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ACSSQ

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

AlpSatellites policy guidelines  
“Enabling a remote-working  
ecosystem to make remote areas thrive”

# AlpSatellites policy guidelines “Enabling a remote-working ecosystem to make remote areas thrive”

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## PART ONE – THE ANALYSIS

### 1 INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The first chapter introduces the whole project and the work done during the WP. It presents the partners and the three countries of application. It includes the methodology adopted during the workshops, references, and literature about the remote working phenomena.

Alpsatellites project is a strategic initiative to facilitate the smooth implementation of hybrid working models and satellite offices in remote and mountainous regions. The primary objective of this project is to carefully examine the opportunities and challenges associated with remote working, with a particular focus on reviving mountainous areas. The ultimate goal is to attract a diverse demographic into these regions, including young professionals, seasonal workers, and digital nomads. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of the complex landscape of remote work, the AlpSatellites Project aims to create a sustainable environment for community development. Additionally, this initiative seeks to establish designated coworking spaces, known as AlpSatellites hubs, to encourage collaboration and innovation.

**1.1 Exploring Alpine Regions Through Collaborative Research Initiatives** AlpSatellites Project is conducting research in three Alpine regions across Italy, France, and Austria. Each region has its own set of unique characteristics and local partners, as follows:

#### ITALY:

- Area: The Evançon Mountain Community (Unité des Communes valdôtaines Évançon) within the Valle d'Aosta Region, consisting of ten municipalities with a total population of 11,498.
- Partners: Collaborating with the Evançon Mountain Community, supported by the University of Valle d'Aosta.
- Characteristics: The region faces challenges in service planning due to the notable dispersion index in the resident population. It is categorised into the central valley (major economic hub), mid-mountain (facing critical issues with limited tourist flows), and high mountains (Ayas, with a pronounced tourist orientation).

#### FRANCE:

- Areas: Briançonnais, Guillestrois-Queyras, and Pays des Ecrins, comprising 36 municipalities with a total population of 35,000.
- Partners: Collaborating with ACSSQ (Association culturelle, sociale et sportive du Queyras) and AMU (Aix-Marseille University).
- Economic Base: Predominantly reliant on tourism, handicrafts, and agriculture. Limited industrial sites, with hydropower plants along the Durance.

#### AUSTRIA:

- Area: Bregenzerwald, comprising 24 municipalities with a population of approximately 33,000.
- Partners: Collaborating with the Municipality of Doren and the University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg.
- Economic Focus: Traditionally recognised for winter tourism, summer hiking, and craftsmanship.
- Characteristics: Emphasis on preserving the landscape, with architectural masterpieces in the council area. Doren features various facilities for children and young people, a grocery store, a camping site, and diverse outdoor spaces, including the "Achtal Weg" walking and cycling path along the Bregenzer Ach River.

These three regions have experienced remote working due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In France, Italy, and Austria, many individuals adapted to working from home for several weeks or months, requiring new skills in work methodologies and communication strategies. These regions provide an excellent opportunity to examine the potential benefits and challenges of adopting hybrid working models and satellite offices in each context.

#### 1.2 Common Grounds and Shared Challenges

The following text outlines shared characteristics and common challenges faced by three territories in their efforts to foster favourable conditions for remote work. These territories include Italy, France, and Austria.

Shared Characteristics:

- Mountainous Terrain: The three countries share regions with mountainous terrain, such as Aosta Valley, Pays du Gran Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois-Queyras, and Bregenzerwald.
- Tourism-Dependent Economies: These regions heavily depend on tourism and attract visitors with natural beauty, outdoor activities, cultural heritage, and historical sites.
- High Cost of Living: Living in these mountainous regions is generally more expensive due to second homes, elevated energy and housing costs, and limited real estate supply.
- Demographic Trends: Common demographic challenges include an ageing population, a decline in young residents, and a tendency for younger generations to seek better job opportunities in larger cities.
- Challenges in Healthcare Services: These regions face similar challenges in providing adequate healthcare services, including medical desertification in some areas.
- Technological Infrastructure: Ongoing efforts to improve technological infrastructure, such as expanding optical fibre, continue. However, issues with internet quality and

access to e-services persist.

- Interest in Remote Work: There is a growing interest in promoting remote work and coworking spaces in these regions, as working from home may be challenging for many remote workers.
- Natural Beauty and Outdoor Activities: These regions are renowned for their natural beauty, protected parks, and various outdoor activities, which make them attractive to tourists and remote workers seeking a high quality of life.
- Cultural Heritage: Rich historical and cultural heritage, including monuments, castles, and medieval towns, adds to the region's desirability for residents and tourists.

Common Challenges in Remote Work:

- Challenging Internet Connectivity: All three regions face issues related to Internet connectivity, requiring advocacy for improvements in broadband and mobile network infrastructure.
- Seasonal Work Patterns: The reliance on seasonal industries, such as tourism, can lead to variations in workloads for remote workers, emphasising the need for diversification of skills and income sources.
- Limited Coworking Spaces: The availability of coworking spaces is limited, necessitating the development of more spaces to accommodate remote workers.
- High Housing Costs: Scenic locations contribute to higher housing costs, requiring remote workers to consider affordable housing options or seek companies offering housing subsidies.

Challenges in Remote Work-Specific Aspects:

- Communication and Collaboration: Limited public transportation and remote workspaces may pose challenges for face-to-face interactions, encouraging innovative solutions like virtual or augmented reality for remote meetings.
- Work-Life Balance: The beautiful natural landscapes and outdoor activities in these regions may make it challenging to maintain a work-life balance, necessitating clear boundaries and dedicated workspaces.
- Career Progression: Lack of local career opportunities and networking events can hinder career progression, emphasising the need for online professional development and virtual industry engagement.
- Isolation and Loneliness: The isolation due to remote work can be intensified in regions with lower population density, prompting the need for online communities, local events, and remote work-related webinars to combat loneliness.

Various methodologies were utilized to explore the phenomenon of remote working and the organisation of coworking spaces in the three areas. These methodologies included workshops, quantitative analysis, qualitative assessments through interviews, and a comprehensive review of relevant literature on remote work and coworking spaces. Although the research had some limitations due to economic and

time constraints, it served as an initial phase to familiarise workshop participants and those involved in qualitative/quantitative analyses with this type of activity and investigation while raising awareness about remote working. This activity can be replicated in regions with similar mountainous characteristics and internal/depressed areas.

### 1.3 Crafting Collaborative Futures: Tailoring Methodologies in the Workshop Phase of Remote Working Exploration

During the initial stage of this project, a comparable methodology was adopted to gain a thorough understanding of the impact and potential of remote working in three distinct areas. Based on the insights we obtained in this stage, where we observed heterogeneity in the results, we decided to adapt the approach for implementing co-creation workshops in the subsequent phase. This strategy is intended to actively involve local communities, allowing a comprehensive exploration of the remote working phenomenon and fostering a greater awareness of the unique opportunities within each host region.

#### ITALY

In Italy, a comprehensive approach was taken to identify stakeholders crucial for local development and co-design. The stakeholders were categorised into four distinct groups:

- Local Administrators and Policymakers: Individuals overseeing local governance and policy-making.
- Local Entrepreneurs (Evançon Mountain Community): Entrepreneurs, particularly those in tourism-related businesses (e.g., hoteliers, restaurateurs).
- Citizens (Non-Business Owners): The generic public, excluding business owners and administrators.
- University Students (University of Valle d'Aosta): Students studying Psychology and Economics.

The policymakers were included from outside the Valle d'Aosta Region to capture insights from decision-makers outside the immediate region and facilitate interaction with diverse Alpine realities. Noteworthy collaborations included the Turin Regional Business Association, Escartons, and Valli Valdesi local action group.

The process was divided into two stages:

Stage 1 (February-March 2023)

- Online workshops for public administrations, local entrepreneurs, citizens, and university students.
- Separate workshops were conducted for each stakeholder group.
- The workshops covered co-working spaces, necessary services for attracting digital nomads, and communication strategies.

Stage 2 (Final Workshop – 28 March 2023)

- Stakeholders from all groups were convened to discuss

and compare visions.

- Insights from the four workshops in Stage 1 were used to identify three main project targets: workstation/leisure travellers, digital nomads, and new residents.
- The workshop used a structured format with moderators leading discussions at three scattered tables, each dedicated to one target group.
- Cross-discussion among local citizens, entrepreneurs, university students, and policymakers was encouraged.

The methodology aimed to engage stakeholders comprehensively and co-design the project, identifying tangible targets and laying the groundwork for further development in remote work in the Evançon Mountain Community and surrounding areas.

In a second phase, on October 30, 2023, the third and last workshop was held at the Evançon Office in Verres, Italy, to establish coworking spaces in the area. The diverse stakeholders, including residents, entrepreneurs, students, and political representatives, attended the session. The workshop addressed three key questions: potential coworking space locations, design features catering to identified users and sustainable funding strategies. Participants explored community-based locations, envisioned flexible and functional coworking spaces, and emphasised the importance of communal areas for fostering interactions. Discussions also delved into financial models, community involvement, and strategic partnerships with educational institutions and businesses. The workshop marked a significant milestone in establishing coworking spaces in the area.

## FRANCE

During the first stage (November 2021 – April 2022), the AlpSatellites Project team held bilateral meetings with key stakeholders from three designated territories: Briançonnais, Guillestrois-Queyras, and Pays des Ecrins. The Queyras Cultural, Social and Sports Association (ACSSQ) and Aix-Marseille University (AMU) facilitated these meetings, which included elected officials and prominent economic stakeholders such as the Haute Alpes Business Union (UPE05). The primary objective was to introduce the project to local representatives and engage them as community advocates—this strategic approach aimed to create a ripple effect, prompting broader community involvement in the subsequent stage.

The second mobilisation stage (beginning of March 2023) composed of three comprehensive meetings orchestrated for the entire territory in early March. The project team deliberately mixed audiences to gather various perspectives and opinions. Participants included elected officials, economic and tourist operators (such as hoteliers, local businesses, and tourist agencies), workers, and representatives from the non-profit sector. Given the expansive size of the French territory, three separate meetings were organised, each held in co-working spaces or nomadic offices. This decision ensured coverage across the vast territory and facili-

tated interactions in environments conducive to collaborative discussions.

The meetings, attended by a total of 42 people (including remote workers, elected officials, social and professional stakeholders, and co-working space owners), followed a structured agenda:

1. Greetings/Ice-breaker
2. Presentation of the project and Q&A session
3. Workshops in sub-groups (utilising the “world café” methodology)
4. Testimonies of teleworkers and managers of co-working/co-living spaces
5. Presentation of the following steps and closing of the meeting with refreshments

The engagement strategy successfully involved diverse stakeholders and set the stage for insightful discussions, laying the foundation for subsequent analyses and developments within the AlpSatellites Project in the French Alpine territories.

For the following phase, on September 22, 2023, the third and last workshop was held, the objective of which was to envision realistic solutions within the context of public policy support, whether regulatory or financial. Invitations were extended to institutional and private partners. Six of 161 invitees were unavailable, and 15 attended, including representatives from local authorities, the **Écrins** Tourist Office, UPE 05, PNR du Queyras, ACSSQ volunteers, and the Aix-Marseille University team. The workshop agenda included introducing the project’s context and final stages, utilising outcomes from earlier phases, and a three-stage solution co-design workshop in sub-groups. The afternoon workshop concluded with selecting solutions for the feasibility study phase, involving a review, suggestions, and voting by participants using stickers.

## AUSTRIA

In the first phase, to assess the appetite for remote work, coworking spaces, and the concept of digital nomads in Austria, AlpSatellites project team implemented a comprehensive methodology involving two independent workshops.

**WORKSHOP 1:** Student and company engagement

The initial workshop aimed to inform students, professors, and select companies about the AlpSatellites project. During this event, a team of three students was formed to address the challenges of AlpSatellites and support Austrian partners over the next five months.

**WORKSHOP 2:** Online Collaboration with Students and Young Workers

This online workshop engaged 15 students and young workers in collaborative work on a mural board.

- **SWOT Analysis:** Participants conducted a SWOT analysis, comparing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to remote work and coworking spaces.



- **Personal and Social Perspective:** Participants examined pros and cons from personal perspectives, considering their opinions and needs and the broader social and community impact.
- **Additional Questions:** Participants addressed the impact of communication methods on remote work, exploring different approaches and marketing strategies. They also discussed ideas to develop services to enhance the region's attractiveness to remote workers and digital nomads.

#### WORKSHOP 3: Regional Engagement in Bregenzerwald

The third workshop involved 25 mayors from the Bregenzerwald region to understand their perspectives on digital transformation, digitisation, and support for remote work and coworking spaces.

- **Keynote Presentation:** A brief presentation on digital transformation, digitisation, and emerging trends was delivered to provide participants with insights and align them on current developments.
- **Survey:** Following the presentation, an online survey using Microsoft Forms gathered opinions, ideas, and sentiments. The questions were tailored to address AlpSatellites' requirements and Doren municipality's interests, emphasising the need for mutual support and interaction among cities in the Bregenzerwald region.

This multifaceted approach allowed the Austrian project team to gather valuable data and insights, combining perspectives from students, young workers, and local mayors. The workshops facilitated a nuanced understanding of the region's stance on remote work, coworking spaces, and digital nomads, contributing to the overall objectives of the AlpSatellites project in Austria.

The workshop of the subsequent phase, the third one, was held at the University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg on July 19, 2023. Participants, mainly students who were familiar with AlpSatellites, seamlessly continued discussions from previous workshops. The 2-hour session aimed to streamline the process, using eight focus points inspired by successful French examples. A benchmarking exercise identified critical factors for community and coworking space development. The main objective was a collaborative brainstorming session facilitated by a whiteboard divided into sections. Discussions spanned community needs, input sources, envisioned services, support, impact, environment, emotions, ideas, personal experiences, challenges, and motivations for participation. The workshop provided a dynamic platform to explore various community and coworking space dimensions.

### 1.4 Interdisciplinary Exploration: Informing AlpSatellites Through a Comprehensive Literature Review on Remote Work and Coworking Spaces

The literature research undertaken for the AlpSatellites project involved a comprehensive interdisciplinary review of remote work and coworking spaces. Given the intricate nature of examining the readiness of target areas for remote work and the AlpSatellites project's overarching goal of identifying potentially attractive locations for individuals and businesses, collaboration between diverse disciplines such as work and organisational psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, economics, and science and technology studies was essential. An extensive literature review was initiated to assess the need and readiness for remote work and coworking spaces in three distinct territories. This review delved into managerial, economic, psychological, and sociological aspects, focusing on key concepts such as remote work, coworking, and rural coworking spaces. The insights gleaned from this literature review formed the bedrock to develop the theoretical framework, subsequently guiding the construction of the quantitative research questionnaire.

