



RURACTIVE

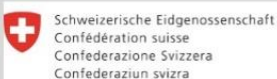


Törbel-Moosalpregion, Switzerland

D12 - Local Action Plan



Co-funded by
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UK Research
and Innovation

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0. Reading This Local Action Plan

This Local Action Plan (LAP) documents the co-development process of solutions undertaken by each Dynamo to establish and empower its local Multi-Actor Rural Innovation Ecosystem (RIE). It is the result of a 12-month participatory and inclusive community-led process from May 2024 to May 2025, and contains both the description of the four steps taken to activate the RIE as well as the co-developed, innovative, place based solutions that will be implemented to support the just, sustainable and smart transition of the Dynamo's territory.

The solutions described in the LAP target one or more core Rural Development Drivers (RDDs, namely: Sustainable multimodal mobility; Energy transition and climate neutrality; Sustainable agrifood systems and ecosystem management; Nature-based and cultural tourism; Culture and cultural innovation; Local services, health and wellbeing) and integrate aspects from the three RURACTIVE crosscutting priorities (climate change mitigation and adaptation, social justice and inclusion, and biodiversity), and take into account gender considerations. During the co-development phase, Dynamos activated, engaged and empowered the local community through four Local Workshops (LWs) that provided support in defining their place-based solutions. This LAP presents the results of these four LWs, highlighting the crucial role of the local community in creating each solution proposal. For further reference to the methodology to activate the RIE and to the conceptual framework of RURACTIVE, the full documents are [available on the website](#).

Each LAP is organised into six main sections:

- Background and Strategic Vision – Introduces the territory, its cultural identity, socio-economic profile, and key development challenges. Further, it outlines the chosen RDDs that guided the focus of local action.
- Step 0: Getting Started – Describes the early activities to set up the foundational elements of the RIE and frame the work, including the selection of the RDDs and territories where the LAPs will be implemented, mapping of previous participatory processes, and a review of relevant local and regional policies.
- Step 1: Identification – describes the activities undertaken for brainstorming, analysing and prioritising local stakeholders
- Step 2: Engagement – explains how local actors were involved through events like Open Days and the creation of Local Task Forces (LTFs).
- Step 3: Empowerment – summarises the series of Local Workshops (LWs 1–4), the recruitment of Local Community Trainers (LCTs) for capacity building and training of local communities, how local challenges were identified, and how solutions were co-designed and refined through structured participation.
- Place-Based Solutions – Lists the key challenges identified and introduces detailed breakdowns of the main place-based solutions co-developed with RIE stakeholders to be carried forward into the implementation stage starting from September 2025

This LAP serves as both a strategic roadmap and a practical implementation tool. It is intended to guide the co-implementation of local solutions and to support replication efforts by other rural communities across Europe in the future. The LAP has been collaboratively developed by the Dynamo partner in close cooperation with their RIE stakeholders, with support and guidance from mentors at the University of Bologna and RURACTIVE project partners.

1. Background Information

Törbel is a Swiss mountain village with around 500 inhabitants, located at an altitude of 1,497 meters above sea level on a south-facing slope high above the Visp Valley in the Canton of Valais. The village is characterized by centuries-old, sun-scorched houses and narrow passageways and is one of the few authentic Valais Mountain villages, as it is rarely found today. Due to its unique cultural heritage, Törbel is listed in the Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property of National Significance. The association “Urchigs Terbil,” founded in 1985, works to preserve the village's traditional appearance and historic agricultural buildings.



Figure 1. Location of Törbel in the district of Visp.

Tourism plays a crucial role in Törbel's economy, as the village is part of the Moosalp region, a renowned tourist destination that includes the communities of Bürchen, Törbel, Emd, and Zeneggen. The Moosalp region, home to several protected moor biotopes, is a popular destination for outdoor activities. It features an extensive network of hiking trails, offering exceptional views of 12

surrounding peaks, many exceeding four thousand meters. In winter, the region caters to snow sports enthusiasts with various activities, including skiing, snowshoeing, and sledging.

In addition to tourism as a main source of income, traditional agriculture is deeply rooted in the identity and way of life of the locals. A defining feature of the village is its long tradition of communal resource management, which attracted the attention of Nobel Prize-winning economist Elinor Ostrom. In the 1980s, Ostrom studied the village's commons, particularly its system of communal pasture and forest management, as well as the traditional irrigation channels known as "Suonen" or "bisses."

Like other rural mountain villages, Törbel faces challenges such as water scarcity and economic pressures. These factors highlight the need for sustainable approaches to ensure the long-term viability of the community while preserving its unique heritage and traditions.

2. Step 0: Getting started

2.1. Chosen RDDs

Identifying the most relevant RDDs for Törbel and the Moosalp region was crucial to ensure our efforts address the region's unique challenges and opportunities. To guide this process, we conducted a comprehensive SWOT analysis, which provided valuable insights into the local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis helped us pinpoint key areas where targeted action can support sustainable development and enhance the community's resilience, while also ensuring that the chosen RDDs align with the expertise available at Bern University, School of Agricultural, Forest, and Food Sciences (BFH-HAFL).



Sustainable agri-food systems and ecosystem management

In this RDD, we are focusing on addressing the challenges and opportunities facing Törbel's traditional agriculture. The SWOT analysis revealed that traditional farming in Törbel is crucial for the region's cultural identity and landscape, but it is threatened by factors such as limited resources and the increasing presence of wolves. Despite these challenges, there is potential for growth, especially through leveraging synergies with the tourism sector, which could allow agriculture to play a more prominent role in the local economy.



Nature-based and cultural tourism

The tourism RDD has already been established and has significant potential for improvement. The SWOT analysis highlighted the pressure on local services such as restaurants and shops, which are essential to the community's social and cultural life. However, the Moosalp region, renowned for its natural beauty and outdoor activities, offer an opportunity to revitalize tourism through innovative approaches. We will focus on improving collaboration between the various stakeholders to enhance the tourism experience while ensuring its sustainability.



Culture and cultural innovation

Although not initially chosen the need for this RDD became clear during the local workshops. The community identified cultural preservation as essential for Törbel's future, particularly in the face of economic pressures. Törbel's strong sense of community, historic village centre, and traditional practices are significant assets, but they are under threat due to factors such as the decline in local services. Cultural innovation could help sustain and modernize the community's traditions, potentially through partnerships with tourism and agriculture. Strengthening the local cultural scene will improve community resilience, enhance tourism, and secure the cultural heritage of Törbel.

2.2. Starting to set up the RIE

In spring 2024, the first meeting was held with Törbel's municipal president Urs Juon and the municipal council member Renato Karlen to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Törbel. During this meeting, the two local stakeholders helped identify key areas for improvement and development within the community. Evelyn Böttinger from BFH-HAFL was chosen as the main RIE coordinator and works alongside Renato Karlen, who serves as the first point of contact and facilitates the connection between local stakeholders and RIE activities.

Building on the findings from the comprehensive SWOT analysis, we gained a deeper understanding of the local context, which guided the identification of key stakeholders. This identification of stakeholders informed the prioritization process, which was carried out collaboratively in this first meeting. This stakeholder analysis served as the foundation for ongoing collaboration and co-

development of solutions, ensuring that all relevant voices are heard and that RIE efforts are aligned with the community's needs and available resources.



Figure 2. Multifunctional Hall in Törbel, chosen as the RIE site for workshops

Regarding the RIE site, the venue selected for periodic workshops is the Mehrzweckhalle Törbel, a multifunctional hall offering ample space, central location, and wheelchair accessibility. It is conveniently located next to the local school, making it an ideal venue for community engagement and RIE activities, considering the limited options available in the area.

