy products, fostering innovation, improving quality standards, and

Thessaly region, 7 family artisanal dairies and a significant number of supporting agencies (Local Action Groups, cooperative banks, industry and commercial chambers, public research laboratories). The cluster is governed by an Assembly that complies with a Territorial Charter and includes two more bodies: Terra Thessalia for service, a non-for-profit organisation, and Trade Thessalia Lactis, a limited liability company for the production and marketing of dairy products[192].

The *Terra Thessalia Association's* main objectives are to establish a transparent and fair dairy value chain governance body and to develop a unique branding and certification for the Thessaly Mountain dairy products through a 'Territorial Participative Guarantee System' (PGS). This guarantees the quality of the product, its ties with the production place, the fair redistribution of the added value to livestock farmers and small cheese makers as well as managing a sustainable relationship between people, animals and nature.

The PGS adopts an integrated methodology combining consultations, a monitoring system using technological tools whose data are displayed in a database and the Terra Thessalia website[193] that is accessible to consumers. All the actors of the dairy chain and a group of scientific and technical support (interdisciplinary and technical working group) participate in its implementation.[194]

The *Terra Thessalia Association* plays also the role of a Living Learning Lab, bringing local actors together for the following activities:

- Support services to ENIPEAS agricultural cooperative of Farsala territory.
- Implementation of a Regenerative Agriculture pilot program for cotton (2021).
- Labelling by territorial quality mark for cotton and chickpeas (in progress).
- On-site sales of packaged cooperative products and collaboration with other cooperatives in Greece.
- Trading contracts with large Greek agri-food companies at preferential prices.

The main funding sources of the *Terra Thessalia Association* are European funds (e.g. LACTIMED EU programme), private funds (e.g. grants for small investments) and self-financing (through the cheese production activities).[195]

increasing market access for these products. The programme is funded by the European Union through the ENPI CBC MED programme (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Cross-Border Cooperation in the Mediterranean), which supports cross-border cooperation projects in the Mediterranean region.

[192] http://www.hnvlink.eu/download/Greece_TerraThessalia-flexiblegovernance.pdf

[193] http://www.terrathessalia.gr/?LANG=en

[194] http://www.hnvlink.eu/download/Greece_ParticipatoryGuaranteeSystem.pdf

[195] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Building Block 7: Sustaining the Use of Local Assets

Aim:	**To sustain the use of local territorial assets and resources (social, cultural and environmental) without over-exploitation or the risk of damage**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[196]:	• Swiss Local Food Competition (CH) • Community interests: Tomato Festival (TR) • Valposchiavo (CH) • Territorial and value chain actors collaboration for the future management of natural resource (Cartography Project to support decision making) (FR)	
Synergy with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes):*	**STRONGER**	• Rural revitalisation – village renewal • Land use & spatial planning • LEADER / CLLD
	RESILIENT	• Energy transition for rural communities • Climate action • Soil health • Green farming activities • Land use & spatial planning • Women empowerment and entrepreneurship/gender equality • Care services (incl. childcare) • Health and safety at work
	PROSPEROUS	• Sustainable bioeconomy, including forestry

[196] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Policy Recommendations

[24] Strengthen legal and strategic frameworks for the protection and regeneration of nature, natural resources and biodiversity in mountain regions and beyond			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Enhance the multi-level governance of designated Protected Areas with participatory processes that focus on collaboration and networking to integrate environmental protection with socio-economic development, including the establishment and up-grading of MPVCs. The Cairngorms National Park, Scotland is an excellent example of good governance of a nationally designated protected area, which prioritises collaboration and networking.[197]	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations local	Most of the 'hotspots' of biodiversity in Europe are in mountains. The EU *Biodiversity Strategy 2030* encompasses two ambitious and long-term objectives: protecting nature and reversing ecosystem degradation.[198] Implementation of the Strategy is a shared responsibility that involves multiple stakeholders at different levels, including the EU institutions, EU Member States, local and regional authorities, NGOs and civil society, the private sector, and scientific community. This multi-level governance is compatible with the recommendations in Building Blocks 1 and 2.	Short- to Medium term
Strengthen support for the implementation of nature protection regulations and measures at local level, by informing, supporting and funding mountain regions with a dedicated contact point, leaflets and incentives.			
Integrate the implementation of environmental protection regulations into local development strategies and associated participatory processes. For example, for the valorisation of local landscapes with nature protection areas, Natura2000, HNV, organic schemes, etc. and increase the capacity of local mountain authorities to coordinate and implement such schemes.			