### 1.5 Surveying Perspectives: Unveiling Insights on Remote Work and Coworking Spaces from a Comprehensive Quantitative Research Approach

The quantitative research phase involved creating a questionnaire based on insights from literature analysis and qualitative interviews. Administered online through Google Forms, it targeted specific groups in the three partner countries—local authorities, entrepreneurs, local workers, and students. The questionnaire, translated into English, Italian, French, and German, sought diverse perspectives on remote work and coworking spaces. Respondents were categorised based on previous remote work experience, directing them to tailored sections. The structured questionnaire, comprising 16 sections under "Remote Work" and "Coworking Spaces," employed Likert scales and open-ended questions. The targeted approach garnered detailed data from 796 respondents across Italy, France, Austria (Italy 394, France 321, Austria 49), and other countries (14 from other countries, 18 nationalities not reported).

### 1.6 Qualitative Insights Across Borders: Informing AlpSatellites Project Through In-Depth Analyses in Italy, France, and Austria

In each of the three countries, qualitative analyses were conducted to inform the AlpSatellites project's quantitative questionnaire and explore research objectives.

**In Italy,** qualitative research in the Evançon area relied on

**4 semi-structured interviews** with Ayas Valley residents working remotely, selected through a strategic sampling approach. Interviews in Italian delved into participants' career choices, past and present work experiences, difficulties, achievements, and obstacles for remote work.

**In France**, 21 interviews were supplemented by participant and non-participant observations through French workshops. The interview guide focused on attracting/retaining/assisting remote workers, the link between remote work and the work environment, and ensuring sustainability in remote working communities. The objective was to under-

stand the challenges faced by mountain territories in implementing policies to enhance attractiveness for remote workers.

**In Austria**, a team of three students conducted 11 in-person interviews with individuals of various age groups, genders, occupations, and municipalities in Vorarlberg. Working closely with Austrian partners of AlpSatellites, they contributed to the research process, exploring topics related to coworking and community spaces. The interviews aimed to create a comprehensive picture of the region, with participants responding to the same questions.

## 2 MARKET ANALYSIS

According to the described methodology, the second chapter is a sort of “market analysis” with a specific focus on the three different countries and the general trends. In the first part, the phenomena are described, recalling the socio-economic evolution and the rising demand for remote working services. Thanks to the implemented quantitative research, we try to measure and specify the market's trends and size in the second paragraph. In the last section, we describe the demand segment using the more qualitative issues: who are the remote workers in the Alpine area?

### 2.1 “Marked need” description of the phenomena The Rise of Remote Workers: A Paradigm Shift in Employment Trends and Demographics

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting measures like quarantine have brought to attention remote working, allowing employees to work outside the corporate office. Although this idea has always existed, it wasn't expected. However, remote work has become more prevalent thanks to various social changes like technological advancements, flexibility, and a growing desire for personal well-being. Remote work is being applied not only by company employees but also by freelancers. The latter is used to describe this category of workers, that is the “digital nomads”.

Remote work is becoming an established mode of work driven by the evolving needs of workers and organisational decisions made by companies. Several significant data highlight this trend:

- Owl Labs reports that 24% of global companies are fully remote.
- According to Global Workplace Analytics, 56% of the U.S. workforce can work remotely.
- Eurostat projects that throughout Europe, in 2022, 30% of workers will regularly work remotely, either entirely or with a hybrid model.
- Eurofound reports that 36% of freelancers across Europe consistently work remotely.

- Owl Labs suggests that 85% of managers believe that managing teams with remote workers will become the new norm.

According to Nomad List, a well-known platform for digital nomads that publishes real-time data, statistics, and trends based on its community and other sources, over 55 million individuals identified as digital nomads in 2023. Data from the same site, reported by *Statista*, indicates that Europe is the continent from which most digital nomads originate worldwide, after the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia. Germany leads the ranking with 4%, followed by France (3%), the Netherlands (2%), Spain (2%), Italy (1%), Poland (1%), Austria (1%), Sweden (1%), and Ireland (1%).

From an age perspective, a global analysis (currently unofficial but the only available one) published by the travel magazine *Abrotherabroad.com* in 2021 highlights that approximately 47% of individuals who identify as digital nomads worldwide fall within the age range of 30 to 39 years. Another 16% belong to the 40 to 49 age group, while 19% are between 50 and 59. Interestingly, only 14% consist of young adults aged 20 to 29.

These data are particularly intriguing as they contrast with the typical image of the digital nomad, often idealised as a young individual with a laptop and backpack.

In one of its articles, *Forbes* emphasises that the digital nomad lifestyle is not just for young singles. According to a survey commissioned in the United States by Safety Wing, most surveyed digital nomads (58.8%) are married or cohabiting, and almost half (48.3%) have children under 18. Surprisingly, 70.4% of digital nomads with children already experienced remote work in various parts of the world plan to continue this practice (source: *Forbes*).

Digital nomads include not only freelance professionals but predominantly employees or contributors to companies (52%), displaying a high level of education: 42% have a bachelor's degree, and 31% hold a master's or doctorate

(source: the second report on digital nomadism in Italy).

The majority of digital nomads and competent workers surveyed in the 2022 study conducted by the Italian Digital Nomads Association operate in high-value-added sectors, with skills spanning the fields of communication, education, and information technology.

Remote working has its own set of advantages and disadvantages.

### Advantages of Remote Working:

1. **Flexibility in Time and Location:** Remote working provides the flexibility to work from anywhere at any time, allowing employees to adapt their working schedules to personal needs.
2. **Company Growth and Flexibility:** Remote work can contribute to the growth and flexibility of a company. While outsourcing is often used to reduce costs and company size, remote work offers internal flexibility, which is especially crucial in modern markets.
3. **Increased Attention to Individual and Team Needs:** Remote work demands greater attention to individual worker needs and effective teamwork. Balancing these aspects is essential for successful remote work implementation.
4. **Enhanced Control with New Strategies:** Although specific software can increase control, managers must identify new strategies and perspectives to manage the paradoxes associated with remote work. This includes addressing concerns about higher costs and reduced direct control.
5. **Reduced Commuting Distances:** Remote work often reduces commuting distances for professionals and office workers. This can increase job satisfaction and work-life balance, as individuals can avoid daily commutes.
6. **Variety in Motivations:** Remote work caters to various motivations, including reduced commuting distances and family obligations. The flexibility accommodates different individual needs and preferences.
7. **Managerial Willingness:** The critical common element for successful remote work implementation is the willingness of managers to embrace and support remote working within their organisations.

### Disadvantages of Remote Working:

*For Employees:*

1. **Risk of Isolation:** Remote workers may experience isolation or neurosis due to reduced social interactions.
2. **Increased Work Time and Workload:** Eliminating breaks and informal time may lead to increased work time and workload.
3. **Threatened Sense of Belonging:** Remote work may jeopardise the sense of belonging within work groups, leading to a risk of atomisation.
4. **Blurring Professional and Private Spheres:** There is an increased “blurring” between professional and private life, challenging the work-life balance.

*Additional Challenges for Employees:*

1. **Anxiety Concerning Technology:** Remote work may increase workers’ anxiety regarding using computers and information technologies.
2. **Perception of Inclusion:** Remote workers may have a poorer perception of inclusion and appreciation within the organisation, affecting their sense of belonging.
3. **Fewer Career Advancements:** Despite productivity, remote workers may face fewer career advancements compared to in-office counterparts.

*For Organisations:*

1. **Reduced Control Capacity:** Organisations may experience difficulties controlling remote employees.
2. **Need for Overhaul in Work Organisation:** Introducing remote work may necessitate a thorough revision of the entire work organisation, posing challenges for implementation.
3. **Increased Costs:** Organisations may face higher installation and maintenance costs associated with supporting remote work.
4. **Cultural Clashes and Lack of Trust:** Challenges such as cultural clashes, isolation, and a lack of trust among remote workers may arise.
5. **Psychosocial Risks:** Risks include psychosocial issues, workaholicism, and potential over-control, primarily through electronic means.
6. **Failure to Cover Remote Work Equipment Costs:** There may be challenges in adequately covering the costs of remote work equipment.
7. **Musculoskeletal Disorders (MD):** Remote work may contribute to an increased risk of musculoskeletal disorders among employees.

While remote work offers numerous benefits, addressing these challenges requires careful consideration and the implementation of appropriate managerial practices.

### Coworking Spaces: Transforming Work Culture and Community Dynamics in the Remote Work Era

The remote working trend has gained immense popularity recently, leading to a surge in demand for spaces where people can work, concentrate, and connect with a professional environment. This has led to the emergence of coworking spaces, which first originated in San Francisco in 2005. Coworking spaces offer shared working spaces for remote workers, promoting collaboration and reducing feelings of isolation. Since its inception, coworking spaces have experienced significant global expansion with impressive annual growth rates, particularly since 2007-2008. Even amid COVID-19 restrictions, coworking spaces increased from 16,000 to 23,500 in three years, with coworker numbers growing from 1.6 to 2.5 million. Projections indicate continued growth to 42,000 coworking spaces by 2024. Notably, coworking spaces are no longer exclusive to freelancers and entrepreneurs; they



are becoming more accessible to companies, indicating a democratisation of their usage.

The elements of a coworking space typically include:

1. **Flexdesks:** Desks available for general use by anyone in the coworking space.
2. **Fixdesks:** Designated workstations reserved for specific coworkers.
3. **Private Offices:** Separate spaces designed to accommodate multiple individuals.
4. **Ergonomic Workstations:** All workstations are designed with ergonomic considerations.
5. **Kitchen Facilities:** Every coworking space has a small kitchen containing a fridge and microwave.
6. **Conference Rooms:** Spaces for team discussions, meetings, or client presentations.
7. **Technology Infrastructure:** Basic technology equipment includes fast broadband Internet, a reliable Wi-Fi connection, and a printer.
8. **Fast Broadband:** Typically understood as a minimum speed of at least 400 Mbit/s.
9. **Booking System:** An efficient booking system, often using software like Cobot.
10. **Headsets:** High-quality headsets with excellent audio for phone calls, critical in open-space offices.
11. **Noise Management:** Solutions for managing noise, such as padded partitions or separate phone booths to enhance concentration during telephone communication.

According to the 1<sup>st</sup> Global Coworking Survey conducted by Deskmag in collaboration with TU Berlin in 2010, most individuals who use coworking spaces are self-employed or work for companies, with many working in the service sector, particularly in creative industries and new media. Common professions include graphic and web design, IT, consulting, and marketing. Over half of the participants hold a university degree, and most are between 25-39 years old. Some used to work from home before joining coworking spaces, while others previously worked in traditional office environments. Investments in fibre optics and 4G have improved internet accessibility and prompted the migration of internet-dependent workers and businesses from urban to rural areas. In rural coworking spaces, a distinct sense of community emerges, characterised by stability and close personal relationships, leading to the adoption of a unique management style. Studies suggest that the proliferation of rural coworking spaces is particularly notable in Europe, with many privately owned. Hosts of these spaces strategically aim to attract talent to remote offices by utilising shared workspaces and existing company premises.

Users of rural coworking spaces express their preference about autonomy, access to tools, meaningful social connections, and a connection with nature. Autonomy is fostered through reduced travel, flexible management of responsibilities, and an improved work-life balance. Research con-

sistently highlights how coworking spaces contribute to the overall attractiveness of villages and towns, potentially drawing in new residents. Rural coworkers often leverage these spaces to circumvent commuting challenges in traditional workplaces. While transportation predominantly relies on cars, rural coworking spaces boast a more diverse demographic landscape regarding backgrounds, ages, and types of workers compared to their urban counterparts. The appeal of rural coworking spaces lies in their accessibility, time-saving benefits, and the diverse and inclusive community they foster.

## FRANCE RURAL COWORKING SPACES

In France, several existing initiatives aim to support remote workers seeking to establish themselves in remote or underserved areas or attract them to communities needing new residents. Notably, five initiatives stand out for examination in this benchmark due to their relevance to regions similar to ours or for presenting innovative ideas.

These initiatives include:

1. **Paris je te quitte:** A company assisting individuals looking to leave Paris and relocate to provinces, offering personalised and comprehensive support through collaboration with local authorities. However, it primarily directs remote workers to partner areas, and mountain territories are not currently part of these partnerships.
2. **Beaujolais vert votre avenir:** Originally an association turned mixed syndicate, it supports new entrepreneurs, including remote workers, throughout their projects. While historically focusing on aiding newcomers, it tends to benefit self-employed entrepreneurs more than all remote workers.
3. **Soho Solo Gers:** An association funded by local communities that actively engage remote workers and project leaders. It serves as a gateway to the region by directing individuals to the right contacts. However, it lacks ongoing support after settlement.
4. **Agence Ariège Attractivité:** Initially funded by the Ariège department, this association calls for projects and actively seeks to attract project developers and remote workers. It provides comprehensive support throughout the relocation process, broadening its scope to attract valuable skills and workforce.
5. **Cantal department:** Selecting 20 new projects each year, including remote workers, participants are invited to spend three days discovering the area. This initiative provides personalised support, offering one of the most effective forms of assistance for remote workers encountered in the benchmark.

## AUSTRIA RURAL COWORKING SPACES

Coworking spaces in Vorarlberg region, Austria, are primarily in cities such as Bregenz, Dornbirn, and Feldkirch and larger villages like Lustenau and Lochau. However, regions like Bregenzerwald have limited coworking options, with only one space known as “Die Gute Stube” in Andelsbuch. While coworking spaces in the area, managed by entities like PRISMA and Workfwd, offer standard amenities, certain regions like Rheinthal and Bregenzerwald have limited options, requiring remote workers to travel to larger cities like Dornbirn.

Each coworking space in Vorarlberg provides standard amenities, including an open workspace, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, a lounge area, and technological resources such as Wi-Fi, printers, projectors, and speakers. Various ticket options, from daily to weekly to monthly passes, are available, accommodating different needs and usage frequencies.

Emphasising community spaces, the Austrian context highlights two well-functioning examples:

### 1. Repair Café:

- Facilitates on-site repair of faulty electrical appliances, involving device owners in the repair process.
- Approximately 20 Repair Cafés in Vorarlberg operate monthly, reviving the culture of repairing and fostering community interaction.

### 2. Hardground:

- An open youth space in Hard is designed for teenagers aged 12 and above.
- Offers a meeting place for socialising, with facilities like a bar, games, and dedicated social workers.
- Provides teenagers with the opportunity to contribute ideas and actively participate in the programme.

## ITALY RURAL COWORKING SPACES

No coworking spaces exist in the Evançon Mountain Community (ECM) area. However, there are preliminary plans to address this gap. One municipality, Challand-St-Anselme, is considering establishing a small coworking space within its municipal building. Additionally, in the municipality of Ayas, the tourism consortium has made its office available for tourists who occasionally need to work remotely.