2.3. Local Policy Analysis Results

The Local Policy Analysis involved compiling a list of policies, strategies, plans, and guidelines relevant to the selected Rural Development Drivers (RDDs) for Törbel and the Moosalp region. These were drawn from the local, regional, cantonal, and national levels. Following an initial review, the most significant policies for the Dynamo area were identified for a more detailed analysis. Particular attention was given to those supporting rural and regional development, agriculture, tourism, and the RURACTIVE cross-cutting priorities, as these were seen as key to the region's future growth and resilience.

Incorporating these policies ensures that the identified RDDs are well-supported by existing frameworks and strategies, making it possible to align local actions with broader national and regional priorities.

An overview of the cantonal and local policies is outlined below, focusing on the RDDs and the RURACTIVE cross-cutting priorities: climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, and social justice and inclusion.



Culture and cultural innovation

- Preserve and restore cultural heritage by documenting, conserving, and transmitting material and immaterial assets for future generations.
- Foster creative work through support for research, creation, and dissemination in all cultural and artistic fields.
- Promote access to culture for all social groups by removing barriers and encouraging inclusive participation.
- Encourage lifelong learning and skill development in arts, heritage, and creative industries.
- Enhance collaboration with local, national, and international partners to expand cultural impact and visibility.
- Preserve cultural heritage of Törbel and share local history
- Promote cultural life by organizing a diverse annual program of events to strengthen local identity of Törbel

**What do
cantonal and
local policies
aim to
achieve?**

D12 – LOCAL LEVEL



Sustainable agri-food and ecosystem management

- Promote local and regional products
- Make rural and mountain regions as well as border regions attractive as economic, living and recreational areas and develop them sustainably
- Support diverse, competitive agriculture through flexible aid, regional projects, and improved market access for local and niche products.
- Promote sustainable land use by protecting fertile soils, limiting urban sprawl, and preserving agricultural zones.
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity through ecological farming practices and conservation of varied habitats and landscapes.
- Safeguard cultural landscapes like terraces, Suonen (irrigation channels), and orchards through traditional methods and restoration efforts.
- Encourage water-smart farming by improving irrigation systems and promoting integrated water resource management.
- Preserve open spaces to protect natural scenery and avoid landscape fragmentation and overdevelopment.
- Enable agri-tourism and diversification by supporting small-scale processing, direct sales, and non-agricultural rural enterprises.
- Strengthen ecological connectivity through green infrastructure and integrated habitat networks.
- Enhance education and innovation in agriculture by supporting training, knowledge transfer, and technological advancement.
- Valorize local identity by marketing high-quality Valais agri-products and showcasing their ecological and cultural value.



Nature-based and cultural tourism

- Protect natural landscapes and promote sustainable tourism that respects the unique environment of the Moosalp region.
- Preserve cultural authenticity by offering peaceful, nature-based experiences rooted in local traditions and heritage.
- Enhance quality of life through tourism that benefits both residents and visitors in a balanced, responsible way.
- Support innovation and digital tools to improve visitor information and experiences across languages and platforms.
- Promote collaboration among tourism providers to strengthen the region sustainably and build long-term partnerships.
- Focus on qualitative development over mass tourism, emphasizing value, excellence, and environmental responsibility.
- Ensure infrastructure sustainability through careful use and maintenance aligned with ecological values.
- Welcome diverse visitors—families, nature lovers, and children—seeking rest, recreation, and connection to nature.
- Encourage identity-building through regional branding, local products, and community engagement.
- Commit to professionalisation in tourism services, aiming for high standards and customer-oriented practices.

Figure 3. Local policy factsheet based on the chosen RDDs.

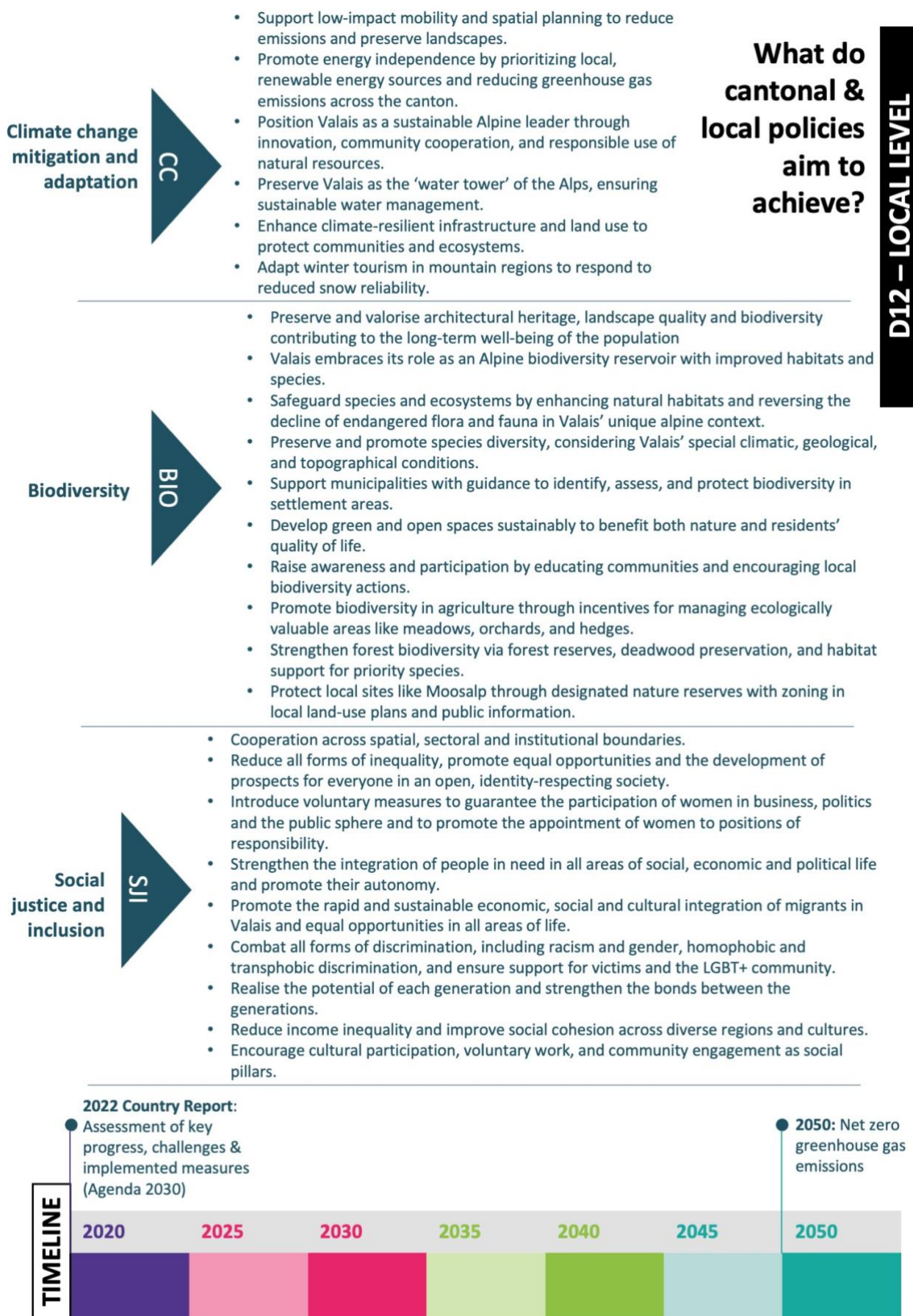


Figure 4. Local policy factsheet based on the cross-cutting priorities

3. Step 1: Stakeholders Identification: brainstorming, analysing and prioritizing

3.1. RIE composition

The identification of stakeholders for the Rural Innovation Ecosystem (RIE) in Törbel began with a brainstorming session, where a comprehensive list of potential stakeholders was compiled, with a total of 71 stakeholders. This included companies, associations, museums, foundations, and political entities such as the municipal council of Törbel. Additionally, relevant governmental institutions at both the regional and cantonal levels were considered, along with institutions and foundations that could play key roles as potential partners, offering funding or expertise. Neighbouring villages were also included, as well as individual stakeholders who could contribute to the project.