[197] https://cairngorms.co.uk/
[198] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

Seek opportunities for developing specific synergies between environmental protection, MPVCs and mountain livelihoods e.g. by linking agri-environment payments to farmers to the promotion of an area's natural beauty and local products. EUROPARC Federation is the representative body of Europe's Protected Areas. It is dedicated to practical nature conservation and sustainable development of Europe's biodiversity, including the fostering of more holistic landscape approaches. In the 2021 Position Paper, *Protected Areas as laboratories for Sustainable Agriculture*, EUROPARC usefully presents a vision for the role of Protected Areas in implementing the EU Green Deal and EU Agricultural Policies[199]. The MOVING report *Protected natural sites in MOVING regions* discusses the implications and added value for MPVCs located in protected natural sites.[200]	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations local	The various interventions of the CAP 2023-2027 are potentially very useful for fostering synergies between environmental protection and mountain product value chains, but the specific opportunities that exist will depend upon the programming priorities of the 28 National CAP Strategic Plans prepared by the Member States.[201]	Short- to Medium term
Make greater use of the valorisation of local cultural assets and intangible heritage as leverages for conserving and preserving the natural resources within territorial strategies for mountain areas. Linking cultural and natural capital with sustainable economic development while involving local communities is an increasingly popular approach used in UNESCO Global Geoparks. At present, there are 213 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 48 countries all managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.[202]	National, Regional and Local authorities	UNESCO Global Geoparks are established through Operational Guidelines[203] involving a bottom-up process engaging all relevant local and regional stakeholders and authorities in the area (e.g. landowners, community groups, tourism providers, indigenous people, and local organizations).	Medium- to Long-term

[199] http://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Position-Paper_Sustainable-Agriculture_-final-version.pdf
[200] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Protected-areas-in-MOVING-regions.pdf
[201] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/approved-28-cap-strategic-plans-2023-27.pdf
[202] https://www.unesco.org/en/iggp/geoparks/about
[203] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260675

[25] Implement specific frameworks and strategies for the sustainable management of common mountain resources, especially those affected by climate and demographic change			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Develop or adapt local, regional or national legal frameworks to more effectively govern the use and management of common resources by communities with traditional rights, especially high-altitude grasslands and forests. Governance of commons is a complex issue and often very locally specific. There are no 'off-the-shelf' solutions, local solutions need to be developed. For example, by encouraging appropriate stocking densities, adapting grassland or forested pasture management for carbon storage, establishing collaborative value chains, valorising common resources for the benefit of local communities, avoiding the outflow of benefits for external interest (e.g. in the case of new renewable energy installations) etc. One option is to use an EIP-AGRI Operational Group to develop local solutions for local challenges. An EIP-AGRI OG initiated the Sustainable Uplands Agri-environment Scheme (SUAS)[204] in Ireland to trial practical and innovative solutions to the complex agricultural, environmental and socio-economic challenges associated with common land and hill farms in the Wicklow and Dublin uplands. The OG successfully changed attitudes and built capacity amongst participating farmers towards managing and improving the natural habitat quality of their upland areas in a sustainable manner through ongoing engagement, training and knowledge exchange[205].	National, Regional and Local authorities	See Recommendation 12 in Building Block 4. Article 77 (COOP interventions) of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[206] makes provision for the setting up of EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and the preparation and implementation of interactive innovation projects in accordance with Article 127(3) of the same regulation.	Short- to Medium term