### Balancing Demand and Offer: Assessing Location Attractiveness for Remote Workers

It is crucial to consider several factors that determine the attractiveness of a location to both remote workers and the hosting territories. These elements can be summarised as follows:

- **Transportation:** Availability and accessibility of flights and trains, the presence and pricing of local transportation, availability and cost of car rentals, and fuel expenses.
- **Accommodation:** Presence of facilities that offer favourable rates for long-term stays.
- **Social Life:** Availability of affordable restaurants and bars, presence of entertainment venues, exploration opportunities, cultural attractions, residents’ proficiency in the English language, the weather, and economic arrangements for purchasing goods and services during leisure moments.
- **Telecommuting:** Presence of coworking spaces, availability of remote working visas, and internet speed.
- **Health and Safety:** Political stability, absence of violence, low atmospheric pollution, and fewer road accidents and crimes.

A survey conducted by the travel search engine Kayak analysed 111 countries based on six different parameters to determine the most favourable countries for remote workers in 2022. The parameters included travel costs and accessibility, local prices, health and safety, remote work opportunities, social life, and climate. The top 10 countries are Portugal, Spain, Romania, Malta, the Czech Republic, and Germany. Italy ranked 72nd, France 43rd, and Austria 54th in the ranking.

**2.2 The quantitative analysis**  
**Cross-Country Perspectives: Unveiling Attitudes and Evaluations on Remote Work and Coworking Spaces among 796 Respondents**

The quantitative analysis, conducted on a sample of 796 respondents from Italy (394), France (321), Austria (49), and 14 from other countries, with 18 not reporting their nationality, aimed to understand attitudes and evaluations towards remote work and coworking spaces. The key findings are as follows:

**1. Remote Work Evaluation:**

- Among the survey respondents, “Maintaining appropriate levels of communication with my work team” (57.4%) and “Balancing personal/family responsibilities and workload” (39.10%) were perceived as challenging. Regarding remote work, ‘Managing productivity’ is the least concerning to the respondents.
- Italy, France, and Austria showed significant differences, with performance being more crucial in Austria and communication being less critical in Italy.

**2. Coworking Spaces - Previous Experience (104 respondents):**

- Two significant factors were identified: Easiness (effort expectancy and hedonic motivation) and Location.
- Italy, France, and Austria exhibited insignificant differences, with Easiness being more relevant than Location.

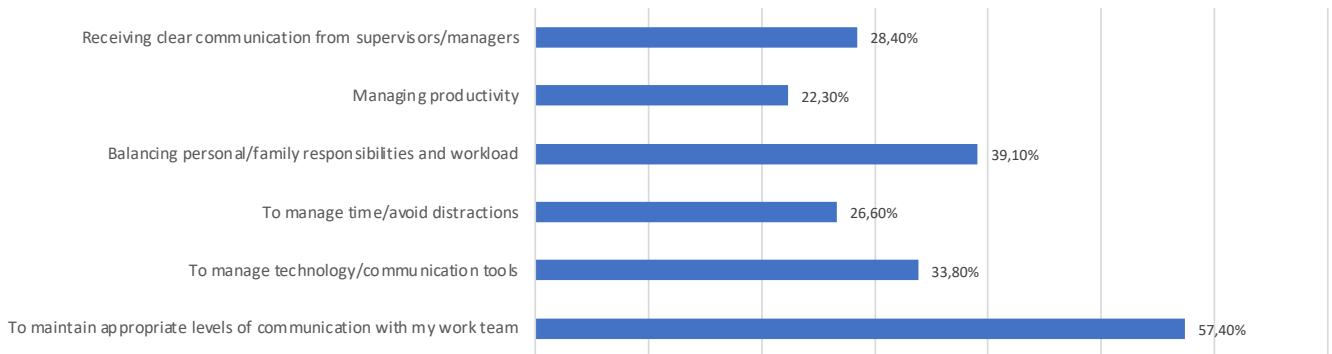
**3. Coworking Spaces - Intention to Use and Performance Expectancy (680 respondents):**

- Two factors emerged: Intention to use a coworking space in the future and Performance Expectancy.
- Italy showed Intention as more critical, while Austria showed a balance between the two dimensions.

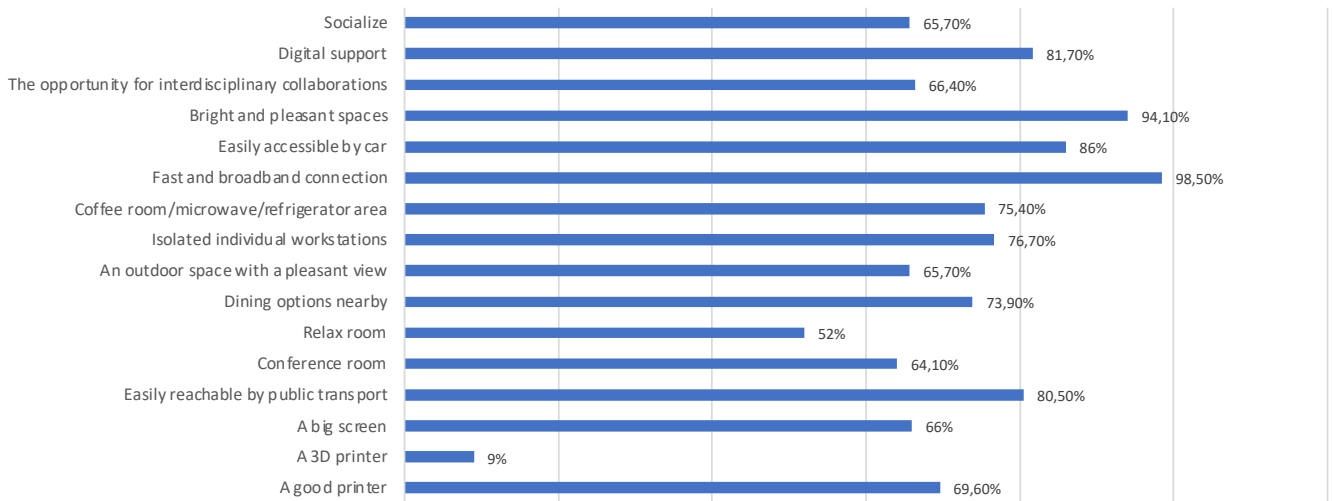
**4. Desired Characteristics of Coworking Spaces:**

- The three most crucial attributes consistently deemed as “important” or “very important” by survey respondents were fast broadband connection (98,5%), bright and comfortable spaces (94,10%), and easily accessible by car (86%).

Challenging Aspects of Remote Work: An Overview



Preferred Coworking Environment Snapshot





- Significant differences among countries included preferences for easy car access (Italy), a good printer and meeting room (France), nearby places to eat (Austria and Italy), digital support (Italy), and social events (Italy and France).

5. Job Satisfaction:

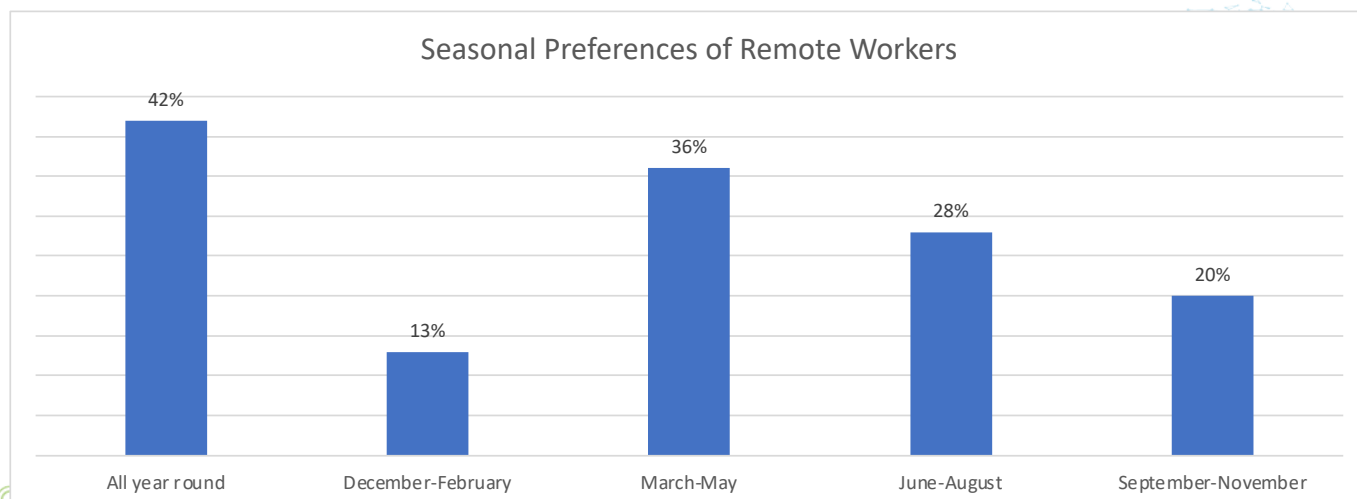
- No significant differences in job satisfaction and intention to leave, but a significantly higher intention to change lifestyle in Italy compared to France and Austria.
  6. Type of Lease and Spending Preferences:
- Daily lease (31.9%) and annual lease (30.9%) were the most preferred types.
- The average intended usage was 5.2 days per month, with an average monthly spending of €84.50 and €11.80 per day, showing variations with large standard deviations.
- No significant differences in preferences among the three countries.

**Unveiling the Digital Nomad Landscape: Insights from the Italian Association of Digital Nomads Survey on Needs and Desires**

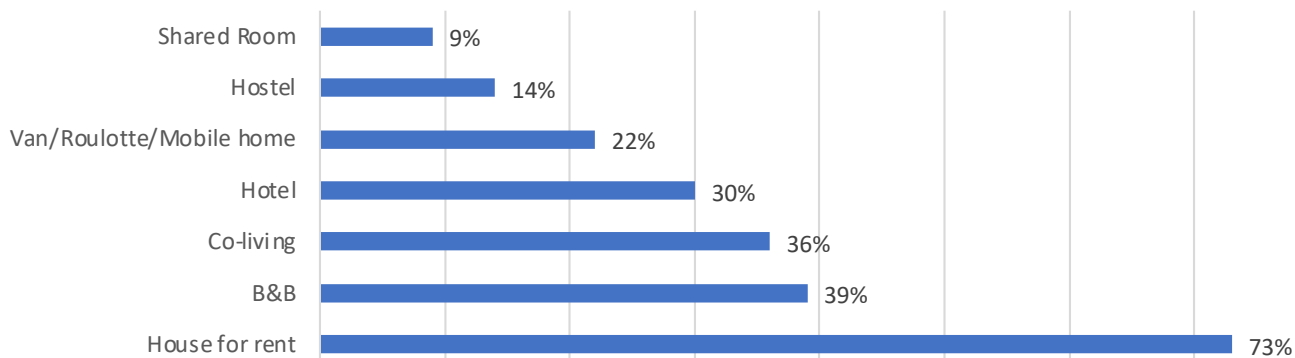
In 2022, the Italian Association of Digital Nomads surveyed approximately 10,000 Italian and foreign workers who engaged in remote working in the previous year, either through experiences of digital nomadism or those interested in such experiences—the survey aimed to identify their needs and desires related to remote work.

- Remote workers and digital nomads who wish to experience remote living and working in Italy would not travel alone; instead, the majority of them expressed a desire to do so with their partner (44%), followed by friends (32%), or family (23%).
- An exciting finding from the survey is the increasing trend of remote workers and digital nomads who would like to travel to Italy with their pets, opening opportunities for niche offers and tailored services.

- 93% of respondents expressed interest in living the digital nomad lifestyle, staying for varying periods in small municipalities and villages in marginal territories and inland areas, considered places where the quality of life and air is better than in large urban centres.
- Unlike traditional holidaymakers or tourists, remote workers and digital nomads are interested in living medium to long-term experiences in destinations. 42% would stay for periods ranging from 1 to 3 months, 25% from 3 to 6 months, while 20% would be willing to wait even longer.
- an exciting data point concerns the possibility of de-seasonalising “tourist flows”, making the supply of products and services (hospitality and accommodation) more sustainable. Indeed, 42% of remote workers and digital nomads have stated that they would travel and move within our territories throughout the year, regardless of the season.
- The preferred accommodation for remote workers and digital nomads during their stay is apartments and rental houses, followed by Bed & Breakfast. The data highlight a growing interest in co-living, which refers to flexible housing solutions designed to meet the specific needs of this new generation of mobile professionals. These accommodations provide private spaces and offer access to services, shared workspaces, and common areas where activities promoting socialisation and networking occur.
- Moreover, the opportunity to participate in exchange and volunteer projects holds a particular appeal for remote workers and digital nomads. Specifically, language exchanges and skill-sharing initiatives related to local arts and crafts traditions attract interest from over 80% of respondents.
- This once again underscores how many professionals opting for this lifestyle feel a strong need to make a positive impact. Unlike traditional tourists, digital nomads do not merely stay in a place; they seek to learn something new about themselves and the world around them, bringing value back to the local communities that host them.



### Preferred types of accommodation for remote worker stays



The experiences that digital nomads are most eager to explore in the regions they inhabit, and which are of most significant interest to remote workers include cultural events (56%), gastronomic experiences (54%), and nature-related activities (51%). This is closely followed

by the desire to engage in authentic and characteristic experiences of the local area (40%), participate in social activities with the local community and fellow digital nomads (37%), and engage in activities related to personal well-being (36%).

### 2.3 The remote worker description from the qualitative analysis

#### Embracing Diversity: Unique Needs and Preferences of Remote Workers in Ayas Valley

The qualitative analysis of the needs expressed by remote workers in the Ayas Valley reveals a diverse range of requirements and preferences. Each individual interview, namely Moreno, Elvira, Giovanna, and Marco, presents unique considerations that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the needs in this context.

From the provided information, it seems that the needs and preferences of remote workers in the Ayas Valley are diverse and multi-faceted. Here are some additional factors and needs that can be identified:

#### 1. Infrastructure and Technology:

- **Robust Internet Infrastructure:** Besides broadband issues, ensuring a reliable and high-speed internet connection is crucial for remote workers.
- **Technology Support:** Technical support and resources, such as IT assistance and equipment, can enhance the remote working experience.

#### 2. Community and Networking:

- **Community Building:** Creating opportunities for networking and social interactions within the coworking space can be essential, especially for newcomers who may face challenges building a social network.
- **Events and Workshops:** Hosting regular events, workshops, and seminars can foster a sense of community and provide continuous learning opportunities.