Stakeholders were then aligned with the Rural Development Drivers (RDDs) and Domains (Policy, Research, Industry/services/investors, Public/user). Following this identification process, stakeholders were analysed and clustered based on their relevance and potential contribution to the project. Factors such as their level of interest, influence, and engagement were assessed, helping to prioritize those stakeholders most critical to the success of the project. This collaborative prioritization was carried out during the initial meeting in Törbel and laid the foundation for effective engagement and partnerships throughout the RIE development process.

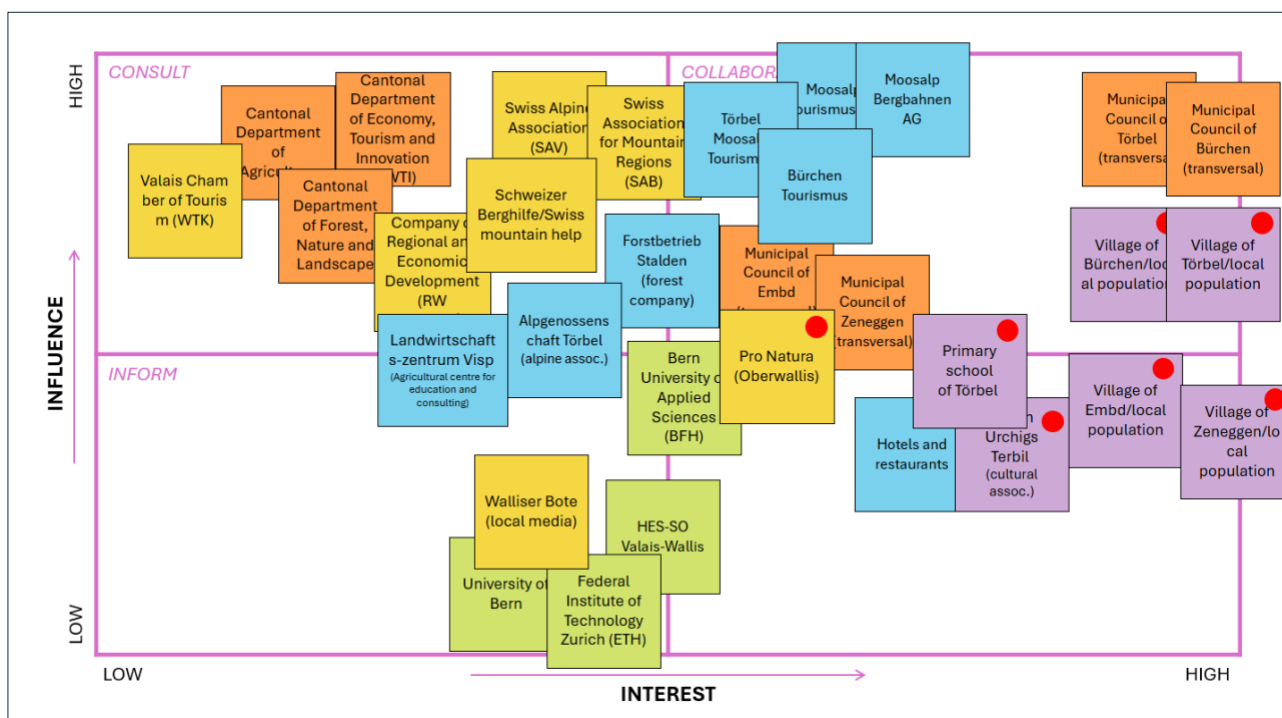


Figure 5. Draft of matrix presented to the two local stakeholders in the first meeting, spring 2024. Red dots represent stakeholders at risk of exclusion. The domains are represented by the colours: (Policy = orange, Research = green, Industry/services/investors = blue, Public/user = yellow).

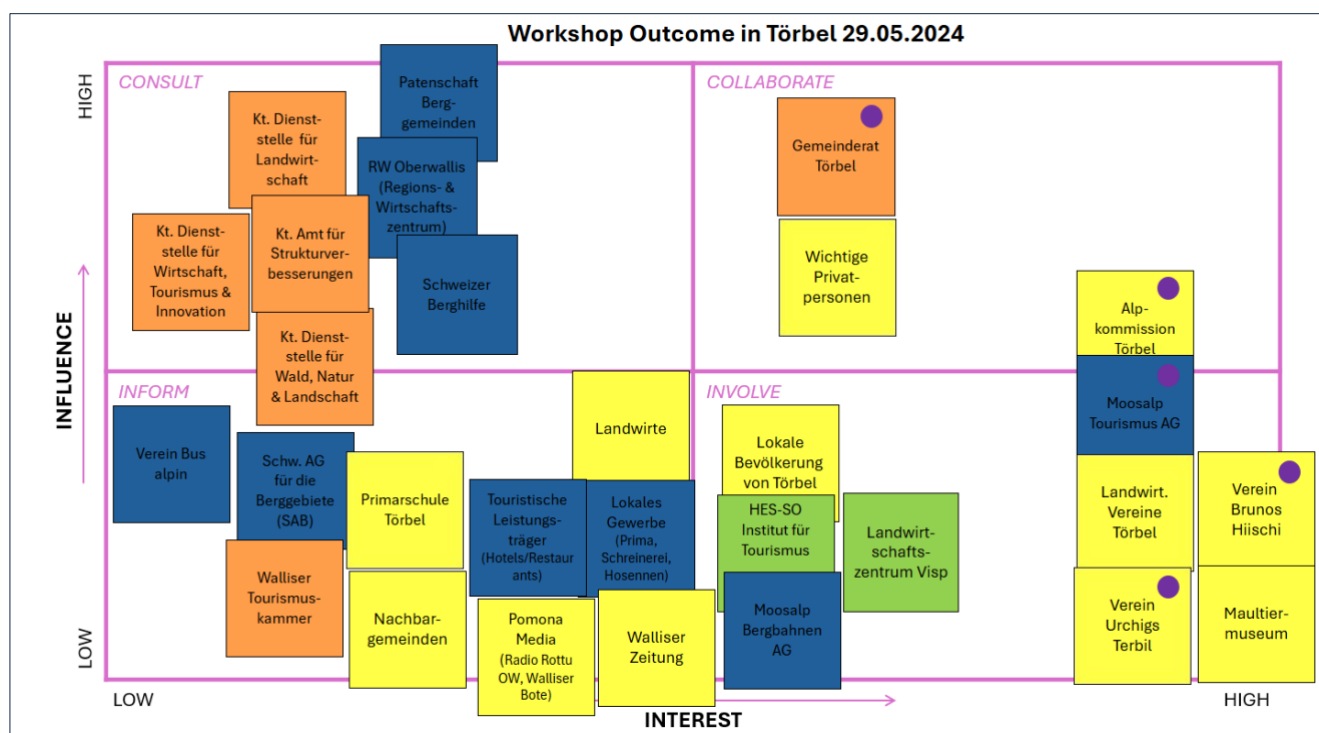


Figure 6. Matrix outcome of the collaborative prioritization with the two local stakeholders in the first meeting, spring 2024. Purple dots represent stakeholders prioritized for the Local Task Force. The domains are represented by the colours: (Policy = orange, Research = green, Industry/services/investors = blue, Public/user = yellow).

The prioritized stakeholders include the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH-HAFL), the municipal council of Törbel, the local population, Moosalp Tourismus AG including Moosalp Bergbahnen, the cultural association “Urchigs Terbil,” the local museum and foundations “Brunos Hischi” and the Mule Museum, the alpine commission and agricultural association, as well as tourism providers (such as hotels and restaurants) and other local enterprises.