[204] https://suaseipproject.ie/
[205] https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-11/good-practice-report-suas.pdf
[206] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

Focus on water as a crucial common resource in mountain regions and an immediate priority for action, both in terms of quality and quantity. Mountains are key providers of freshwater to European society. For example, 125 million cubic meters of drinking water are annually abstracted from Lake Constance, a transboundary mountain lake that is 78% supplied by rainwater and meltwater from the Alps. The extracted water is distributed to approximately 4 million people in living in 320 cities and municipalities[207]. A comprehensive range of water use regulations currently aim to ensure the good status of water bodies and good quality water in sufficient quantities to the population and economic sectors[208], however climate change is greatly affecting the water cycle and bringing many new challenges and risks (e.g. local conflicts, fire risks etc.) which existing legislation does not address.	European, National, Regional and Local authorities	It is urgently needed to address water challenges in mountain areas at two levels: • To accelerate the development and implementation of local water governance strategies by leveraging the available water protection laws and mechanisms and increasing controls and measures against illicit usage and pollution as well as prevention and storage measures. • To "waterproof" both the CAP (e.g. schemes to promote positive water management practices in mountain areas) and Cohesion Policy (e.g. a ban on the use of EU funds for investment in artificial snow-making infrastructure). Euromontana[209] currently (August 2024) has a position paper on these issues under preparation. Also see Recommendation 28 in Building Block 8.	Short- to Medium term

[207] Schirpke, U., Tappeiner, U. & Tasser, E. A transnational perspective of global and regional ecosystem service flows from and to mountain regions. *Sci Rep* 9, 6678 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-43229-z

[208] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/74/water-protection-and-management

[209] https://www.euromontana.org/

[26] Provide integrated packages of support for mountain pastoralism, including remuneration for ecosystem services in the form of easily accessible and manageable schemes with simplified administrative procedures			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Ensure that policymakers recognise the extreme importance of mountain pasture systems for a range of issues and develop easily accessible land management schemes. Pastoralism is key to maintaining the vibrancy of many mountain areas, providing environmental services (climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation, natural and cultural landscapes), preserving traditional know-how, and creating opportunities for new and upgraded MPVCs. However, pastoralists face a number of challenges that have led to a drastic decline in pastoral practices in Europe in recent years. On the one hand, they are confronted with inadequate European policies, a lack of differentiation between intensive and extensive farming methods and the declining attractiveness of pastoral jobs. On the other hand, the increasing impact of climate change threatens the future of pastoralism. Regarding this, it is essential to reaffirm the importance of the **High Nature Value (HNV) Farming** concept[210] for mountain areas and to investigate new ways to compensate farmers (and foresters) for the delivery of biodiversity benefits from their management practices in view of the high risk of mismanagement and/or abandonment of mountain pasture systems.	National, Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private and voluntary sector organisations local	There is great potential to develop place-based 'green' mountain farming schemes in consultation with mountain farming communities, civil society organizations for the protection of the environment and other competent local, regional, and national institutions. In 2021, an Action Plan[212] promoting and supporting European Pastoralism was proposed to the European Committee of Regions (CoR). This proposal should be reactivated. Immediate opportunities for developing integrated support packages, include: • Well-designed eco-schemes[213] for mountain grasslands in National CAP Strategic Plans in accordance	Short- to Medium-term

[210] http://www.high-nature-value-farming.eu/

[212] https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/action-plan-for-European-pastoralism-.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3hRzRWyoQAVoN3JvxbsZqsE71rPydilD0f9qFpO63Q0neYBMvN4GR55ts

[213] The Institute of European Environment Policy (IEEP) has prepared a useful Guide for Managing Authorities on Using Eco-Schemes in the New CAP: https://www.organicseurope.bio/content/uploads/2020/06/ifoam-eco-schemes-web_compressed-1.pdf