#### 3. Flexibility and Work-Life Balance:

- **Flexible Working Hours:** Supporting flexible working hours and accommodating different time zones is vital, considering the diverse needs of remote workers.
- **Outdoor Workspaces:** Providing options for outdoor workspaces with a robust wireless connection can cater to those who prefer working in natural surroundings.

#### 4. Accessibility and Location:

- **Accessibility:** Ensuring that the coworking space is easily accessible, whether by car or public transportation, is crucial for attracting a diverse range of remote workers.
- **Strategic Location:** Choosing a location strategically, considering exposure to natural light, proximity to essential services, and ease of commute, can contribute to the success of coworking spaces.

#### 5. Cost and Sustainability:

- **Affordability:** Addressing the high costs of rental accommodation and exploring options for affordable coworking memberships can make it more accessible to a broader audience.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Investigating coworking spaces economic/financial sustainability, including potential contributions from employers, can be a crucial consideration.

#### 6. Cultural Integration and Diversity:

- **Cultural Integration Programmes:** Facilitating programmes that help newcomers integrate into the local culture can address the challenge of creating new social networks.
- **Diverse Workspace Needs:** Recognising and accommodating the diverse needs of different segments of remote

workers, such as tourists, nomadic workers, and long-term residents, is essential.

### 7. Regulatory and Legal Considerations:

- **Regulatory Support:** Advocating for regulatory simplification at national and European levels to facilitate remote work for foreign workers with different employment contracts.

### 8. Environmental Considerations:

- **Sustainable Practices:** Integrating sustainable practices within coworking spaces, aligning with the preferences of individuals interested in working in a natural environment.

### 9. Tailoring to Regional Differences:

- **Location-Specific Design:** Considering the unique needs of different regions within the Ayas Valley and tailoring coworking spaces to address specific challenges in the high, middle, and low valleys.

### 10. Transportation and Mobility:

- **Public Transportation:** Addressing the lack of an adequate local public transportation network to reduce reliance on personal vehicles.

### 11. Legal Flexibility for International Workers:

- **International Work Regulations:** Advocating for more flexible legislation at the European level to facilitate the mobility of workers across countries.

## Navigating Remote Work Needs in Pays du Grand Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois: A Comprehensive Analysis for Sustainable Community Development

The following analysis highlights the various needs of remote workers in the Pays du Grand Briançonnais, Ecrins et Guillestrois. As remote work continues to transform traditional work practices, it is essential to understand the multi-faceted expectations of remote workers. This understanding can provide valuable insights for local authorities, businesses, and communities. By recognising and addressing these needs, the region can attract remote talent and create a conducive environment that encourages a harmonious blend of work and lifestyle. The following bullet points provide a detailed breakdown of the identified needs, offering a roadmap for strategic interventions and community development initiatives.

### Desired Living/Working Environment:

- The area size should be “on a human scale.”
- Proximity to nature is desired for space and opportunities after work.

### Quality of Life:

A healthy environment with less pollution and more excel-

lent safety is preferred.

- Achieving a good work-life balance, allowing time for personal life, sports, and family.
- Climate and environmental issues awareness, reflecting new ecological values.

### Housing:

- Availability of quality housing is essential.
- Concerns about the lack of suitable housing meeting urban standards.
- Some remote workers desire to buy a home in the area.

### Professional Comfort:

- Maintenance of job comfort and a certain salary level, particularly for those working in Paris.
- We need reliable equipment, including affordable property, an internet connection, and a dedicated workspace.

### Travel:

- Proximity to a city is preferred for travel convenience.
- Concerns about transportation in certain areas, with variations in public transport availability.
- Accessibility for family and friends, especially for those with children.

### Social Ties:

- Facilities to prevent isolation, opportunities for social interactions, and informal events.
- Desire for a network of associations and social life to facilitate integration.

### Freedom:

- Flexibility in work hours and location.
- Variety in workplaces, such as cafes, libraries, and third places, to maintain a boundary between private and professional life.

### Transportation and Mobility Needs:

- Improved and more accessible transportation options to the city.
- Enhanced local mobility solutions, especially for those without personal vehicles.
- Reliable and efficient train services, addressing issues like delays and limited coverage.

### Lack of Local Services:

- Increased availability of cultural offerings and social events.
- Creation of more meeting places and socialising venues.
- Better provision of daily services, including schools, transport, and administrative facilities.
- Adapting services to be less seasonal and more suitable for young residents.

### Communication Issues:

- Improved communication channels and information ac-



- Accessibility, especially in languages other than French.
- Increased awareness of existing coworking spaces and associative offerings.

#### Infrastructure and Facilities Needs:

- Development of more green spaces and parks.
- Addressing safety concerns related to road conditions and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Enhancement of internet connectivity to support remote work.
- Establishment of digital training centres and a wider range of training courses.

#### Support Services:

- Support and Guidance: Remote workers require assistance and support while settling in a new area.
- Entry Points to the Area: Support programmes are essential entry points to facilitate the integration of remote workers into a community.
- Information and Orientation: Access to information about the area and orientation services is crucial for remote workers.
- Facilitation of Decision-Making: Support programmes should assist in various stages of the migration decision-making process, including prospecting for potential locations.
- Connection with Local Stakeholders: Remote workers must connect with elected officials and stakeholders to gather information and establish relationships.
- Exploratory Experiences: Programmes that allow remote workers to test an area through short stays provide hands-on experience for better decision-making.
- Assistance in Real Estate: Remote workers must receive support in finding suitable housing or professional locations in competitive real estate markets.
- Role of Third Places: Third places, particularly for the self-employed, play a supportive role by providing workspaces and contributing to establishing economic activities in a new area.

#### Opportunities:

- Creation and promotion of coworking spaces to attract and retain remote workers.
- Development of additional services for tourists, aligning with the rise of remote work.
- Improved communication about existing services and opportunities.
- Creation of new services, such as improved stores, to meet the needs of remote workers.
- Long-term planning to maintain and enhance services for remote workers.

#### New Legislation and Regulation:

- Local authorities are regulating the property market to limit second homes.

- Consideration of taxing or requisitioning second homes to address housing challenges.
- Implementation of housing renovation policies to utilise empty buildings and encourage renovation.

#### Fostering Community Well-being in Vorarlberg, Austria: Insights from a Qualitative Analysis of Remote Worker Perspectives

A recent qualitative analysis of remote workers in Austria, specifically in the Vorarlberg region, was conducted through 11 in-person interviews. The study revealed several needs and challenges faced by the remote workers in the area. Here are the key findings of the analysis:

#### Perception of Community Life:

- The remote workers had an overall positive perception of community life in the region, with different reasons provided.
- Some remote workers appreciated the caring and supportive nature of the community, while others valued peace.
- However, concerns were raised about the impact of constant incoming migration on community strength.

#### Suggestions for Change:

- Intensified marketing is needed to promote events, addressing criticism about limited event information.
- Inclusivity is crucial: all residents should be informed of events and activities.
- The remote workers emphasised the need for social gatherings for various age groups.
- Activities that foster interaction between different generations are needed.
- Revising traditional local restaurants as meeting places is essential to foster social interactions and community bonds.
- More diverse and frequent events organised by the municipality and local clubs are needed.
- Spaces and activities specifically catering to young people are necessary.
- The community needs dedicated meeting spaces and different types of stores for local shopping.
- Public transport plays a crucial role, especially those without personal vehicles.
- The municipality should diversify activities covering various interests and age groups.
- Unique activities should be proposed to bring different age groups together.

#### Technical Skills and Digital Technology:

- The study revealed diverse levels of familiarity with digital topics, clearly correlating to age.
- Younger participants demonstrated higher digital skills and usage of technology.
- Remote workers recognised the importance of digital skills for potential remote work initiatives.

### 3. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN ITA, FRA, AUS.

After examining the legislative frameworks governing remote work in France, Italy, and Austria, it is clear that each country has developed a unique approach to address the changing dynamics of modern work arrangements. By analysing the common principles and distinct features of remote work legislation in these three nations, we can gain insights into the diverse strategies used by each country to navigate the complexities of the contemporary work environment.

#### 3.1 ITALY

The main aspects of Italian legislation concerning remote work are outlined as follows:

##### Remote Work:

- **Homeworking Definition (Law No 877/1973):** Homeworking is work carried out by an individual engaged in a worker-employer relationship in their residence or designated premises, utilising materials owned by the homemaker or the employer.
- **Teleworking (Interconfederal Agreement - Accordo Interconfederale):** Teleworking involves an employee carrying out duties at home, connected to the company's central offices through information technology. The Interconfederal Agreement (2004) mandates adherence to regulations by businesses, workers, and their respective representative bodies, recognising teleworking as a deliberate decision by both the employer and the employee.
- **Flexible Work/Remote Work (Law No 81/2017):** Flexible work, referred to as innovative working, is regulated by Law No 81/2017. It emphasises flexibility in working hours and location, allowing the use of technology and partial work on the company premises. An individual agreement between parties is required.
- **Health and Safety Measures:** Employers are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of teleworkers. Measures include communication of occupational health and safety policies, prevention of isolation, and providing opportunities for regular meetings and access to company information.
- **Equal Rights:** Remote workers are entitled to the same remuneration and conditions as on-site workers. They have access to training, career development, and protection against accidents at work or while commuting to the remote workplace.
- **Prioritisation for Remote Work Requests:** Employers must prioritise remote work requests from employees with children up to twelve years old and workers with disabilities facing difficulty. Retaliatory measures for requesting remote work are prohibited.

##### Right to Disconnect:

- **Introduction of the Right to Disconnect (Law 61/2021):** Law 61/2021 introduced the right to disconnect for remote workers. Workers can disconnect from technological devices and IT platforms, subject to any agreements reached by the parties, without affecting employment or remuneration.
- **National Collective Labor Agreements:** Specific sectors, such as Education and Research, middle managers and professionals in credit and financial institutions, have introduced criteria for using technological tools beyond regular working hours, ensuring the right to disconnect.
- **National Protocol on Remote Working (December 2021):** The protocol formalises individual agreements for remote working, specifying rest periods, technical and organisational measures for disconnection, and the option to disconnect during approved absences.

##### Limitations of Italian Legislation:

- **Absence of Comprehensive Legislation:** Italian legislation on remote work dates back to 2017, needing more comprehensive coverage. There is a need for updated legislation that distinguishes between teleworking, homeworking, and other scenarios.
- **Regulations for Vulnerable Workers:** Specific rules for vulnerable or fragile workers, including parents, guardians, or caregivers, accessing remote work are suggested to ensure their rights.
- **Structured Legislation for Workplace Choice:** The current legislation needs more specificity regarding the employer's responsibility to ensure the safety of remote workplaces, especially in coworking spaces.
- **Public Administration Limitations:** The public administration limits remote work to one or two days per week, hindering the potential benefits of repopulating rural areas.

#### 3.2 FRANCE

The key aspects of French legislation regarding remote work and coworking are outlined as follows:

##### Remote Work:

- **Legal Definition:** Remote work in France is carried away from the company's site, often utilising new communication technologies at home or in a third place.
- **Legal Framework:** The legal framework for remote work is established by the law n° 2012-387 of March 22, 2012, emphasising the voluntary nature of remote work and the need for a mutual agreement between employers and employees.
- **Flexibility:** The law allows flexibility in remote work sys-

tems, with options for individual agreements, collective agreements, or internal charters. The employment contract remains unchanged when transitioning to remote work.

- **Voluntary Participation:** Remote work must be voluntary, and the company cannot sanction refusal by an employee. The company must ensure the compatibility of remote tasks and provide the necessary equipment.
- **Equal Access:** Employers must establish eligibility conditions for remote work to ensure equal employee access. The company can be sued if eligibility conditions are not transparent.
- **Right to Disconnect:** Employees have the right to “disconnect” during non-working hours, and employers must establish a schedule in consultation with the employee to respect rest periods.
- **Employee Rights:** Remote workers retain the same rights as on-site workers, including accident insurance coverage during working hours, even outside the company.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Disputes between remote workers and employers are subject to the “tribunal des rud’hommes” (French Labour Tribunal) (Labor Code, article L. 1411-1).

#### Coworking Spaces:

- **Declaration Requirement:** Coworking spaces must be declared before their first use and can be classified as either ERP (“Espace Reçevant du Public”) or ERT (“Espace Reçevant des Travailleurs”).
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Owners or managers of coworking spaces must comply with fire safety regulations restricting access and obtain authorisation for any modifications to the space.
- **Technical Controller:** A specialised technical controller is mandatory for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th category ERPs, ensuring the project’s feasibility.
- **Standardisation Efforts:** SYNAPHE, a professional organisation, is studying a standard for coworking spaces, providing a certification guaranteeing quality and regulatory compliance.
- **PASS Coworking:** A tool called PASS Coworking allows “neo-nomadic” coworkers to refer to a trusted third party to verify the commitments of coworking space managers.
- **Proposed Standard:** A proposed standard by SYNAPHE aims to guide coworking space managers in meeting the expectations of coworkers and companies, potentially leading to a certification with periodic revisions.

### 3.3 AUSTRIA

The main aspects of Austria’s legislation about remote working include:

- **Voluntary Nature of Remote Work:**
  - Remote work in Austria is voluntary, emphasising the need for mutual agreement between employers

and employees. Both parties must agree on whether remote work aligns with their preferences and operational needs.

- **Written Agreements and Termination Procedures:**
  - Remote work arrangements must be documented in writing, and either party can terminate the agreement with one month’s notice for significant reasons. This formalised approach ensures clarity and transparency in the remote work relationship.
- **Equipment Provision and Compensation:**
  - Employers are responsible for providing necessary work equipment for remote employees, including an Internet connection. Alternatively, compensatory lump-sum payments can be agreed upon. Tax regulations introduced in 2021 contribute to the clarity of compensation rules, covering various incurred costs.
- **Adherence to Working Time Laws:**
  - Remote workers are subject to existing working time laws, ensuring that established norms regarding rest periods and other time-related regulations remain applicable in a remote work setting. This maintains consistency and fairness in the treatment of employees.
- **Liability and Insurance:**
  - Remote workers are held liable for any damage to employer-provided work equipment. The legislation reaffirms the extension of employers’ accident insurance to cover remote workers, encompassing inevitable accidents that may occur outside the worker’s home.
- **Ergonomic Standards and Inspection Permissions:**
  - The legislation emphasises the importance of ergonomic standards for office equipment employers provide. Inspections by the government labour inspectorate require explicit consent from the remote worker, safeguarding the privacy of remote workers.

#### Implications for Employers:

- **Negotiation Dynamics:** Employers can negotiate remote work agreements, considering equipment provision, compensation, and adherence to legal requirements.
- **Legal Compliance:** Ensuring compliance with the legislation’s provisions, especially regarding equipment standards and insurance coverage, is crucial.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Effective communication with employees regarding the terms of remote work agreements contributes to a transparent and collaborative work environment.