4. Step 2: Stakeholders Engagement: local task force and involving stakeholders

4.1. LTF composition

The composition of the Local Task Force (LTF) was carefully structured to ensure that each chosen Rural Development Driver (RDD) was represented by a local stakeholder. The selection of these members was influenced by their involvement in relevant sectors, ensuring diverse perspectives and expertise are integrated into the RIE activities.

The LTF members are as follows:

- Evelyn Böttinger, Dynamo Coordinator from BFH-HAFL: RIE-Coordinator, female, 36-50 years old

- Renato Karlen, Member of the Municipal Council of Törbel, in charge of forest, agriculture, alpine farming and other municipal departments: RIE Co-Coordinator, male, 36-50 years old
- Karin Kalbermatten, Employee of the Local Tourism Association “Moosalp Tourism AG”: female, 36-50 years old
- Corinne Juon, Member of the Executive Board of the Local Cultural Association “Urchigs Terbil”: female, 36-50 years old

The Local Task Force is composed of 75% females, reflecting a strong female presence in key leadership and decision-making roles within the group.

4.2. Open Day

The Open Day was held in conjunction with a touristic event of the region on Saturday, 10th of August 2024, the so-called “Moosalp Markt” where regional producers and artisans presented their products. The event aimed to raise awareness of the RURACTIVE project among locals and visitors. An informational stand was set up by BFH-HAFL, where visitors could learn about the project and engage with the RIE coordinators. Since there were few locals from Törbel (due to other informal events happening simultaneously), and the majority of attendees were tourists, the outreach of the Open Day wasn’t as broad as expected. However, it was still a valuable event for raising awareness and providing an opportunity to get to know the RIE co-coordinator better.

Social media posts were published on LinkedIn and Facebook to further reach Törbel residents and raise awareness about RURACTIVE.



Figure 7. RURACTIVE-Open Day with informational stand at the local market.



Figure 8. A typical Eringer cow showcased at the Moosalp market – a proud symbol of Valais tradition.

The participant group varied in terms of age, with the largest portion of attendees falling within the 35-50 age range, comprising 12 people. A smaller number of participants were in the 50-65 age group (3 people), while only 2 participants were aged between 65-80, and one participant was in the 18-35 age range.

In terms of gender, there was a notable balance with 12 male participants and 9 females, resulting in a slightly higher proportion of men in attendance. The event also attracted a

diverse range of participants, including 4 tourists and 2 holiday homeowners, alongside 6 people from the local area and 8 individuals from Törbel itself.

Regarding RDDs, the primary interest was in nature-based and cultural tourism, with 4 participants expressing particular enthusiasm for this area.

5. Step 3: Stakeholders Empowerment

5.1. LCT Recruitment

The role of the Local Community Trainer (LCT) was presented during the first workshop on September 30th, 2024, to find interested individuals. One person immediately expressed interest but had limited capacity. Another one – a member of the municipal council – was approached due to his digital competencies but then declined, also due to limited capacity as he later became municipal president. A post was published on the local Facebook page and community app to search for a LCT. One resident showed interest and successfully applied: Emanuel Petrig, presenting himself as follows:

“My name is Emanuel Petrig and I am currently working as a Quality Unit Support IT Specialist at Lonza AG in Visp, an international company where I collaborate daily with colleagues from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. Over the past decade, I have gained extensive experience in managing teams, optimising workflows, and leading collaborative projects. As a former team leader in quality control, I focused on building trust, fostering teamwork, and achieving shared goals through clear communication and structured problem-solving.



Figure 9. Emanuel Petrig

My open and collegial approach helps me connect easily with people and create positive, inclusive environments. My ability to work effectively with individuals from different backgrounds has been a key asset, enabling me to bridge gaps, encourage collaboration, and drive progress in both professional and community settings. Currently, I am pursuing a part-time degree in Business Informatics to deepen my knowledge of digital technologies and how they can be applied practically. My aim is to use this knowledge to help bridge the gap between technology and people, making it approachable and beneficial for everyone.

I am deeply connected to my hometown of Törbel and passionate about helping the local community develop digital skills. This opportunity not only allows me to contribute to Törbel but also offers a chance for personal growth and further development. I believe that fostering collaboration and encouraging shared learning can strengthen both individuals and the community as a whole.

Mentor, Jury memberships and Keynote Speaker” *Emanuel Petrig*

5.2. LWs1 Vision and Challenges

During the first Local Workshop (LWs1), a shared vision for the future of Törbel emerged, one that is focused on sustainability, digital deceleration, and preserving the community's cultural heritage while embracing modern ways of living. The vision for 2030 describes Törbel as a vibrant, resource-efficient mountain village that emphasizes environmental conservation, such as revitalizing old hiking trails and irrigation channels and developing new bike trails. Agriculture will be strengthened through local cooperatives, maintaining the landscape and supporting cultural heritage with the help of the “Urchigs Terbil” association. Additionally, digital technologies will be embraced only when they support sustainability, and public transport will be improved to enhance mobility for all, particularly young and elderly residents. A central gathering space for social, cultural, and sports activities will be created, strengthening the community bond.



Figure 10. Workshop participants brainstorming about the vision and challenges.

Challenges identified during LWs1 were placed into different categories, including culture and social life, natural hazards and landscape, infrastructure, and tourism. These are further described below. Regarding the workshop participants, a total number of 17 people engaged in this first workshop. These participants included 8 males and 9 females. The participant group was diverse, with a mix of age groups: 2 individuals aged 18-35, 10 individuals aged 36-50, 2 individuals aged 51-65, and 3 individuals aged 66-80. One participant from the group reported having a disability, and 4 participants were either new residents or second homeowners and therefore considered at risk of exclusion.

In terms of the participants' interests and expertise, most were interested in multiple domains, rather than just focusing on one. The topics that attracted the most attention were "Nature-based

and cultural tourism" (9 participants), followed by "Local services, health, and wellbeing" (9 participants), and "Culture and cultural innovation" (7 participants). There was also notable interest in sustainable agrifood systems and ecosystem management (3 participants) and energy transition and climate neutrality (3 participants). Sustainable multimodal mobility was also represented (4 participants). From a domain perspective, most participants (11) identified with the "Public/users" category, while 5 were from "Industry/services/investors," 3 from "Policy," and 1 from "Research." These numbers reflect the broad engagement of local stakeholders, including both residents and individuals with professional expertise, showing a strong commitment to various areas of development in Törbel.


List of challenges	
Challenge 1 - Place based	Overgrowth of the landscape, meadows and forests (as agriculture declines)
Challenge 2 - Place based	Endangered local services (village shop, post office) with potential loss of valuable local products/crafts
Challenge 3 - Place based	Endangered agriculture and restaurant
Challenge 4 - Place based	Ski tourism is endangered due to lack of snow and water shortage
Challenge 5 – For open call for innovators	Unlively village centre
Challenge 6 – For open call for innovators	Water shortage for agriculture (and drinking water)

5.3. LWs2 Learning from others

The second Local Workshop (LWs2) focused on identifying and co-developing potential solutions for the challenges highlighted in LWs1. Participants explored relevant examples from the RURACTIVE Solutions Catalogue and worked together to determine how these ideas could be tailored to the specific needs of Törbel.

The workshop began with an introduction to the selected challenges (5 in total) and corresponding solution factsheets (three per solution). Each participant selected a challenge of interest and discussed pre-selected solution factsheets in pairs or small groups. They identified key takeaways and possible adaptations for Törbel, documenting their findings on question cards. After the first round, the groups switched, allowing participants to explore additional challenges and solutions.

By the end of the workshop, stakeholders prioritized the most promising solutions to be further refined in the next phase (3 in total). A total of 22 participants engaged in this workshop, including 14 males and 8 females. The participant group represented a diverse range of age groups: 6 individuals were aged 18-35, 11 individuals were aged 36-50, 3 individuals were aged 51-65, and 2 individuals were aged 66-80. One participant reported having a disability, while 2 participants were identified as either new residents or second homeowners, placing them at risk of social exclusion.