Dedicated support and political attention all need to be upscaled for HNV farming, and the Horizon 2020 HNV-Link[211] Thematic Network project collected and shared many inspiring innovations for achieving this. Greater consideration should also be given to agro-forestry systems, especially agro-silvio-pastoral systems that would benefit from a policy framework combining regulations from forestry and pastoralism and that recognizes and supports food production from specific mountain trees like carob and chestnuts.		with Article 31 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[214] • Developing innovative results-based agri-environment-climate commitments targeted at grasslands of special nature conservation interest in accordance with Article 70 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 • Providing dedicated farm advisory and innovation support services – see Recommendations 12 and 13 in Building Block 4 • Providing shared infrastructure and facilities for pastoralists – see Recommendation 16 in Building Block 5 • Enhancing the value of pastoral products – see all Recommendations in Building Block 6	
Develop and disseminate viable business strategies and models for the valorisation of the ecosystem services delivered by farming and forestry in mountain areas. This includes the integration of MPVC branding, labelling and	Regional and Local authorities in partnership with private	See all recommendations in Building Block 6 regarding the promotion, recognition and valorisation of mountain product quality.	Medium- to Long-term

[211] http://www.hnvlink.eu/

[214] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

promotion with national designations for environmental protection and the PDO, PGI, organic and Optional Quality Term (including mountain products) schemes. This is a huge area of opportunity and there are many existing examples, including the Terra Thessalia Association in Greece (see Building Block 6 - Implementation Example). This specific business model uses a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) to certify products from local mountain farmers[215], but there are many other options.	and voluntary sector organisations local	There are multiple EU funding opportunities available for developing and promoting new business strategies and models under the CAP, ERDF, ESF+, JTF and LIFE. However, one of the best opportunities for preliminary experimentation with a new strategy/business model (and involving multiple stakeholders) is an EIP-AGRI Operational Group financed under Article 77 (COOP interventions) of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[216].	
Acknowledge and support the contribution that MPVCs make towards maintaining agrobiodiversity by safeguarding locally adapted crop species and cultivars. Low input mountain farming systems contain some of the last reservoirs of indigenous plant genetics in Europe. These heritage species need to be preserved and valorised for re-introduction to consumers and re-integration into markets via supermarkets and restaurants etc. They also have an important role to play in the adaptation of agricultural production to climate change. Local knowledge on traditional crops and their necessary processing should be updated and adapted (retro innovation) to modern food safety standards etc.	National and Regional authorities	Agrobiodiversity makes an important contribution towards the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030[218] and is a high priority for conservation actions. For example, compensatory payments for the maintenance of traditional and diverse crop varieties are eligible to include in National CAP Strategic Plans (ENVCLIM interventions) under Article 70 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 [219].	Short- to Medium-term

[215] https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/standards-certification/participatory-guarantee-systems
[216] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115
[218] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en
[219] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

For example, the H2020 CERERE[217] Thematic Network project promoted innovative approaches to introducing and managing agrobiodiversity in organic and low-input cereal production, and there is much potential for other similar actions within the Horizon research and innovation programme.			

[27] Integrate knowledge and practices from MPVCs into actions for a Circular Mountain Economy			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Include mountains and mountain agri-food specificities into EU and national actions for closing nutrient cycles and promoting circularity. The EU Circular Economy Action Plan focuses (amongst many other things) on food waste and packaging but neglects to consider farming systems, including traditional mountain agriculture. Mountain agriculture continues to embrace many traditional 'circular' practices, such as the use of by-products like wool and whey, which have limited emissions, decrease dependency on other regions and generally reinforce place-based approaches. Many MPVCs are, therefore, intrinsically part of the circular economy but are not acknowledged for it. There is great potential to reinforce this circularity through: • Investing in the setting-up or renovation of processing plants and multi-functional processing hubs that offer shared facilities for the processing of wool, nuts, leather, cereals, fruits, wood, etc. – see also Recommendation 16 in Building Block 5	EU and National authorities	The EU Circular Economy Action Plan[220] is one of the main pillars of the European Green Deal[221] and aims to reduce food waste, increase the sustainability of food distribution and consumption, introduce a water reuse regulation and develop an integrated nutrient management plan. Mountain areas face unique challenges and opportunities in implementing the EU Circular Economy Action Plan due to their specific geographical, environmental, and socio-economic conditions. While there are no exclusive funds or programmes currently dedicated to	Short- to Medium-term