#### Implications for Employees:

- **Agreement Flexibility:** Employees have a say in negotiating the terms of remote work agreements, ensuring that the arrangement aligns with their preferences and maintains a healthy work-life balance.
- **Equipment and Compensation:** Clarity on providing necessary equipment and compensation mechanisms empowers employees to make informed decisions regarding



their remote work setup.

- Working Time Management: Adhering to established working time laws is essential for employees, and any adjustments to work schedules should be agreed upon collaboratively with employers.

Future Considerations:

- Evolution of Remote Work Culture: Changes in work dynamics and cultural shifts toward remote work may influence the evolution of legislation.
- Technological Advancements: Ongoing technological developments may prompt adjustments to legislation, particularly in areas related to digital work equipment and data security.
- Global and Economic Influences: External factors, such as global economic trends and international labour standards, could impact the trajectory of remote work legislation.

### 3.4 Shared Principles and Distinctive Features in France, Italy, and Austria

This comparative analysis of remote working legislation across France, Italy, and Austria unveils shared principles and distinctive features that shape the legal frameworks in these nations.

Common Aspects in Remote Working Legislation:

- Voluntary Nature of Remote Work:
  - All three nations (France, Italy, and Austria) emphasise the voluntary nature of remote work, highlighting the need for mutual agreement between employers and employees.
- Written Agreements:
  - Each country requires remote work arrangements to be documented in writing. This formalised approach ensures clarity and transparency in the remote work relationship.
- Equipment Provision:
  - Employers in all three nations are responsible for providing necessary work equipment for remote employees. The legislation addresses the employer's obligation regarding equipment provision.
- Adherence to Working Time Laws:
  - Remote workers in France, Italy, and Austria are subject to existing working time laws. The legislation ensures that established norms regarding rest periods and other time-related regulations remain applicable in remote work.
- Liability and Insurance:
  - The three nations have provisions related to liability and insurance for remote workers. This includes

holding remote workers liable for damage to employer-provided work equipment and extending accident insurance coverage to remote workers.

- Ergonomic Standards:
  - The legislation in these countries emphasises the importance of ergonomic standards for office equipment provided by employers, aiming to safeguard the well-being of remote workers.
- Unique Aspects in Remote Working Legislation:
  - Right to Disconnect (France and Italy):
    - France and Italy have introduced the right to disconnect for remote workers, allowing them to disconnect from technological devices during non-working hours. This aspect should be explicitly mentioned in the information concerning Austria.
  - Equal Access (France):
    - France emphasises the need for employers to establish eligibility conditions for remote work to ensure equal access for employees. The company can be sued if eligibility conditions are not transparent. This aspect should be explicitly mentioned in the information concerning Italy and Austria.
  - Dispute Resolution (France):
    - Disputes between remote workers and employers in France are subject to the “tribunal des rud’hommes”. This aspect is not explicitly mentioned in the information provided for Italy and Austria.
  - Declaration Requirement for Coworking Spaces (France):
    - France requires coworking spaces to be declared before their first use, and they can be classified as ERP (“Espace Reçevant du Public”) or ERT (“Espace Reçevant des Travailleurs”). This aspect is specific to France and needs to be mentioned for Italy and Austria.
  - Regulations for Vulnerable Workers (Italy):
    - The information on Italy mentions the need for specific rules for vulnerable or fragile workers, including parents, guardians, or caregivers, accessing remote work. This aspect should be explicitly mentioned for France and Austria.
  - Structured Legislation for Workplace Choice (Italy):
    - The information on Italy suggests that the current legislation needs more specificity regarding the employer's responsibility to ensure the safety of remote workplaces, especially in coworking spaces. This aspect should be explicitly mentioned for France and Austria.
  - Public Administration Limitations (Italy):
    - Italy mentions limitations in public administration, restricting remote work to one or two days per week. This aspect should be explicitly mentioned for France and Austria.

## 4. BENCHMARKS

Especially in the post-pandemic period, many organisations, institutions, and political bodies were forced to design and adopt policies and practices regarding changes in labour organisations. The evolution of working habits was going rapidly toward remote working and different coworking spatial organisations. This drives an increasing demand for information, data, and analysis, pushing research institutions to focus on the topic.

The remote working and coworking issues are tackled by several studies and policy guidelines tools, even if the viewpoint about remote and mountain areas is rarer.

In this sense, a possible list of benchmarks about policy design on the topic can be comprehended:

### 1 OECD – LEED The future of remote work: Opportunities and policy options for Trentino

Published in 2021, the study by Trento's Centre on Local Economic and Employment Development (OECD) and Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) focuses on remote work from a regional perspective. It analyses the Trentino state of play in terms of demand and solutions, defining a strategy for improving a regional approach. In Trentino, the phenomenon is quite relevant; 57% of workers can work at least one full day remotely, based on the current occupational distribution. Before the pandemic, around 5% of workers in Trentino reported working remotely.

The study first introduces remote working and local development in a global sense, focusing on Trentino's potential and the actual market with a data-centred quantitative approach.

In the second part, the study describes preferences and trends thanks to research conducted with local stakeholders. Several barriers are identified for future improvement, such as internet connection and speed or digital human capital. Some relevant factors are identified: differences among public and private sectors and geographical characteristics. Those factors are influencing the future development of remote working and the possible influence on the tourism market.

In the last part, the study identifies local conditions for improvement (at individual and community level) and designs a roadmap to foster the political strategy.

The study closes with six policy recommendations:

- Continue to track local labour market trends
- Facilitate knowledge and experience sharing on teleworking among public and private sector organisations as well as the public
- Improving the regulatory framework for employees and firms
- Integrate teleworking into other policy areas
- Invest in Internet infrastructure and plan transport systems with the demands of remote working in mind

- Raise Trentino's profile as an attractive destination for teleworkers and as a reference for a governed transition to large-scale teleworking

### 2 OECD - Implications of remote working adoption on place-based policies: a focus on G7 countries

The report was published by the OECD in 2021 and aims to build a comparative analysis between different national or regional approaches to remote working. Much of the data comes from the pandemic region, but the report drafts a diverse and deep analysis comparing countries and different factors influencing remote working performances. In remote areas, we can find fewer possible work categories and lower internet infrastructure, but remote working policies can greatly impact development, especially thanks to female workers.

Even if the pandemic and remote working boom took many changes, this phenomenon could have many effects on the environment, society, and urban organisations. The study is concluded with three clear pieces of advice on remote working policy adoption:

Reduce digital divide

Improve services, especially in rural areas (for example, through coworking spaces)

Take care of environmental impacts.

### 3 CMI and Work Foundation, Making hybrid inclusive critical priorities for policymakers by Taylor, Florisson and Hopper

The English study published in 2021 outlines the potential of inclusiveness and accessibility of hybrid work. Thanks to a survey on nearly 1.000 workers, the research understood that most workers are benefiting from hybrid work adoption; disabled employees, in particular, can have a higher employment rate and accessibility to work thanks to remote and hybrid policies. Evidence shows that remote work has a positive impact, especially for parents and family carers, but it can influence the distinction between working and family time, compromising leisure and family time or the "right to disconnect".

The study ends with five policy recommendations to policymakers about inclusive hybrid work, from employer procedures to skills and human resources management practices.

### 4 Associazione nomadi Digitali (Digital Nomad Association), third report on digital nomads in Italy: how can digital nomadism reduce social and economic gap in Italy, attracting professionals and talents in small and remote areas.

The report published in Italian in 2023 is particularly interesting since it focuses on the relationship between the digital nomad work trends and local development in remote areas, very close to the AlpSatellite focus and approach. The

work is based on a hybrid methodological approach based on workshops and interviews. After describing the digital nomads' phenomena at the national and international levels, the report focuses on impacts on people and territories. The study underlines a vast potential for remote working development in rural Italian areas, both in terms of demands by national and international workers and in terms of offers by small rural settlements. The report includes different examples of positive relation and effects of remote working for rural areas, it suggests improvements to be adopted by policy makers and constraints to be solved.

### 5 Rural Coworking Guide by CoLabora

CoLabora, a European cooperation project promoting coworking in rural areas, has released the toolkit "Rural Coworking Guide - Tips for the successful creation of a rural coworking space". The toolkit is available for free download. Coworking spaces can contribute to the development of rural areas. This new model of places designed for professionals offers them an opportunity to work efficiently where they choose to live without the need to move away from their rural environment. CoLabora is a transnational LEADER cooperation project gathering seven LAGs from Spain, France, Germany, Latvia, and Wales.

The report focuses on the definition of coworking, different arrangements, community involvement and impact on local development.

### 6 Establishing coworking spaces in rural areas

Part of the final event of Interreg project P-IRIS (Policies to improve rural areas' innovation systems by professionalising networking activities and use of innovation tools) was dedicated to coworking in rural areas. The project focuses on boosting innovation in these areas to develop knowledge-based or creative businesses, offering attractive jobs for well-educated and creative young people. The partners are from Norway, Finland, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, and Spain.

"One of the topics that were quite important in the P-IRIS project was coworking spaces, as it was the focus for 3 of the six partner regions. Danijel Bertović, from P-IRIS project partner PINS (Croatia), presented the main discoveries on rural coworking spaces from Croatia, Finland, and Slovenia. The main finding about rural coworking spaces is that they differ from urban ones. Rural coworking spaces are mainly used for networking, socialising, and education of entrepreneurs, less for traditional distant work to avoid commuting. Rural coworking spaces are also often used as multifunctional spaces combined with other activities such as coffee, drop-off points, online marketplace, pop-up stores.... In contrast, urban coworking spaces are used predominantly as office spaces." (<https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/p-iris/position-paper/>)



## 5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN REMOTE WORK INTEGRATION

### Unlocking Opportunities: Advantages of Attracting Remote Workers to Mountainous Regions

What are the potential benefits of attracting remote workers to mountainous areas? The following opportunities are primarily expected:

1. Diversification of the traditional tourism industry
2. Creation of new growth opportunities for existing economic activities in the region
3. Revitalisation of local communities.

Diversification of the traditional industry	
Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Remote workers who choose to temporarily reside in tourist destinations can contribute to diversifying the traditional tourism offerings, potentially reducing the dependence of destinations on seasonal tourism peaks. Here are some possibilities that remote workers may bring to diversify the offerings for countries or territories that are already popular tourist destinations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuous Presence Throughout the Year:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote workers can maintain a continuous presence even during periods outside the traditional tourist seasons.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Collaboration with Local Communities:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote workers can collaborate with local communities to organise events, cultural festivals, and thematic courses to enrich both the resident and temporary communities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Incentives for Implementing Remote Work Infrastructure:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governments and local authorities can encourage the implementation of the infrastructures for remote work, such as co-working spaces or public connectivity services to the internet, benefiting both locals and temporary residents.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>To take advantage of the opportunities presented by remote workers and attract them to traditional industries, here are some suggested actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Infrastructure Development:                             <p>Invest in modern infrastructure to support remote work, including reliable high-speed internet, coworking spaces, and other facilities that promote a remote work lifestyle.</p> </li> <li>2. Community Engagement Programmes:                             <p>Establish community engagement programmes that encourage collaboration between remote workers and residents. This can involve organising joint events, cultural festivals, and skill-sharing initiatives that benefit both groups.</p> </li> <li>3. Promotion of Year-Round Activities:                             <p>Promote and diversify year-round activities and attractions to encourage a continuous presence of remote workers, reducing dependence on seasonal tourism peaks.</p> </li> <li>4. Incentive Programmes:                             <p>Introduce incentive programmes for remote workers, such as tax incentives, subsidies for housing or workspace setup, and other benefits that make the destination financially appealing for them.</p> </li> <li>5. Marketing and Promotion:                             <p>Implement targeted marketing and promotional campaigns to position the destination as an ideal place for remote work. Highlight unique features, cultural experiences, and lifestyle benefits to attract remote workers.</p> </li> <li>6. Collaboration with Local Businesses:                             <p>Encourage collaboration between remote workers and local businesses. This can include partnerships for hosting events, supporting local products and services, and contributing to the overall economic growth of the area.</p> </li> <li>7. Supportive Regulations:                             <p>Establish clear and supportive regulations for remote work, addressing legal and administrative aspects to make the process seamless for remote workers and local authorities.</p> </li> </ol>

New growth opportunities for existing economic activities in the region	
Opportunities	Challenges
<p>As more people embrace remote work, they don't necessarily have to relocate to another place to find employment. Instead, they can work from anywhere while doing their jobs or businesses. This trend can create opportunities for local companies. In the following list it is possible to take a look at some of them:</p> <p>a. Economic Support for Producers and Small Businesses: When remote workers choose a location, they tend to buy essential goods from local producers, which supports small businesses in the area. This creates a network of economic exchange that benefits both parties.</p> <p>b. Digital Support for Local Businesses: Remote workers can offer consultancy and support to local businesses. They can help companies develop an online presence, enhance their digital marketing strategies, and optimise their business processes.</p> <p>c. E-commerce for Artisanal Products: The presence of digital nomads can stimulate and support local artists' and creatives' creativity and craftsmanship. By collaborating with skilled professionals, they can explore new opportunities to showcase and sell their products globally on e-commerce platforms.</p>	<p>To make existing economic activities more attractive to remote workers and maintain the appeal of new growth opportunities, the destination should focus on the following:</p> <p>1. Community Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster collaboration between remote workers and local communities through events, cultural activities, and skill-sharing initiatives.</li> <li>• Create a sense of belonging by involving remote workers in community projects, encouraging participation in local events, and promoting cultural exchange.</li> </ul> <p>2. Digital Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide digital resources and support to local businesses to help them establish a solid online presence.</li> <li>• Facilitate digital skills workshops and collaborations with remote workers to improve local businesses' digital marketing strategies and operational efficiency.</li> </ul> <p>3. Authentic Offer Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and promote the region's unique cultural and natural assets, crafting an authentic narrative that appeals to remote workers seeking distinctive experiences.</li> <li>• Develop tailored experiences that align with the region's identity, such as local craftsmanship workshops, culinary events, or eco-tourism initiatives.</li> </ul>

Revitalisation of local communities	
Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Attracting remote workers can inject new life into local communities and partially address the issue of migration towards larger urban centres. They can bring diversity and internationalism to small towns and remote areas while encouraging counter-migration.</p> <p>1. Cultural and Linguistic Exchange: Remote workers can facilitate cultural and linguistic exchange through informal activities like conversation meetups, language clubs, and cultural exchanges, enriching local life.</p> <p>2. Digitalisation and Enhancement of Artistic and Cultural Heritage: Collaboration with local institutions and cultural organisations allows remote workers to contribute to projects focused on digitising and enhancing artistic and cultural heritage.</p> <p>3. Participation in Volunteer Associations: Remote workers can actively participate in local volunteer organisations, supporting the community and enhancing the overall quality of life.</p>	<p>To revitalise communities, an integrated and participatory approach involving residents, businesses, government institutions, and civil society organisations is crucial. This includes initiatives that encourage interaction and exchange between temporary and permanent residents from around the world.</p> <p>To achieve this, it is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise Engaging Activities for Community Involvement: Create opportunities for remote workers to participate in the local community. These activities can include volunteering, cultural exchanges, and skill-sharing initiatives to foster a sense of belonging.</li> <li>• Develop a Comprehensive Communication Strategy: Craft a communication strategy that goes beyond presenting the destination as a workplace. Emphasise the sense of community and belonging, positioning the location as a second home for remote workers to connect with authenticity and natural beauty.</li> <li>• Implement Incentive Programmes for Attraction: Implement incentive programmes such as long-term accommodation offers or bonuses on restaurant services. Attracting remote workers can contribute to the local economy and community, fostering growth and sustainability.</li> </ul>

## PART TWO – STRATEGY AND SOLUTIONS

Although the three countries present some common demographic, economic, and territorial characteristics, besides multiple challenges and problems, the strategies implemented and the solutions reached in this project are different, considering the dissimilar study purposes and territorial realities and needs. Hence, each country designed its methodology based on the specific objectives and the results of the co-design workshop.