Lösungsvorschlag zu Herausforderung 1

Virtuelles Landschaftstheater

Schottland, UK

Unter der Leitung von: James Hutton Institute

Virtueller, interaktiver Raum zur gemeinsamen Entwicklung von Visionen und Planungen für die Landnutzung. Für die Bewertung von Landschaftsprojekten werden auf einer gebogenen Leinwand Daten und Landschaftselemente in einer 3D-Umgebung projiziert.

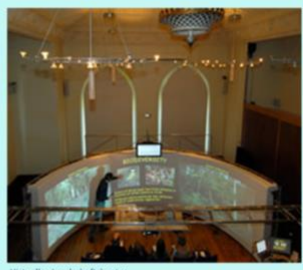
Ziel

Das Virtuelle Landschaftstheater bietet einen sicheren Raum für die Beteiligung von Interessensvertretern und BürgerInnen, um gemeinsam Ansichten auszutauschen und Visionen für zukünftige Landnutzungen und Landschaften zu entwickeln. Es wird in drei Funktionen genutzt:

- Forschung zu Landschaftspräferenzen zur Untersuchung von biophysikalischen und sozialen Einflussfaktoren.
- Mitwirkung zu geplanten Landnutzungsänderungen (z.B. Windkraftanlagen; Landwirtschaft, Aufforstung).
- Entwickeln von Visionen für zukünftige Landschaften.

Nutzen für die Region:


- Fördert die Beteiligung der BürgerInnen an Landnutzungsentscheidungen und öffentlichen Debatten
- Nutzung von Behörden und öffentlichen Einrichtungen zur Entwicklung von Raumplänen und Strategien für die Umsetzung von erneuerbaren Energien
- Visuelle Bewertung potenzieller Auswirkungen von Projekten im Bereich erneuerbare Energien
- Gemeinsames Lernen und neues Wissen über Landnutzung und Landschaft aus Gesellschaft, Wissenschaft, Praxis und Politik



Website: <https://macaulay.webarchive.hutton.ac.uk/landscapes/>

Co-funded by the European Union

Project funded by James Hutton Institute, Scottish Government, UK Research and Innovation



Fragebogen

Gewählte Herausforderung:

Eure NAMEN/ NAME eurer ORGANISATION:

Sind diese Beispiele eurer Meinung nach hilfreich, um die gewählte Herausforderung zu lösen? ☐ JA ☐ NEIN ☐ TEILWEISE

1. Welche Elemente könnten aus diesen Beispielen übernommen oder angepasst werden, um sie in Törbel zu nutzen?

.....

.....

.....

2. Habt ihr eigene innovative Ideen oder Vorschläge, um die gewählte Herausforderung in Törbel zu lösen? Bitte beschreibt sie kurz (Wo sie angewendet werden könnten. Wie ihr sie umsetzen würdet.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Könntet ihr euch vorstellen, bei dieser Idee mitzuwirken? Welche Rolle hättet ihr dabei?

.....

.....

.....

4. Wen würdet ihr einbeziehen, um zusätzliche Unterstützung für die Umsetzung der Lösung zu erhalten?

.....

.....

Mehr Platz auf der Rückseite

Figure 11. Example of a solution factsheet (left) and the question card (right)

Again, participants expressed interest in multiple domains rather than focusing on just one. The most popular topics were "Culture and cultural innovation" (10 participants), followed by "Local services, health, and wellbeing" (9 participants) and "Nature-based and cultural tourism" (8 participants). There was also notable engagement in "Sustainable agrifood systems and ecosystem management" (5 participants) and "Energy transition and climate neutrality" (4 participants), with "Sustainable multimodal mobility" drawing interest from 2 participants.

From a domain perspective, 14 participants identified as "Public/users," 10 were from "Industry/services/investors," 7 represented "Policy," and 1 participant came from the "Research" sector. These numbers demonstrate a strong engagement from local stakeholders, including both residents and professionals, reflecting a commitment to shaping the future of Törbel through diverse perspectives and expertise.

List of challenges	
Challenge 1 - Place based	Insufficient landscape management and overgrowth
Challenge 2 - Place based	Endangered ski tourism due to snow and water shortage
Challenge 3 - Place based	Endangered agricultural activities and traditions
Challenge 4 - Place based	Endangered restaurants and other local services
Challenge 5 - Place based	Insufficient cultural integration of new residents

List of solutions proposals	
Proposal 1	Törbel-Package (to promote local economy and culture)
Proposal 2	Volunteer initiative to support local agriculture
Proposal 3	Transdisciplinary living lab to focus on overgrowth

5.4. LWs3 Fine-Tuning

The third Local Workshop (LWs3) focused on refining and assessing the feasibility of three selected solution proposals identified during LWs2. The aim was to evaluate their potential for implementation in Törbel, considering economic and financial viability as well as RURACTIVE's cross-cutting priorities.

The session began with a recap of the previous workshops and a short overview of the three proposals. Participants were split into groups to discuss each proposal using the RURACTIVE Canva. Initial discussions centred around brainstorming and clarifying ideas, which limited progress on the more technical aspects of the Canva.

For Solution 1 (Törbel-Package), 12 participants (7 women, 5 men) contributed a wide range of ideas, particularly about existing offers and services. However, varied levels of knowledge made it challenging to define concrete activities and responsibilities. Solution 2 (Volunteer Platform) gathered 9 participants (8 men, 1 woman), who were highly engaged and enthusiastic. Most participants expressed willingness to take on a role in the implementation of proposed activities. Solution 3 (Living Lab) involved 11 participants (8 men, 3 women), but engagement was low, particularly after the break.

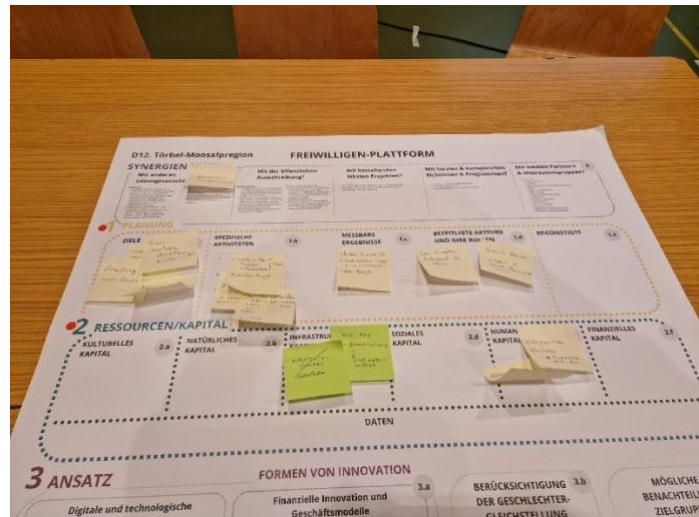
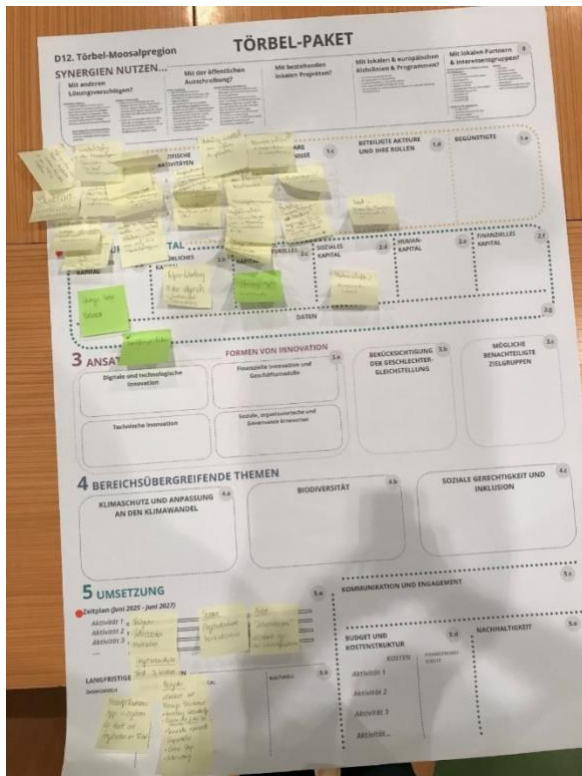


Figure 12. Pictures of the RURACTION canvases filled out by the participants.