[217] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/727848/en
[220] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1583933814386&uri=COM:2020:98:FIN
[221] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

• Establishing local/regional hubs and or networks for the concrete exchanges or selling/buying of by-products and attempts to close material cycles (within regions). • Supporting networks of knowledge exchange on innovative circular practices and retro-innovation, and training for MPVC actors for 5R (reuse, reduce, etc) principles in production and processing is important to increase uptake		circular economy initiatives in mountain areas, several EU-funded initiatives and projects have been specifically tailored or adapted to address circular economy needs in these regions. This includes the GREENCYCLE[222], AlpBioEco[223], Circular4.0[224] and PEACE_Alps[225] projects in the Alpine Space Programme.	

[222] https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/greencycle/
[223] https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/alpbioeco/
[224] https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/circular4-0/
[225] https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/peace_alps/

Building Block 7 - Implementation Example

Result-based Farming for Ecosystem Services

The *Hen Harrier Project*[226] is a pilot conservation programme in the mountains of western Ireland that aims to build strong partnerships with the local farming community to deliver sustainable benefits for biodiversity, upland ecosystems and a vibrant local rural economy.

The project addresses the declining population of Hen Harriers in Ireland, where the loss of suitable habitat due to changes in land use, afforestation, and agricultural intensification poses significant threats. The project's main goal is to work with farmers and landowners in designated Hen Harrier Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to manage their land in a way that supports the conservation of the species.

A unique feature of the project is that operates through a 'large scale' EIP-AGRI Operational Group (with a total budget of EUR 25 million) to bring together various stakeholders, including farmers, conservationists, researchers, and government bodies. The group leverages the expertise and insights from different sectors to co-design and implement practical solutions for land management that benefit both biodiversity and farmers.

A key innovation of the Hen Harrier Project is its result-based payment scheme. Unlike traditional prescriptive conservation measures, this approach incentivizes farmers by directly linking payments to the ecological outcomes achieved on their land. Farmers receive higher payments for maintaining or enhancing conditions that support Hen Harriers, such as managing vegetation to provide suitable nesting and foraging habitats. The result-based scheme was developed through extensive consultation with farmers, ecologists, and other stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensured that the scheme is both ecologically effective and economically viable for farmers. The payment system is flexible, allowing farmers to use their local knowledge and expertise to manage their land in a way that best suits the needs of the Hen Harrier while also fitting into their farming practices.

As a result of this project, there has been a noticeable improvement in habitat conditions within the targeted SPAs, leading to better breeding success rates for Hen Harriers[227]. Furthermore, the project exemplifies how an EIP-AGRI Operational Group can effectively address complex environmental challenges through a result-based approach. By involving farmers directly in the conservation process and rewarding them for positive outcomes, the project not only contributes to the preservation of a vulnerable species but also promotes productive and sustainable land management practices that benefit the broader ecosystem. This has greatly strengthened the relationship between the biodiversity conservation movement and agricultural communities.