The solution chosen from each country is presented in the following paragraphs, describing the objective, methodological approach, and findings.

### 6. FRENCH PROPOSAL

#### 6.1 Objective

The French partners conducted a feasibility study to implement a shared digital platform to attract and retain remote workers in the French territory of ADMO.

#### 6.2 Methodological approach

The French methodology can be summarised in three consecutive steps:

1. Co-design workshop carried out during 1.3 activity that led to multiple potential solutions, which can be summarised in facilitating travel, housing, creating courses, attracting/retaining remote workers, promoting the region's assets, directing policies, and creating a "Multi-pass" card.
2. Videoconference meeting with elective representatives. Starting from the solutions identified earlier, the participants utilised Padlet to share their points of view to choose and develop just one or two aspects, creating four "Action Sheets". This tool guides people in their actions and answers "How?". Following the Action Sheets, elected representatives proposed focusing on one action: "Promoting the region's assets for remote working".
3. Third meeting. Participants collaboratively completed a pre-filled Business Model Canvas. This tool enables them to transcribe an organisation's business model and helps to visualise the implementation of selected solutions quickly and visually. Concerning the French solution, Canvas was a tool to imagine and structure a coherent project for implementing a shared digital platform for remote workers.

#### 6.3 Findings

Thanks to the action sheet tool, a decision was made to focus on an in-depth feasibility study of the "Promoting the

region's assets" action to attract and retain remote workers—the action aimed to raise awareness of this new way of working among companies and potential remote workers. The feasibility study, it was chosen to create a shared digital platform to promote the region's assets that has been analysed through a pre-filled Business Model Canvas, whose results are summarised below.

#### Customer Segments and Value Proposition

- Remote workers seeking new living places were identified as the primary customers.
- Identified needs included quick access to information in multiple languages on potential areas to settle.
- The platform aims to offer information to save time and address potential frustrations, covering various aspects of a territory, from workspaces to local services.
- The platform was identified as a tool to assist remote workers with information needs for successful relocation and project planning.

#### Distribution channels

Participants discussed the advantages of a dedicated website based on examples of existing sites in the territories concerned rather than considering the creation of a brand-new site.

Distribution strategies involved promoting the platform through links on individual territory websites, seeking support from department and regional websites, and using Search Engine Optimisation to attract visitors to the website.

#### Customer relations

Three essential points for customer relations were proposed: site ergonomics, information exchange on the website, and maintaining relationships with service users. Ergonomics will draw inspiration from successful platforms targeting seasonal workers and individual attractions. A website that's easy to use, with concrete information, a potential forum for community building among remote workers, and available in English.

#### Key activities

Primary key activities involve website creation, information gathering, and website updating. Support activities focus on platform management, marketing, networking capabilities, mobilising companies, and team creation.

#### Key resources

Essential resources include physical (e.g., web hosting), intellectual (e.g., site creation and marketing), human (e.g., platform management), and financial. To optimise project management, delegating tasks to territory agents with relevant skills is suggested.



### Key partners

Participants identified vital partners crucial for the website's design and governance: PETR (Pôle d'équilibre territorial et rural - Territorial and rural balance cluster) for coordination, the communities of municipalities, the municipalities, public business incubators, the UPE05 (Enterprises Union of Hautes-Alpes), the tourist offices of three territories, Directors of technical services in communes and elected officials from the department.

### Cost structure

The primary focus is minimising costs by leveraging synergies and delegating skills among all partners involved. It is preferred to take a collaborative approach to assess the competencies of the three communities of communes and reallocate them as needed. Strategies include seconding technicians (one from each commune) to meet regularly and optimising costs by utilising existing forces for similar tasks.

### Income sources

Given the public service nature of the product, profitability is not the primary goal; instead, the focus is on financing the service through local authorities and subsidies. Subsidies may be sought from various sources, including Europe (aligned with relevant European themes, e.g., AlpineSpace programme), the French government (in line with national strategies), or regional and departmental authorities. The possibility of presenting it as a project for "Espace Valléens" is suggested, underlining its experimental and regionally beneficial nature.

## 7. AUSTRIAN PROPOSAL

### 7.1 Objective

The Austrian rural development strategy, centred in Doren but adaptable to diverse Alpine areas, revolves around establishing a vibrant community hub. The aim is to cultivate a dynamic community life centred around "Klein Wien", a space with a small library where people can already meet, fostering community engagement and deepening residents' connections within the municipality. Plans include transforming a portion of this space into a coworking area.

The development of the community is built upon three key pillars:

- Services: offer diverse services, amenities, workshops, and events. Create a convenient and accessible environment.
- Digitalisation: focuses on elevating the digital landscape through an accessible website, a knowledge base platform, and the "Digital Fit" concept.
- Project "Digital Fit" addresses digital accessibility, supporting older individuals, raising awareness, and integrating remote work.

### 7.2 Methodological approach

The Austrian solution is based on a classical project management approach, covering all the essential steps. The feasibility study is structured as a set of guidelines that allows for overcoming the difficulty of estimating costs and ensuring the solution's transferability to other regions. Hence, it is designed to guide interested stakeholders in implementing a similar solution.

Austrian methods for analysing feasibility and impact include:

- Business Model Canvas (BMC): provide an overview of crucial factors for designing a project and gain a comprehensive view. The canvas identified stakeholders, resources, channels, and segments, facilitating a structured approach to the project.
- Cost-Benefit Analysis. A simplified cost-benefit analysis was crafted to provide an overview of the financial feasibility. While numerical precision was not the primary focus, the study aimed to make users aware of potential costs and benefits, recognising their dependence on specific use cases.
- SWOT Analysis: provides a thorough summary of the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats associated with the project.
- Risk Analysis: a tool for organising and assigning potential risks. All conceivable risks for the proposed solution are identified and categorised based on their likelihood and impact. The "Impact" category concerns the consequences of an event occurring, while the "Likelihood" category concentrates on the probability of such events happening. In essence, the matrix helps prioritise and systematically address potential risks.

### 7.3 Findings

The heart of the BMC, the value proposition, is emphasised for its role in exploring the value the project brings to customers. In this case, three main streams of value were identified for citizens and stakeholders:

- Regional Benefits: Strengthened regions with increased service offerings, a community/coworking space, and enhanced digital skills make the region more attractive, benefiting residents and local businesses.
- Community Building: The proposed solution fosters networking and communication through additional services and community space, creating an open and welcoming environment that strengthens social ties and resilience.
- Social Ties and Connection: Centred around a community space, the solution promotes interaction between citizens, fostering connections, communal learning, and bridging different age groups.

Austrian feasibility is based on cost-benefit analyses. Specifically suitable for non-profit, governmental, and community projects. Unlike merely comparing costs to earnings, this approach emphasises identifying and evaluating benefits.

**Identified costs:**

- Physical Assets and Equipment: details the necessary equipment for services, including coworking space setup.
- Human Resources: encompasses personnel requirements, such as web developers and facility managers, along with the vital role of volunteers.
- Communication and Information Flow: lists resources for effective communication of services and projects to the public, engaging community members.
- Technical Infrastructure: addresses digital requirements, including fast internet, computers, and centralised data storage, essential for both digital projects and services.
- Facility and Infrastructures: encompasses general resources like public transportation, electricity, water, and their maintenance.

**Benefits****Social connectivity:**

- Coworking spaces contribute to an increased social connectivity by encouraging people to frequent the area and enhancing interaction, communication, and new of partnerships.
- Networking between individuals and companies leads to the creation of new alliances and strengthens social networks.

**Community cohesion, trust, and community dynamics:**

- A strong, engaged community develops a greater sense of belonging and is better prepared to adapt to changes and is more open to innovation.
- Trust and reciprocity are crucial to gain support for initiatives like coworking spaces.

**Engagement and Participation:**

- Actively working on new services, community infrastructure, and digital tools fosters a more open and participatory community.
- A caring and interested community is more resilient and actively addresses problems and challenges.

**Safety and Support:**

- Active community participation reduces the likelihood of distress and crime, enhancing the overall feeling of security.
- Support systems become crucial in providing help in various situations, complementing the municipality's efforts.

**Region Appeal and Sustainability:**

- Investments in coworking spaces and community infrastructure make the region more attractive to newcomers and locals, reducing the need for relocation.
- The shift from a tourist destination to encouraging long-term stays boosts economic growth and wealth in the region.

**Economic Growth:**

- Coworking spaces stimulate economic growth by sup-

porting start-ups, freelancers, and small businesses, creating new jobs and workplaces.

- Increased population leads to higher spending, benefitting regional companies and overall economic development, allowing the development of better infrastructures, the creation of additional public spaces and the rise of a solid service infrastructure.

**Resource Utilisation and Sustainability:**

- Coworking spaces promote efficient resource utilisation by sharing office equipment and amenities, and environment responsibility by hosting events focused on sustainability and community engagement
- Shared economy approaches contribute to a more sustainable region, reducing carbon emissions and supporting sustainable transportation.

**Talent Attraction and Retention:**

- Vibrant coworking spaces attract professionals seeking collaborative environments, strengthening the local talent pool.
- Retention of local talent is enhanced, reducing the need for individuals to leave rural areas in search of better opportunities.

**Innovation, Creativity, and Cultural Enrichment:**

- Coworking spaces accommodate innovative companies and individuals seeking a creative environment, inspiring residents to break from their routines.
- Coworking spaces are evolving to cater to industrial purposes, offering specialised areas known as fab labs or think tanks equipped with expensive machinery like 3D printers and CNC machines.
- Exchanges of ideas and expertise in these spaces contribute to cross-cultural learning and enrichment.

The SWOT analysis of the project highlights strengths in community commitment, resilience, and innovation, fostering an inclusive environment. However, weaknesses, such as infrastructure limitations and ongoing operational complexities, pose challenges. Opportunities include fostering community connections and attracting new residents, but threats like insufficient community acceptance and financial considerations must be addressed. Overall, addressing weaknesses and mitigating threats is crucial for the long-term success of the project.

The risk matrix has allowed to identify the following risks. “Not enough money” poses the risk of financial unaffordability. Strategies to mitigate this risk include prioritising needs, diversifying funding sources, exploring financing options, engaging the community, and actively pursuing grants. “Long-lasting usage” introduces the risk of declining demand over time, eventually leading to non-utilisation. To address this, strategies involve continuous market research, forming partnerships, and diversifying service offerings.

“No person responsible” poses the risk of insufficient individuals willing to take on project responsibilities. Mitigation strategies include clearly defining roles, providing recognition and incentives, creating a supportive environment, implementing succession planning, and encouraging collaborative decision-making.

“No users” indicates a lack of demand, leading to project non-utilisation. Strategies for avoidance include thorough market research to understand needs, collaborations, feedback mechanisms, incentives, awareness programmes, and user-friendly onboarding processes.

“Connection problems” arise from inadequate internet connectivity in alpine regions. Mitigation involves advocating for infrastructure improvement, exploring alternative technologies, establishing community networks, seeking government grants, forming public-private partnerships, introducing mobile hotspots, implementing mesh networking, and leveraging smart technologies.

## 8. ITALIAN PROPOSAL

### 8.1 Objective

The Italian project aims to evaluate the economic feasibility of the implementation of three coworking spaces in the Unité des communes valdôtaines Evançon, one for each part of the Ayas Valley, upper, middle, and lower. This project marks a pilot experiment in introducing coworking spaces to the area, as none currently exist.

### 8.2 Methodology approach

The Italian methodological approach focused, firstly, on the analysis and the estimation of the market, particularly the potential demand for each coworking space, utilising all pertinent accessible data on groups that may be interested. Secondly, it has been estimated the standard operational costs to run a coworking space to see its feasibility. The methodological approach followed four analytical steps.

#### Step one: data collection

The first step aims at constructing the dataset. Data is collected at the municipal level on segments/groups potentially interested in coworking spaces, including:

- Residents commuting for work out of the municipalities, categorised by destination area.
- Official tourist flows incoming to the Unité des communes valdôtaines Evançon, classified by origin (domestic or foreign) and type of accommodation.
- Second homes tourist flows based on statistics about the number of second homes.

#### Step two: estimation of potential demand

The market potential has been calculated following logical sequential actions:

- Conversion of collected data into working days (e.g., converting commuter data into days based on yearly working days).
- Estimation of coefficients representing the rate of people interested in coworking for each group.
- Calculation of the number of days that the coworking spaces could potentially be used by each segment/group.

For Commuters:

- Identification of commuters whose work can be done remotely (assumed to be 53% of commuting flows).
- Weighting commuters based on the distance covered.
- Calculation of the average total number of yearly working days (assumed to be 220 days).
- Estimation of the average total number of weekly working days in remote working (2 out of 7).
- Estimation of the percentage of days potentially dedicated to coworking (33%).

Multiplication of data to get the potential number of days demanded for coworking by residents in commuting.

#### For Official Tourist Flows:

- Multiplication of overnight stays by the rate of the working-age population (64% in 2022).
- Consideration of tourists whose jobs can be done remotely (assumed to be 53%).
- Estimation of potential interest in remote/smart working based on the stakeholder consultation (10% of overnight stays).
- Estimation of the percentage of overnight stays potentially dedicated to coworking (33% domestic, 22% foreign).