The workshop resulted in a clearer understanding of each proposal's implementation path, generating actionable, place-based ideas to be integrated into the Local Action Plan.

A total of 21 participants took part in this workshop, including 13 males and 8 females. The group spanned various age categories: 7 participants were aged 18-35, 10 were between 36-50, 3 were aged 51-65, and 1 participant was in the 66-80 age range. One participant reported having a disability, while another was identified as a new resident or second homeowner, placing them at risk of social exclusion.

Participants once again demonstrated interest in multiple domains rather than focusing on just one. The most popular topics were "Culture and cultural innovation" (8 participants), "Local services, health, and wellbeing" (8 participants), and "Sustainable agrifood systems and ecosystem management" (7 participants). "Nature-based and cultural tourism" also attracted interest from 7 participants, followed by "Energy transition and climate neutrality" (3 participants) and "Sustainable multimodal mobility" (2 participants).

From a domain perspective, the majority of participants (13) identified as "Public/users," while 9 were from "Industry/services/investors" and 7 represented "Policy." These figures highlight the ongoing commitment of both residents and professionals in contributing to the development of Törrbel, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives in shaping its future.

5.5. LWs4 Co-Tuning

The fourth Local Workshop (LWs4), held over two evenings in May, focused on the co-tuning of Innovator solution proposals with the local community. As part of the RURACTIVE Open Call, three international innovator teams were invited to present their concepts addressing two major challenges in Törbel: the revitalisation of the village centre and the improvement of agricultural irrigation.

On the first evening, two teams – one from Greece and one German-Swiss-British consortium – presented their proposals for village centre revitalisation. Each team introduced their approach, explained the technical feasibility and potential impacts, and outlined the steps needed for implementation. Participants actively engaged in the discussions, provided feedback, and raised questions around integration into local structures, sustainability, and community involvement.

The second evening focused on the agricultural irrigation, where a Swiss-British consortium presented their solution to several local farmers and interested residents. Feedback was again collected through moderated discussions, highlighting local needs, possible risks, and technical requirements.

At the end of both sessions, a consolidated list of comments and improvement points was shared with the innovator teams. The refined proposals were evaluated in mid-June, and the most promising solution is expected to move toward implementation from summer 2025.

During the first evening a total of 16 participants were present, including 9 males and 7 females. Age distribution was broad: 3 participants aged 18-35, 10 between 36-50, 1 aged 51-65, and 2 aged 66-80. Among attendees, one participant reported having a disability, and another was identified as a new resident, representing groups at risk of social exclusion.

Participants represented diverse domains, with 12 identifying as public/users, 9 from industry/services/investors, 5 from policy, and 1 from research. Interests spanned multiple topics, with the most popular being local services, health, and wellbeing (10 participants), nature-based and cultural tourism (9), culture and cultural innovation (8), and sustainable agrifood systems and ecosystem management (4). Energy transition and climate neutrality and sustainable multimodal mobility attracted fewer participants (2 and 4 respectively).

The second evening included 17 participants, with 14 males and 3 females (reflecting the male majority among local farmers), and welcomed 5 new participants who had not attended earlier workshops. The age range included 6 participants aged 18-35, 8 between 36-50, 1 aged 51-65, and 2 aged 66-80.

Domain representation included 13 public/users, 9 industry/services/investors, 6 policy, and 1 research participant. Interests were centred on sustainable agrifood systems and ecosystem management (9 participants), culture and cultural innovation (8), local services, health and wellbeing (8), and nature-based and cultural tourism (5). Sustainable multimodal mobility and energy transition and climate neutrality were less represented, with 3 participants each.

Open Call for innovators: Selected Solutions (Stage 1)	
Proposal 1	O-STROM: Optimized Smart Tracking for Regional Water Management
Proposal 2	HARMONY: "Reviving Törbel: Heritage-Driven Placemaking for Community Life"
Proposal 3	CFT: Conviviality for Törbel

6. List of solutions and action plan for implementation

Through a series of participatory exchanges and co-development activities with local stakeholders, Törbel has defined a shared ambition: to strengthen village life and long-term resilience by building on its cultural heritage, agricultural traditions, and strong commons-based governance. The result is a portfolio of three complementary, place-based solutions that address economic vitality, social cohesion, and knowledge exchange in a mountain context.

The first solution, *Terbil-Päcklini*, focuses on strengthening the local economy and cultural identity through modular visitor packages that connect tourism, gastronomy, agriculture, and cultural actors. By improving collaboration and visibility, these packages promote authentic, year-round experiences while supporting de-seasonalised and sustainable tourism.

The second solution establishes a *volunteer initiative to support local farmers* and landscape maintenance. By connecting residents, second-home owners, and visitors with meaningful agricultural tasks, the initiative preserves traditional mountain farming, strengthens intergenerational exchange, and reinforces community bonds.

The third solution proposes the creation of a *transdisciplinary living lab* in partnership with the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH-HAFL). This living lab positions Törbel as a real-world learning and research site, fostering long-term collaboration between science and the local community on socio-ecological challenges.

Together, these solutions promote rural development in Törbel and strengthen the village's capacity to navigate future challenges.

Solutions N.	Solutions' title	Related challenge/s
1	"Terbil-Päcklini" to promote local economy and culture	Endangered restaurants and other local services
2	Volunteer initiative for Törbel	Endangered agricultural activities and traditions
3	Transdisciplinary Living Lab Törbel	Insufficient landscape management and overgrowth

6.1. “Terbil-Päcklini” to promote local economy and culture – action plan

Solution 1 - “Terbil-Päcklini” to promote local economy and culture	
Objectives of the solution	<p>Strengthening local networks and collaboration</p> <p>Strengthen and foster collaboration among cultural, tourism, gastronomy, and other local providers in Törbel to create products and services.</p> <p>Enhancing visibility of local products and services via better marketing</p> <p>Enhance the visibility and accessibility of Törbel’s products and services to both residents and visitors, ensuring that information is available and easy to find.</p> <p>Expand the diversity and appeal of Törbel’s tourism supply through categorization based on guest needs and the creation of flexible, combination-based packages that cater to a broad audience.</p> <p>Promoting sustainable and de-seasonalized tourism products and services</p> <p>Foster balanced, year-round tourism by diversifying products and services to reduce pressure on peak seasons and over-visited areas. This includes expanding engaging, all-season activities while enhancing nature-based and cultural experiences tailored to off-peak periods.</p> <p>Attracting sustainable visitors</p> <p>Increase the attractiveness of Törbel as a tourist destination by offering authentic experiences that highlight the region’s culture and heritage.</p> <p>Encourage tourists visiting the Moosalp region to spend more time in Törbel, promoting local products and services, as well as enhancing the village experience to foster longer stays.</p> <p>Boost the local economy by attracting more regional groups for various activities and day excursions to Törbel.</p> <p>Preserving local traditions and cultural heritage</p> <p>Preserve and promote Törbel’s cultural heritage and local identity through tourism products and activities.</p> <p>Support the local economy by creating sustainable visitor activities that contribute to long-term prosperity without compromising the region's heritage</p>
Brief Description (max 250 words)	<p>The "Terbil-Päcklini" (= Törbel packages in local dialect) aim at strengthening the local economy and preserving Törbel’s cultural heritage by offering customizable visitor experiences. Local businesses,</p>