[226] http://www.henharrierproject.ie/
[227] http://www.henharrierproject.ie/resources.html

Building Block 8: Preparing & Adapting for Change

Aim:	**To build capacity for adaptation to changing environmental and social circumstances/challenges in mountain areas, including resilience to sudden shocks**	
Relevant MOVING Strategic Options[228]:	• Towards a triple sustainability, economic, environmental and social (ES) • AGRO-ECOCLIM Project CEDD (CH)	
Synergy with LTVRA / Rural Pact *(including underlying themes):*	**STRONGER**	• Research and innovation for rural communities • Community empowerment • Land use and spatial planning • LEADER / CLLD • Smart Villages
	RESILIENT	• Energy transition for rural communities • Climate action *[assumed to include water scarcity issues etc.]* • Soil health • Green farming activities • Developing short supply chains • Land use and spatial planning • Women empowerment and entrepreneurship/gender equality • Social inclusion (migrants, people with disabilities, minorities, LGBTQ+) • Care services (incl. childcare)
	PROSPEROUS	• Economic diversification (developing new sectors) • Entrepreneurship and SMEs (making rural areas more attractive for them)

[228] https://www.moving-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/D6.3-Synthesis-report-including-a-Repertoire-of-Strategic-Options.pdf

Policy Recommendations

[28] Mainstream climate-change readiness and adaptation measures for mountain regions into EU and national Climate Adaptation frameworks			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Focus on the specific adaptation needs of mountain areas and ensure they are addressed in all future EU and National climate adaptation strategies. Mountains are already affected by climate change more than low-land areas and are highly vulnerable to other major drivers of change. In line with the recommendations in BB1 *'Better Territorial Governance, Regulation and Public Services'* and BB2 *'Balancing Ecology & Society'*, more holistic place-based approaches are urgently needed to prepare both for the unpredictable risks of climate change and other potential crises. Key issues include: 1. Enhancing understanding of climate impacts through research and data collection – see Recommendation 6 in Building Block 1 2. More effectively using participatory diagnostic tools (e.g. SHARP tool) to engage local communities and their tacit knowledge in the assessment of regional and landscape-level sustainability, vulnerability, and resilience – see Recommendation 7 in Building Block 2 3. Integrating climate adaptation into all relevant EU policy domains, such as agriculture, water management, infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction to ensure a coordinated response 4. Promoting 'nature-based solutions' (NBS) such as the use of ecosystems and green infrastructure (e.g. wetlands, forests) to mitigate climate impacts such as floods and heatwaves	EU, National and Regional authorities	The European Commission adopted its new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change on 24 February 2021[230]. The strategy sets out how the EU can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050 by making adaptation **smarter**, **swifter** and **more systemic**, and by stepping up **international action** on adaptation to climate change. EU Member States are also required to develop and implement their own National Adaptation Strategies (NAS) or National Adaptation Plans (NAP) in alignment with EU guidelines but tailored to their specific national contexts.	Short- to Medium-term

[230] https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/eu-adaptation-strategy_en

5. Mobilizing all available sources of public and private funding for adaptation projects – see Recommendation 3 in Building Block 1 6. Aligning the monitoring and evaluation of the Climate Adaptation frameworks (both EU and national) with that of CAP funding to avoid the risk of obsolete practices (i.e. irrigation in vineyards) not being adapted to climate change and mountain specificities 7. Using international cooperation projects to support adaptation efforts in transboundary mountain massifs – see Recommendation 2 in Building Block 1 and Recommendation 10 in Building Block 3 At least 4 European countries (Austria, France, Spain and Switzerland) are understood to already include a strong focus on mountains in their NAS/NAP. Initiatives such as the Climate-ADAPT platform[229] are very important for disseminating the experiences and good practices from these countries. Consider developing common strategies for particularly fragile regions. This might include common packages of emergency tools and aid programmes with ear-marked EU/national/regional funds that could be quickly mobilised. Note that, although essential for decarbonisation, it is important to consider carefully the potential negative impacts of large renewable energy projects (hydro, solar, wind) on local mountain assets.			
Support the development and implementation of the EU Blue Deal by preparing NOW for water resilience in mountain areas. The EU Blue Deal is an emerging framework within the EU aimed at enhancing water management, protecting aquatic ecosystems, and promoting sustainable use of water resources across Europe. While it is not yet a formal, standalone policy like the Green Deal, the Blue Deal is envisioned as a complementary approach that	EU, National and Regional authorities	As part of Green Week 2024 organised by the European Commission, Euromontana hosted an online webinar on water issues in mountain areas and how to prepare for resilience in these territories *("From*	Short- to Medium-term

[229] https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en

addresses water-related challenges, aligning closely with the EU's broader climate and environmental goals. Also, see Recommendation 25 in Building Block 7.		*Awareness to Action")*. All presentations are available online[231].	