#### For Second Homes Tourism:

- Estimation of the number of days second homes are occupied yearly (20 days on average).
- Multiplication of total days by the rate of working age population.
- Consideration of second homes tourists whose jobs can be done remotely (assumed to be 53%).
- Estimation of the percentage of days potentially dedicated to coworking (2 out of 7).
- Estimation of potential days dedicated to work at coworking spaces (33%)

#### Step 3: Estimation of Potential Revenues and Operational Costs

- Calculation of potential yearly revenues based on the estimated market potential and willingness to pay for coworking space use.
- Estimation of yearly operational costs for coworking spaces, including salaries, maintenance, and utilities.

#### Step 4: Evaluation of Economic Feasibility

Comparison of potential yearly revenues and operational



costs to evaluate the economic feasibility of each coworking space.

This methodological approach presents some limitations:

- Risks of overestimation due to assumptions and exclusions (e.g., focusing on specific economic sectors).
- Potential bias in the survey sample, as respondents expressed interest in an ideal coworking space.
- Risks of underestimation, such as not accounting for tourist flows from Airbnb accommodations or digital nomads.

### 8.3 Findings

#### Potential demand

Utilising the outlined methodology, the study successfully estimated the potential demand for coworking services across different market segments and geographical sub-areas within the Unité des communes valdôtaines Evançon.

#### Demand by Market Segment:

- Commuters emerge as the primary market segment, contributing to about 70% of the total potential demand for coworking services.
- Official tourists and second-home tourists represent a smaller portion, accounting for 2% and 28%, respectively, of the overall days potentially demanded.

#### Demand by Geographical Sub-Area:

- The breakdown by the three geographical sub-areas reveals a less polarised market potential.
- The lower valley takes the lead with over 50% of the market potential, followed by the upper valley with 30%, and the middle valley with approximately 17%.

#### Characterisation of Market Potential Models:

- Upper Valley:
  - Predominantly driven by second-home tourists (69%).
  - Official tourists also contribute, making it a tourist-based model.
  - Commuters have a less significant role in this sub-area.
- Middle Valley:
  - Balanced model with a significant demand from both commuters (65%) and second-home tourists (35%).
  - Reflects a more balanced model of market potential for coworking.
- Lower Valley:
  - Clearly defined commuter-based model.
  - Approximately 97% of the potential demand comes from commuters to other Valdostan municipalities or regions.
  - Represents a distinct and focused market potential.

#### Potential Revenues

##### Demand Curve and Pricing

- The study constructs a demand curve based on the responses from the survey conducted in activity 1.2 on the

hypothetical price per day that individuals would pay for coworking space.

- The curve illustrates a negative relationship between price and the number of interested respondents.
- Assuming an average price of €12.00 per day, 51.6% of respondents (113 out of 219) are willing to pay at least this amount.

#### Revenue Estimation:

- The number of potential desks required to meet the demand is estimated by dividing yearly coworking days by the respective yearly working or occupancy days.
- The total number of desks needed across all coworking spaces is slightly over 80: 29 desks in the coworking space in the upper valley, 9 desks in the one in the middle valley, and 44 desks in the one in the lower valley.
- Estimated potential revenues are calculated by multiplying the number of desks, the average price per day (€12.00), and yearly working or occupancy days (180 days).
- Specifically, we must apply the following formulas:  
As far as the upper valley is concerned:  $(5 \cdot 170 \cdot 12) + (29 \cdot 180 \cdot 12)$   
As far as the middle valley is concerned:  $(9 \cdot 220 \cdot 12) + (5 \cdot 130 \cdot 12)$   
As far as the lower valley is concerned:  $(44 \cdot 220 \cdot 12) + (1 \cdot 130 \cdot 12)$
- Total estimated revenues from the three coworking spaces amount to over €222,000.
- The lower valley coworking space is projected to earn approximately 53% of the total revenues (€118,000), followed by the upper valley (33%, €73,000), and the middle valley (14%, €31,500).

#### Estimated Costs

Operating costs are estimated based on the benchmark of coworking Luceo in Briançon (France).

The total operational costs for Luceo amount to about €93,000 per year, with staff costs at €25,000 per year. Operating costs include water/sanitation, energy, administrative supplies, maintenance, building maintenance, equipment maintenance, telephony/internet, cleaning fees, and taxes. The coworking Luceo, with 25 desks, has an average cost of about €3,700 per desk.

Total estimated costs from the three coworking spaces under consideration amount to €303.400.

The lower valley coworking space is projected to cost €162.800, followed by the upper valley one (€107.300) and the middle valley one (€33.300).

It is discerned that, in all three cases, the estimated annual operating costs surpass the anticipated potential annual revenues, signalling a financial deficit.

Acknowledging the financial shortfall, alternative strategies are proposed to enhance economic viability. Collaboration

with other facilities, such as co-living spaces, is suggested to achieve cost savings. Joint management could also optimise resources and create a more sustainable financial model. An example is presented where a single community manager oversees all three coworking spaces, leading to significant reductions in variable costs.

With the assumption of shared management, the middle

valley coworking space is projected to be economically feasible. In the upper and lower valley, the gap between costs and revenues would be notably reduced.

In conclusion, collaborative management strategies and innovative partnerships, such as co-living spaces, can potentially mitigate costs and enhance economic feasibility.



## PART THREE – POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 9. REMOTE WORKING AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ALPINE AREA

This section unfolds a comprehensive exploration, tracing the multi-faceted impacts of remote working, its implications for local development, and its intricate relationships with macro-level Alpine policies. A panoramic overview is constructed through meticulous examination, illuminating the transformative influence of remote work on diverse aspects of rural and urban landscapes. The implications for economic vitality, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability are scrutinised, uncovering the nuanced interplay between remote working dynamics and broader policy frameworks governing Alpine regions. Through this exploration, insights emerge into the evolving landscape of remote work in the context of the Alpine region, offering perspectives on its potential as a driver of regional development and a catalyst for shaping future policy agendas.

#### 9.1 Impacts of remote working and coworking spaces on local development

To conclude the analysis and studies conducted throughout the project and across various deliverables, it is evident that remote working coupled with coworking initiatives in remote areas holds profound implications across a spectrum of territorial dimensions. Through a nuanced examination, it becomes evident that the convergence of remote work and coworking spaces has the capacity to reshape not only individual work patterns but also broader socio-economic landscapes.

The impacts of remote working coupled with coworking initiatives on local development will be explored in detail in this section, highlighting their potential to drive economic growth, enhance social cohesion, and promote environmental sustainability in remote areas.

#### Environment

Remote working and coworking initiatives have the potential to contribute to a reduction in commuting flows, thereby resulting in positive environmental outcomes. By enabling employees to work from remote locations or shared coworking spaces closer to home, there is a decrease in the need for daily commutes, leading to reduced traffic congestion and lower levels of air pollution. This shift towards remote work can also encourage sustainable transportation options, such as walking, cycling, or using public transit, further minimising the carbon footprint associated with traditional commuting practices.

#### Economy

The adoption of remote working and coworking models in remote areas can stimulate economic growth and diversification by unlocking new opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation. By attracting remote workers, freelancers, and digital nomads to these regions, coworking spaces can serve as hubs for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and business networking, fostering a dynamic ecosystem of start-ups, small businesses, and independent professionals. Additionally, the presence of remote workers can drive demand for local goods and services, supporting the growth of local economies and enhancing overall economic resilience in remote communities.

#### Society

Remote working and coworking initiatives have the potential to reshape social dynamics and foster community cohesion in remote areas. By providing opportunities for remote workers to connect, collaborate, and socialise in shared coworking spaces, these initiatives can mitigate feelings of isolation and loneliness often associated with remote living. Moreover, coworking spaces can serve as inclusive and accessible spaces that promote diversity, inclusivity, and social inclusion, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, professions, and cultures. This sense of community and belonging can strengthen social ties, enhance the feeling of well-being, and contribute to the overall quality of life in remote regions.

#### Infrastructures and services

There may be opportunities to enhance local amenities and services, such as healthcare facilities, educational institutions, recreational spaces, and cultural venues, to cater to the needs and preferences of remote workers and their families. By investing in these infrastructures and services, policymakers can create an enabling environment for remote working and coworking initiatives, driving sustainable development and enhancing the overall liveability of remote areas.

#### Technology and innovation

Remote working and coworking initiatives can drive technological advancements and foster innovation in remote areas. By attracting tech-savvy professionals, entrepreneurs, and start-ups to coworking spaces, these initiatives create opportunities for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and the development of new ideas and solutions. Additionally, remote workers often rely on digital tools and platforms to facilitate communication, collaboration, and project man-



agement, spurring demand for innovative technologies and software solutions. This influx of technology and innovation can position remote areas as hubs of creativity and entrepreneurship, driving economic growth and competitiveness in the digital age.

### Tourism and Cultural Heritage Preservation

Remote working and coworking initiatives can play a role in promoting tourism and preserving cultural heritage in remote areas. By attracting remote workers, digital nomads, and tourists to coworking spaces and remote destinations, these initiatives can showcase the unique cultural, natural, and historical attractions of remote regions. Additionally, remote workers often seek authentic and immersive travel experiences, leading to increased demand for ecotourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism activities in remote areas. This influx of visitors can generate revenue for local businesses, support heritage conservation efforts, and create employment opportunities in tourism-related industries. By leveraging the potential of remote working and coworking initiatives to promote tourism and preserve cultural heritage, policymakers can enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of remote areas as desirable places to live, work, and visit.

In conclusion, the examination of remote working and coworking initiatives in rural areas reveals a tapestry of significant impacts across various dimensions, each contributing to the holistic development and sustainability of these regions. By fostering economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability, these initiatives hold the potential to revitalise communities, promote inclusivity, and preserve cultural heritage. As we navigate the evolving landscape of remote work, it is clear that these initiatives offer transformative opportunities for rural regions, positioning them as dynamic hubs of innovation, connectivity, and prosperity.

## 9.2 AlpSatellite's contribution to Eusalp macro regional strategies

### Introduction

EUSALP Strategy represents a concerted effort to address the unique challenges and opportunities present in the Alpine area. With its focus on regional cooperation and cohesion, EUSALP seeks to foster synergy across diverse sectors such as economy, education, environment, accessibility, and mobility. This comprehensive strategy aims to mitigate social and territorial inequalities while promoting sustainable development aligned with the broader objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy. AlpSatellites project contributes to the EUSALP Strategy, offering insights and solutions that intersect with the missions and priorities of specific EUSALP Action Groups (AGs), notably AG2 “Economic Development”, AG3 “Labour market, education and training” and AG5 “Connec-

tivity and Accessibility”. The subsequent paragraphs elaborate in detail on these connections.

Moreover, the AlpSatellites project is linked to the cross-cutting priority of “Promoting Digitalisation for the Alps”, which aims at supporting local communities and economic players in the digitalisation efforts, by promoting the adoption of remote working, training, and learning practices. AlpSatellites has shown that alongside establishing a good environment for remote workers and setting up coworking spaces, achieving community digitalisation is essential to reach successful development across the Alpine region.

### AlpSatellites contribution to the AG2 “Economic Development”

In the AlpSatellites project, possible synergies with AG2 group were explored during online meeting with Dr. Dario Musolino and Prof. Angelo Benozzo, from Aosta Valley University, and Dr. Massimo Lapolla, from Piedmont Region and leader of EUSALP AG2 on “Economic Development” and Professor Gilles Guieu from Aix-Marseille University and Sylvain Guetaz from Auvergne-Rhones-Alpes and leader of EUSALP AG2. Aosta Valley researchers presented the work carried out focusing particularly on the feasibility studies conducted for the Activity 1.4.1, while the two leaders illustrated the work conducted by AG2 group, underlined that AG2 is working especially on four themes: Tourism, Digital Economy, Circular Economy, Wood, and Furniture Industry. Digital economy and tourism emerged as a possible common ground on which finding synergies and therefore cooperating. AlpSatellites results, as well as tool proposals could be of interest for several challenges identified or supported by AG2 / sub-group Tourism. For example, the TranStat project aims to facilitate the adoption of co-constructed transition processes in Mountain Resorts (<https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/transtat/>). New remote work practices and the development of coworking spaces in remote areas and Mountain Resorts could be effective tools for the transition process, through a shift from highly seasonal economic activities to a more even activity over the full year. Tourists stay more, some of them move to the Alps, housing goes from seasonal to permanent.

### AlpSatellite contribution to the AG3 “Labour market, education and training”

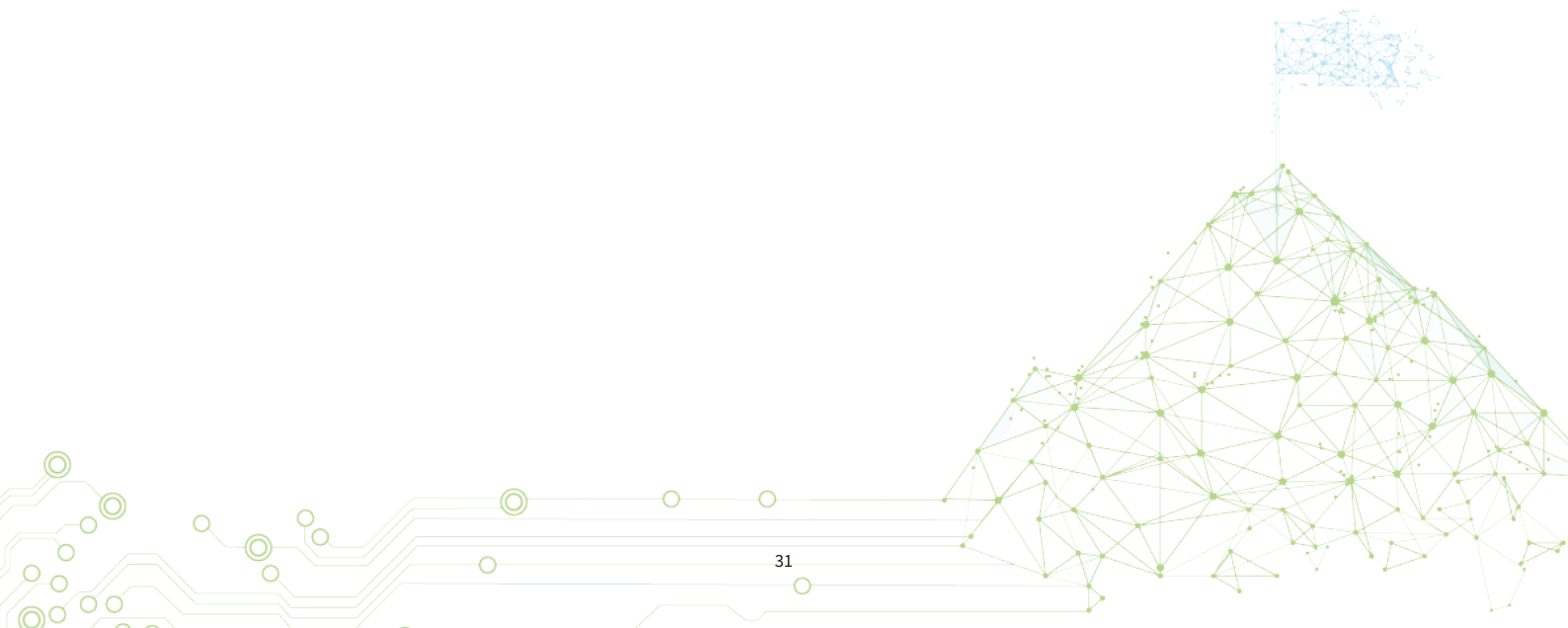
AlpSatellites has provided a deeper understanding on how remote working opportunities could tackle the so-called “talent development trap”, meaning the difficulty remote and mountain areas experience in retaining talented young people by ensuring the availability of high-quality education and jobs. The project research and feasibility study on coworking spaces in the mountains have shown that, in these places, multiple services (equipment, connectivity, networking, etc.) can be provided to young people who do not wish to move to urban areas to find a job or to pursue a post-secondary education. Besides their traditional function of supporting professionals, coworking spaces can become

learning hubs shared by different VET and HE Institutions willing to enrol remote learners. In this respect, the AG3 initiative to network VET institutions in the Alpine Space can exploit AlpSatellites results, while policymakers can encourage alpine educational institutions to partner with coworking spaces and to increase the number of distance training courses offered. AlpSatellites has also shown how strategic it is to publicise those alpine areas which have in place services for remote workers, as “remote-work friendly” territories, to attract new young residents and to inform them about existing opportunities for remote working in the Alps, as recommended by the AG3 workplan. All these initiatives are closely intertwined with the EUSALP cross-cutting priority of digitalisation. The research conducted in the ambit of AlpSatellites found that one of the most needed services in these rural coworking spaces is the digital support provided to the users. Thus, enhancing digital skills, a key objective of AG3, is crucial to unleash the potential of a remote-working alpine system. In these multifunctional spaces where people work, study, and even live together, digital skills can be informally learned through the digital tools available, dedicated workshops, but, mainly through the culture of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and life-long learning that flourish in their communities.