	<p>associations, museums, agricultural providers and others each contribute unique components, such as guided tours or tastings of regional products. These components can be combined to create personalized packages that showcase the village's unique charm and resources. This also fosters collaboration among stakeholders, including tourism providers, cultural associations, and local businesses, encouraging them to work together and build a stronger community network. By utilizing existing resources and infrastructure, such as the museum and other cultural attractions, the packages highlight Törbel's strengths and provides visitors with authentic and tailored experiences. This approach not only strengthens the local economy but also preserves Törbel's cultural identity and ensures a vibrant social life for the community.</p>
Relevant RDD and RDD subcategory	<p>Nature-based and cultural tourism (subcategory: Destination development)</p> <p>Culture and cultural innovation</p>
Relevant Challenge/s	<p>Challenge 4: Endangered restaurants and other local services</p>
Specific Activities	<p>1. Establish a working group</p> <p>Form a working group comprising municipal representatives, stakeholders from various sectors – including local businesses, hotel, and gastronomy and other – as well as LTF-member and BFH. Organize regular workshops and meetings. (Responsible: LTF-Member, BFH)</p> <p>2. Explore a partnership with Moosalp Tourism</p> <p>Explore opportunities with Moosalp Tourism to expand the functionality of the website and app, including the long-term coordination, promotion and sales of local products and services. Agree in a memorandum of understanding (Moosalp Tourism should be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the data.) (Responsible: LTF-Member/Municipal representative)</p> <p>3. Product and service analysis</p> <p>Document existing local tourism products and services, along with the willingness of providers and tourism suppliers to participate. (Responsible: LTF-Member)</p> <p>4. Formal agreements</p> <p>Establish formal agreements with key stakeholders, to formally express their commitment and involvement in the collaborative efforts. (Responsible: BFH)</p>

5. Demand analysis

Demand analysis based on available data (quantitatively and qualitatively), such as monthly tourist tax and overnight statistics, to identify gaps and opportunities for new offerings. Consider doing a qualitative survey/interview with guests and potentially research existing qualitative surveys. (Responsible: LTF-Member, BFH)

6. Product and service catalogue

Co-create a comprehensive catalogue of all local products and services with providers. Develop complete visitor packages tailored to specific themes, target groups, and cross-cutting priorities (e.g. biodiversity walks). Include combination options with modular and seasonal elements, integrate traditional farming activities, and ensure offerings support a de-seasonalized tourism model. (Responsible: Working group; all providers)

7. Define the target audience

Co-create and offer packages to attract special target groups like children, disabled people etc. (Responsible: Working group)

8. Establish marketing strategies

Select marketing channels and collaboration opportunities to promote the packages (e.g. Valais Promotion, "Bietschhorn Connect", neighbouring villages, other tourist organisations). Consider collaboration with other partners to promote packages and discounts for, e.g. climate friendly transportation (SBB, Postauto etc., such as train + bus + Törbel experience). (Responsible: Working group)

9. Test and improvements of packages

Promote and sell one package. Use the insights gained to improve the packages and the overall process, with final adjustments completed by June 2027. (Responsible: Working group)

Targets

1. Establish a working group

Form a working group with one representative for each sector (Moosalp tourism, hotel/accommodation/gastronomy, local business, culture, agriculture, maybe municipal council of Törbel) and hold the first meeting in September 2025.

2. Explore partnership with Moosalp Tourism

A signed memorandum of understanding with Moosalp Tourism to formalize the partnership and define mutual commitments.

3. Complete the product and service analysis

Complete the product and service analysis and document at least 8-10 local products and services (esp. products and services that focus on cross-cutting and locally owned/produced).

4. Secure formal agreements

Secure at least 5 formal agreements with key providers (e.g., businesses, tourism operators, and local associations).

5. Conduct a demand analysis

Conduct a comprehensive demand analysis, incorporating at least 2 data sources (e.g. tourist tax and overnight statistics) and qualitative insights from at least 10 guest interviews or surveys

6a. Create a catalogue and visitor packages

Create a complete catalogue of local products and services and develop at least 3 visitor packages (seasonal, thematic, and cross-cutting). Ensure the inclusion of activities that support a de-seasonalized touristic offer. Ensure the catalogue and packages are easily accessible (e.g. digital and/or printed formats).

6b. Investigate agricultural activities

Include 1 agricultural activity (e.g., farm tours, product experiences, cross-cutting topics), promoting sustainable farming practices.

7. Define the target audience

Define and categorize at least 3 key target audiences (e.g., families, eco-tourists, culture enthusiasts) and align local offerings to these segments.

8. Establish marketing strategies

Identify and implement at least 1-2 strategic marketing channels (e.g., Moosalp Tourism, Valais Promotion) for promoting the packages.

9. Test and improvement of packages

Successfully promote and sell at least one package. Improve the packages and the overall process by integrating feedback and insights from the test phase.

Location of implementation	Törbel Moosalpregion (Canton of Valais) Switzerland
Geography and territorial context	Mountain area

**Integration of
relevant crosscutting**

Biodiversity

Generally, the “Terbil-Päcklini” can integrate biodiversity conservation by ensuring that tourism activities actively protect and educate visitors about the region's unique natural environment. Given Törbel’s location in the Swiss Alps, a highly sensitive ecosystem, integrating biodiversity-focused initiatives can enhance sustainability while offering authentic experiences that attract eco-conscious visitors. This can specifically be integrated in:

- Activity 6: Organize and promote biodiversity walks where visitors learn about local plant species (e.g., edelweiss, gentians, and alpine roses, Törbel Tulip).
- Activity 6: Consider creating and including a badge in the catalogue for biodiversity-friendly products and services.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Given Törbel’s location in the Swiss Alps, the solution must address rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events while promoting sustainable tourism and local economic resilience.

This can specifically be integrated in:

- Activity 6: Promote year-round tourism to reduce dependency on winter tourism (which is at risk due to decreasing snowfall).
- Activity 6: Promote seasonal and vegetarian menus in restaurants which are locally produced to lower the carbon footprint.
- Activity 8: Promote climate-friendly travel by actively encouraging the use of public transport instead of private cars. Highlight sustainable transport during the booking process, align activities with public transport schedules, and engage local businesses to offer incentives or discounts for visitors arriving by train or bus.

Social justice and inclusion

Certain groups in Törbel may face barriers to participation in tourism-related activities, economic opportunities, or community engagement. These may include: Elderly residents who face mobility challenges or digital exclusion, women with caregiving responsibilities who struggle to participate in economic activities, new residents who may not feel fully integrated into the community, people with disabilities who face accessibility barriers in historic buildings and public spaces. Make sure that the solution empowers all residents, by ensuring equitable access to opportunities, and by creating a tourism model that benefits the entire community – rather than just a select few.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all activities: Actively include and engage younger people, elderlies and new residents. • Activity 1, 3 & 6: Ensure the active involvement of locally owned businesses, local workers, and community associations – especially those from underrepresented groups – in the working group, as well as the design and delivery of tourism products and services. • Activity 6 & 7: Co-create packages that are accessible and appealing to diverse groups, including families, children, elderlies, and people with disabilities. Components may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barrier-free access to activities, venues, and transport (e.g., wheelchair-accessible trails, accommodations, and facilities). ○ Family-oriented activities like hands-on farming, storytelling, and nature walks. ○ Multilingual or easy-to-read materials for improved understanding. ○ Community guides or local companions to support participation where needed.
Forms of Innovation considered	<p>Digital & Technological Innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded Moosalp Tourism website and app allow users to browse, customize, and book local visitor packages with real-time updates and seasonal filters. • Modular and flexible digital packages: Visitors can choose and combine experiences based on season and interests. <p>Social, organizational & governance innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local co-creation and co-ownership models where businesses, residents, and associations jointly manage tourism packages to ensure fair benefits.
Gender Sensitive Planning aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly women may have fewer social engagement opportunities. Activities tailored to intergenerational exchange (e.g., traditional crafts workshops, storytelling sessions) can help them stay involved. • If available, actively promote women-owned or women-led businesses in tourism offerings. • Highlight women's role in traditional commons management: Törbel was studied by Nobel prize winner Elinor Ostrom for its unique community resource management. Showcasing how women contributed historically and continue to do so can promote gender equity in heritage representation.