[29] Address urgent issues related to the impact of climate change on the local mountain environment and its provision of resources, ecosystem services and public goods			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Adopt nature-based solutions (NBS) as a key element of local climate change adaptation strategies and actions plans. This will involve updating some traditional practices (retro-innovation) and/or making use of current research, including participatory on-farm research such as an EIP-AGRI Operational Groups - see Recommendation 12 in Building Block 4 and Recommendation 25 in Building Block 7. Relevant NBS include agricultural practices adapted to climate change, such as drought-resistant crops and cultivars, water-conserving crop rotations, development of integrated grazing management plans with adaptive grazing practices etc. There is much scope for the development of new CAP-funded eco-schemes and agri-environment-climate interventions. Some non-productive investments will also be relevant - these are defined as not leading to a significant increase in the value or profitability of the holding or	National, Regional and Local authorities	Eco-schemes[235] and agri-environment-climate payment schemes can both be included in National CAP Strategic Plans to support NBS-based farm management practices for climate adaptation. This in accordance with Articles 31 and 70 respectively of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[236]. Non-productive investments are eligible for inclusion in National CAP Strategic Plans in accordance with Article 34 (INVEST interventions) of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115.	Short- to Medium-term

[231] https://www.euromontana.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Water-mountains-webinar-presentations.pdf

[235] The Institute of European Environment Policy (IEEP) has prepared a useful Guide for Managing Authorities on Using Eco-Schemes in the New CAP: https://www.organicseurope.bio/content/uploads/2020/06/ifoam-eco-schemes-web_compressed-1.pdf

[236] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

business concerned, but necessary to achieve certain environmental and climate objectives. There are several Horizon-funded research and innovation projects focused on NBS solutions for mountains and other vulnerable regions. These include PHUSICOS[232], OPERANDUM[233] and RECONECT[234].			
Use territorial information systems to support the development of 'climate smart' farm advisory and information/knowledge exchange tools (including collaborative diagnosis and decision-making regarding climate risks) as part of the "mountain AKIS" – see Recommendation 12 in Building Block 4. Consider how to use new approaches, such as Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES), that are being developed[237]. This includes ensuring better access to comprehensible indicators and data at NUTS3 and below via Eurostat and/or rural observatory platforms. This is especially important for supporting public authorities to forecast climate change impacts on local natural assets and to prepare and implement local adaptation action plans – see Recommendation 6 in Building Block 1.	National, Regional and Local authorities	Article 15 of the CSP Regulation (EU) 2021/2115[238] requires that Member States support farm advisory services that cover *"economic, environmental and social dimensions, taking into account existing farming practices, and deliver up-to-date technological and scientific information developed by means of research and innovation projects, including the provision of public goods"*.	Short- to Medium-term

[232] https://www.phusicos.eu/
[233] https://site.unibo.it/operandum/en
[234] http://www.reconect.eu/
[237] https://biodiversity.europa.eu/europes-biodiversity/ecosystems/maes
[238] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115