#### **Alpsatellite contribution to the AG5 “Connectivity and Accessibility”**

Through some meetings with Ing. Carlo Vigna and Dr. Alessio

Pastorino, we have explored the implications of the Alpsatellites project for the objectives of AG5. Additionally, some results of the Alpsatellites project have been presented and shared in numerous meetings organised by the AG5 group, such as during the Digital Alps Conference (AG5) held in Courmayeur in October 2023. The cross-cutting priority of AG5 aims to support local communities and economic players in their efforts toward digitalisation. This Action Group collects and disseminates best practices, explores how to unleash the potential of data and the data economy, and promote the adoption of remote working, training, and learning practices. The mission of this actions is twofold. Firstly, to develop a comprehensive strategy that guides and shapes the ongoing digitisation process in the Alpine Region. Secondly, to enhance accessibility to public services provided by authorities for the residents in the area. Through qualitative and quantitative research (deliverable 1.2.1) and the feasibility study (1.4.1), Alpsatellites has provided numerous insights that help understand how to promote the adoption of remote work and the use of coworking spaces. Alpsatellites has thoroughly studied the reasons that can drive a worker to work remotely and to frequent coworking spaces. In particular, for the AG5 group, Alpsatellites has highlighted how multifunctional spaces like coworking spaces can maintain and improve a network of relationships that are otherwise absent when working remotely from home. This could increase a sense of belonging to a community, which is one of the goals for the creation of smart communities.



## 10. FINAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter tries to summarise all the lessons learnt into a common reflection on political and operative procedures to be adopted in remote working approach for alpine contexts.

### 10.1 Enabling conditions and local policies at macro level

At the macro level, the creation of enabling conditions and the implementation of supportive local policies are pivotal factors in facilitating the establishment and growth of remote working and coworking initiatives in rural areas. These overarching conditions and policies play a fundamental role in shaping the regulatory environment, infrastructure development, and community engagement strategies necessary to foster a conducive ecosystem for remote work and coworking spaces. By addressing key macro-level considerations, policymakers can lay the groundwork for sustainable economic development, social inclusion, and innovation in rural regions, unlocking the full potential of remote working as a catalyst for rural revitalisation and prosperity.

**1. Greater coherence and uniformity of the European legal framework about remote working.** Efforts should be made to enhance the coherence and uniformity of the legal framework governing remote working across European countries. This involves harmonising regulations related to employment contracts, taxation, social security, and data protection to provide clarity and consistency for both employers and employees operating across borders. Furthermore, streamlining visa policies and work permit procedures can facilitate the mobility of remote workers within the European Union. This entails simplifying administrative processes, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and ensuring that visa regulations are responsive to the needs of remote workers seeking to live and work in different EU countries.

#### 2. Develop territorial policies about:

- a. housing regulation by making the housing market more affordable and available through measures such as rent controls, subsidies for low-income households, and incentives for affordable housing development projects;
- b. public transport network, a well-functioning public transport system is essential for facilitating mobility and connectivity within and between rural and urban areas. Investments in public transportation infrastructure, including the expansion of bus and rail networks, the development of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure can help reduce reliance on private vehicles and support sustainable travel options for re-

- c. territorial services and facilities provision. Ensuring access to adequate territorial services and facilities, such as healthcare, education, childcare, and recreational amenities, is essential for enhancing the quality of life in remote areas. Territorial policies should prioritise the provision of essential services and facilities to support the well-being and productivity of residents, including remote workers and their families.

**3. Foster operational research and pilot projects.** Investing in operational research and pilot projects with European financial support can drive innovation and experimentation in remote working practices and community development initiatives. For example, setting up coworking spaces and studying the integration and inclusion of new populations in remote areas can help to identify effective strategies for promoting economic growth, social cohesion, and sustainability.

**4. Increase technological investments.** Investing in technology infrastructure and digital services is crucial for improving high-speed internet connectivity and digital inclusion in remote areas. This includes expanding optical fibre networks, increasing network coverage in underserved areas, and providing support for digital skills training and capacity-building initiatives to empower remote workers and communities to fully participate in the digital economy.

**5. Encourage community engagement and participation.** Fostering community engagement and participation through initiatives such as virtual town halls, online forums, and digital community platforms can strengthen social connections and cohesion among remote workers and residents, fostering a sense of belonging and collective identity.

**6. Foster collaborative partnerships.** Facilitating collaborative partnerships between government agencies, businesses, educational institutions, community organisations, and civil society groups can leverage collective expertise, resources, and networks to address complex challenges and seize opportunities for remote working and sustainable development.

**7. Encourage companies to promote remote working and the use of coworking spaces.** Fostering the adoption of human resource management strategies centred on working goal achievement rather than strict worker surveillance, therefore promote a culture of flexibility, productivity, and trust in the workforce, granting the possibility to work remotely.

## 10.2 Short guide for implementation

In the following section the core elements necessary for laying the groundwork for a remote working environment and the establishment of coworking spaces in the Alpine region will be discussed.

This exploration is designed to offer practical guidance and insights aimed to facilitate the seamless creation of coworking spaces tailored specifically to the unique requirements of remote workers within Alpine settings. By dissecting key aspects ranging from infrastructure to community integration, the aim is to provide a comprehensive roadmap for stakeholders initiating the endeavour of establishing coworking spaces amidst the Alpine landscapes.

### Set up the place

This point is useful to understand the features that a coworking space in an alpine environment should have. As seen, the creation of these types of spaces can contribute to attracting and retaining remote workers in mountain areas.

The following aspects address the needs and desires identified by the interviewed individual, so quite specific to the alpine areas of question.

- **Technological infrastructure.** It is not only fundamental to have a reliable high-speed connection but also to provide additional tools such as printers, scanners, and projectors.
- **Architecture and design.** The space should be in natural surroundings, providing the possibility to work outside. Furthermore, a nice well-designed and functional architecture can create an attractive and comfortable space, including exposure to natural light, and an agreeable view on the mountains.
- **Space fluidity.** It should provide a variety of different spaces – shared desks, private offices, soundproof meeting rooms, relaxation areas, a food&drink area. Moreover, space where users can create personalised “corners”, in a hybrid configuration perspective.
- **Additional services,** such as cafeterias, break areas, reception services, and administrative support should be provided.
- **Networking.** Events, workshops, seminars, and common interest groups should be organised.
- **Contractual flexibility.** Flexible rental options, such as short-term leases or monthly subscription plans.
- **Sustainability,** adopting eco-friendly practices such as recycling and the use of environmentally friendly materials.

### Connect with the surrounding

In remote areas such as the Alpine region, the scarcity of daily services and essential facilities is often marked, particularly during off-season periods when commercial activities

wind down and cultural offerings diminish. This can pose significant challenges for remote workers who rely on access to amenities and a vibrant community for both professional and personal fulfilment. Without the usual hustle and bustle of peak tourist seasons, these areas can feel desolate, exacerbating feelings of isolation especially among newcomers. Envisioning cultural and social events, even during these seasons, is crucial to enhance the appeal to remote workers. By proactively organising activities such as local festivals, art exhibitions, outdoor adventures, and community gatherings, these regions can create opportunities for connection and engagement. Not only does this enrich the overall experience for residents, but it also helps to attract and retain remote workers who seek a sense of belonging and camaraderie in their new surroundings.

Many remote workers relocate to these areas precisely because of their natural beauty and tranquil ambiance. However, the lack of social infrastructure can sometimes detract from the overall experience. Therefore, fostering a vibrant social scene through carefully curated events can make a significant difference in the quality of life for both residents and remote workers.

Additionally, a well-connected coworking space serves as a central hub for networking and collaboration, further enhancing the sense of community among remote workers and residents. Furthermore, the coworking space should be in a convenient and accessible location, near public transportation and have adequate parking. This ensures that remote workers can easily access the facilities without relying solely on personal vehicles, reducing both environmental impact and logistical challenges.

### Connect with the local community

Building strong connections with the local community is not just beneficial but crucial for fostering a profound sense of belonging and mutual support with remote workers. This effort involves more than mere proximity; it requires active engagement and collaboration with residents, businesses, and organisations to establish enduring partnerships and initiatives that transcend mere coexistence.

By embracing community-centric values and actively participating in local events and initiatives, remote workers can integrate seamlessly into the fabric of the community. Hosting regular community events, not only provides opportunities for remote workers to connect with locals but also showcases the diverse talents and offerings of the community. Additionally, collaborating with local artisans, producers, and entrepreneurs to showcase their products or services within the coworking space not only supports the local economy but also fosters a sense of pride and ownership among residents.

Moreover, the coworking space can serve as more than just a workplace; it can become a dynamic hub where individuals from diverse backgrounds converge to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and form meaningful connections.



By offering spaces for community meetings, workshops, or cultural events, the coworking space becomes an integral part of the local ecosystem, bridging the gap between newcomers and long-time residents.

Ultimately, by investing in building strong ties with the local community, the coworking space can evolve into a true community anchor—a place where individuals, regardless of their origin, can find a sense of belonging and contribute to the collective well-being of the area. This symbiotic relationship not only enriches the experiences of remote workers but also enhances the overall resilience and vitality of the community as a whole.

### 10.3 Future development

#### a. Implement an Alpsatellites prototype

The project conducted within the Alpsatellites framework entails analytical and theoretical aspects. This implies a major focus on research, data analysis, and theoretical exploration to understand the underlying principles and dynamics of remote working and coworking spaces.

Moving forward, the next step would be the implementation and test of a prototype, one for each partner country. This stage marks a transition from theory to practice, where the insights gleaned from the analytical and theoretical work are applied to develop tangible solutions. The implementation of prototypes serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it allows for the validation of theoretical hypotheses in real-world settings, providing empirical evidence to support or refine the theoretical frameworks developed earlier. Secondly, it serves as a practical means of assessing the feasibility and effectiveness of proposed solutions, offering valuable insights into what works and what doesn't in diverse socio-cultural and environmental contexts.

For the Italian territory the prototype could be experimenting with the establishment of a coworking space, the first one, in the Unité des communes valdôtaines Evançon. This could show the effectiveness of introducing coworking concepts in a rural Italian area, its concrete effects on the surroundings (economy, environment, community).

For the French territory the prototype would be the creation of a shared digital platform with the objective of, not only promoting the region's assets, but also a tool to help remote workers to find easy information about the area. Through the implementation of the platform its effectiveness in attracting remote workers could be analysed.

The Austrian pilot can implement the three main pillars that they have studied (services, digitalisation) to establish a vibrant community in Doren and around the hub "Klein Wien", facilitating the emergence of a community space with coworking facilities.

#### b. Replicate the project in other remote areas and monitor the results.

The second step would be the replication of the project in

other remote areas, utilising lessons learned to tailor solutions to the specific needs of each region. This expansion strategy involves adapting the project's framework to different socio-cultural, environmental, and economic contexts while maintaining a focus on the core objectives of promoting coworking spaces and remote working.

By replicating the project in diverse geographical regions, stakeholders can assess its scalability and effectiveness across varied landscapes and populations. This broader scope not only enhances the project's reach but also allows for a more comprehensive understanding of its potential impact.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes will be put in place to track key performance indicators, measure the project's impact on different economies, environments, and communities and identify what strategies are effective and what adjustments are necessary for optimal outcomes.

To sum up, the replication of the project in other remote areas represents a pivotal phase in its evolution, underscoring a commitment to adaptability, accountability, and effectiveness in fostering vibrant communities, promoting remote working environments and the creation of coworking spaces.

#### c. Transfer the learning at the inter-regional policy level.

The third step is dedicated to the crucial task of transferring the invaluable lessons learned and best practices acquired during the implementation phase to the inter-regional policy level. This process entails more than mere dissemination—it involves a comprehensive synthesis of insights and experiences into actionable recommendations tailored for policymakers operating at regional, national, and international scales.

Central to this endeavour is the active engagement with policymakers and stakeholders across diverse geographical regions. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, the aim is to catalyse policy reforms that foster an enabling environment for the growth and sustainability of remote working ecosystems. This involves advocating for policies that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration while addressing pertinent socio-economic and environmental challenges.

Furthermore, the transfer of learning at the inter-regional policy level is driven by a commitment to fostering resilience, inclusivity, and prosperity across regions. Through strategic interventions and targeted advocacy efforts, the project seeks to influence policy frameworks that prioritise the needs of remote workers and promote the creation of supportive infrastructures and ecosystems.

Ultimately, the overarching goal of this step is to effect positive systemic change, contributing to the development of more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous regions. By leveraging the insights gained from the project's implementation phase and translating them into meaningful policy action, the project endeavours to create lasting impacts that extend beyond individual communities, shaping the future landscape of remote working and community development on a broader scale.

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