[30] Strengthen mountain communities' adaptive capacity to face socio-economic changes and environmental changes, trends and shocks			
Relevant Policy Leverage Points	**Target Group**	**Applicable Policy Interventions**	**Timeframe**
Empower and build the capacity of MPVC actors and other mountain stakeholders to be part of planning, implementation and monitoring processes regarding adaptation to environmental and socio-economic change in their own localities and regions. This requires multiple mechanisms to raise awareness and leverage local communities' participation in determining the long-term resilience of their mountain areas, including actions and strategies to anticipate and/or intervene in unbalanced outcomes (e.g. resource degradation due to overproduction) arising from MPVC development and management.	National, Regional and Local authorities	Multiple policy interventions are applicable. See Recommendations 2, 3 and 6 in Building Block 1, plus Recommendation 7 in Building Block 2.	Short- to Medium-term
Improve the consistency and coherence of existing information sources and knowledge exchange platforms to support the empowerment of MPVC actors and other mountain stakeholders in Europe. There are many useful information sources and knowledge exchange platforms already available (e.g. Climate-ADAPT[239]), including scientific tools that are being integrated and adapted for use by end-users, (e.g. the Alpine Drought Observatory[240]). However, they need to be more visible and accessible – ideally through a single user-friendly, multi-lingual platform. A good example for scaling up and out in Europe could be the Mountains Connect[241] and Adaptation at Altitude[242] initiatives for mountain regions in the	EU and National authorities	Precedents exist for testing the feasibility and developing such platforms with funding from the Horizon research and innovation framework programme. For example, development of the EU-FarmBook platform[243] is funded by a Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action (CSA).	Medium- to Long-term

[239] https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en
[240] https://ado.eurac.edu/vci
[241] https://mountains-connect.org/
[242] https://adaptationataltitude.org/
[243] https://eufarmbook.eu/en

Global South that are funded by the United Nations Environment Programme and Swiss government. A single dedicated platform for European mountains would need long-term funding and hosting by the European Commission.			

Building Block 8 - Implementation Example

The Carpathian Civil Society Platform
The *Carpathian Civil Society Platform* (CCSP)[244] is a strategic initiative aimed at bolstering the resilience and capacity of rural civil society organizations (CSOs) in the mountainous regions of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine. These regions are characterized by their remote locations, ethnic diversity, and shared cultural heritage. They face significant challenges such as poor infrastructure, increasing poverty, and social exclusion, particularly among vulnerable groups like refugees, Roma communities, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. The primary contribution of the CCSP to the resilience of these mountainous areas lies in its role as a facilitator of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and resource mobilization. By creating a network that operates on both local and transnational levels, the CCSP strengthens the capacity of rural CSOs to address the complex and cross-cutting issues they face. At the local level, the CCSP has established "hublets," or local workshops, in each of the participating countries. These hublets bring together CSOs to identify their needs, form partnerships, and work on community-specific issues. Each country has a partner organization ensuring that local perspectives are represented in the broader interregional hub and transnational dialogue. The CCSP's activities include organizing capacity-building training, securing funding, and facilitating the implementation of local projects through a micro-grant scheme. This financial support has been critical, as many rural CSOs lack the resources and expertise to independently apply for and manage development funds. The platform has successfully mobilized funding from various sources, including the European Regional Development Fund, INTERREG, and private foundations like the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Open Society Foundation. This funding has supported a range of projects, from mentoring sessions and transnational study visits to the creation of communication materials and the organization of cultural events.

[244] https://www.karpatokalapitvany.hu/en/tartalom/carpathian-civil-society-platform

The CCSP has played a crucial role in fostering cross-border cooperation and the exchange of good practices. This has been particularly valuable in addressing shared challenges across the Carpathian region, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The platform's flexibility and responsiveness have allowed it to quickly adapt to these crises, providing humanitarian aid and working remotely when necessary.

The success of the CCSP is rooted in its participatory approach, ensuring that rural CSOs are not just beneficiaries but active participants in the platform's development. This has led to a strong sense of ownership and sustainability within the communities it serves. By addressing the critical need for funding access and creating a robust network of support, the CCSP significantly enhances the resilience of the mountainous rural areas in the Carpathian region, enabling these communities to better respond to current and future challenges.

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