Resources/Capitals needed	<p>Infrastructure:</p> <p>Distribution and promotion channel (through Moosalp Tourism website and app)</p> <p>Social capital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Moosalp Tourism • Other collaborations for the promotion <p>Human Resources:</p> <p>Main coordinator needed to ensure long-term sustainability of this solution (e.g. updating data, coordinating bookings).</p> <p>Financial Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for additional promotion costs (e.g. Collaboration with Valais Promotion) • Products and services, as well as packages should be self-sustaining in the long-term. <p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative tourism data about current/past demand (overnight stays, number of visitors/day visitors, length of stay) • Qualitative tourism data about current/past demand (target group, travel motives, visitors' expectations) • Overview of existing local products and services
Main stakeholders involved and their contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTF-Member who is the main contact point for relevant activities regarding Moosalp Tourism • LTF-Member (from cultural association Urchigs Terbil) who responsible for several activities and supporting the set-up of this solution • Moosalp Tourismus AG (main role for promotion, booking & sales, as well as organising in the long-term) • RURACTIVE-Local Community Trainer (supporting the implementation of the solution) • BFH (supporting in coordination and consultation)
Main and other Beneficiaries	<p>Local businesses to potentially provide their products and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karlen Sattlerei (leather saddlery) • Schreinerei Karlen & Kalbermatten (carpentry) • Hotel Weisshorn • Restaurant Moosalp • Restaurant Dorbia • International Retreat Centre Kailash • Konsumgenossenschaft (village shop)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toerbelttime.ch • Emergencyyoga • Kirsch und Raus/Café RausZeit • Farmers <p>Local associations/museums/foundations to potentially provide their products and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural association Urchigs Terbil • Hosennen Museum (foundation) • Mule museum • Other associations (Musical, sports etc.) <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality of Törbel • Neighbouring villages Bürchen, Emd, Zeneggen • Moosalp Bergbahnen AG (as part of Moosalp Tourism AG) • Regional/cantonal marketing and tourism organisations (Valais/Wallis Promotion)
Target groups at risk of exclusion	<p>Young people</p> <p>Older people</p> <p>New residents/second-home owners</p>
Timeframe (M to M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a working group (July to September 2025) • Explore a partnership with Moosalp Tourism (July to September 2025) • Product and service analysis (September to December 2025) • Formal agreements (January to February 2026) • Demand analysis (September 2025 to August 2026) • Product and services catalogue (February to August 2026) • Define the target audience (May to August 2026) • Establish marketing strategies (September to December 2026) • Test and improvements of packages (from Spring 2027)
Indicative cost	The Törbel packages are intended to be self-sustaining, with costs covered through the sale of touristic products and services.
Indicative funding sources	Budget for all place-based solutions (CHF 35.000)
Long Term Impact Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic: The solution strengthens the local economy by fostering collaboration among local businesses, expanding tourism offers, and attracting more visitors through year-round, personalized packages. It supports local producers and service providers, increases demand for regional products, and promotes sustainable income generation beyond peak seasons. • Environmental: The solution promotes eco-friendly tourism. By encouraging public transport and climate-friendly travel options, it

	<p>helps lower the environmental footprint and supports long-term natural resource conservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social: The solution enhances community cohesion through stakeholder collaboration and inclusive participation. It contributes to a vibrant village life by preserving traditions and offering spaces and activities that foster social interaction across age groups and backgrounds. • Cultural: The solution actively preserves and showcases Törbel's unique cultural heritage. By integrating local history, crafts, and traditions into the tourism offer and involving residents, it ensures that cultural identity is valued and celebrated.
Communication and Engagement	<p>Since this solution focuses on local economic development, cultural heritage, and personalised tourism experiences, the promotional strategy should ideally target travellers looking for authentic experiences, cultural enthusiasts, sustainable tourism advocates, and local businesses. Promotional activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital storytelling & social media to showcase local people, places, and experiences. • Partnerships with tourism boards and local businesses for wider reach and cross-promotion. • Print materials at tourist hubs to attract visitors already in the region. • Event-based offers tied to festivals or seasons, and tailored packages for groups. • Introduce loyalty incentives to encourage repeat visits and word-of-mouth marketing. • Accessible booking via travel platforms and gift voucher options.
Sustainability consideration	<p>The solution is designed for long-term sustainability beyond the project duration. It builds on existing networks, empowering local stakeholders to take ownership. By integrating the solution into established platforms (Moosalp Tourism website/app), it becomes part of ongoing local operations. The flexible package system allows for easy updates and adaptations based on future needs and demand. Involving local providers from the start increases buy-in and ensures that the initiative remains relevant, scalable, and financially viable over time.</p>
Synergies with other solutions	<p>Open Call Challenge: Revitalization of the village centre</p> <p>Both initiatives focus on revitalizing Törbel's historic village centre while preserving its cultural heritage and strengthening the local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By integrating local businesses, cultural associations, and agricultural providers, the Törbel packages naturally encourage activity in the village centre. Offering guided tours, cultural experiences, and

regional product tastings can bring both visitors and locals together in key locations, fostering informal community interactions.

- The challenge seeks to repurpose empty traditional buildings for communal activities. The Törbel packages can directly support this by hosting visitor experiences within these historic spaces – for example, using old farmhouses or barns for tastings, storytelling sessions, or artisanal workshops. This ensures these spaces are actively used and maintained rather than left empty or converted into secondary residences.
- By attracting visitors and increasing demand for local products and services, the packages help sustain the village shop, local crafts, and agricultural businesses.
- Since the challenge emphasizes creating common meeting spaces, the experiences within the Törbel packages can incorporate public events, workshops, and festivals that strengthen social life. This could include seasonal markets, cultural storytelling nights, or interactive exhibits in existing or repurposed spaces, bringing locals and visitors together in a dynamic way.

Open Call Challenge: Efficient agricultural irrigation

- The Törbel packages could include activities such as guided tours or workshops that focus on traditional irrigation systems (Suonen) as well as new technologies for their preservation. Visitors could learn more about the history and cultural significance of the Suonen, raising awareness of the challenges of water scarcity.
- Revenue from the Törbel packages could help support the (further) financing of irrigation systems.

Volunteer initiative

- Agricultural products presented in the Törbel packages could be produced with the support of volunteers (e.g., cheese production).
- Offer events, activities, and services from the Törbel packages to volunteers (e.g., as a form of compensation for their efforts).

Living lab

- Results and activities from the living lab could be part of the Törbel packages. This adds an educational component to the packages.
- Data from the living lab could help integrate cultural and ecological values into marketing by highlighting aspects such as biodiversity conservation.

Synergies with local policies

- Federal Government Tourism Strategy
- Regional Tourism Policy of the canton of Valais

- Tourism strategy of Moosalp Tourism AG
- Label “Jugendfreundliche Bergdörfer” (SAB)
- Bundesinventar der schützenswerten Ortsbilder von nationaler Bedeutung der Schweiz (ISOS)
- Cantonal structure plan (Kantonaler Richtplan)
- Cantonal Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030 der nachhaltigen Entwicklung des Kantons Wallis)

6.2. Volunteer initiative for Törbel – action plan

Solution 2 - Volunteer initiative for Törbel

Objectives of the solution

Providing support to local farmers

Offering hands-on volunteer assistance to farmers for tasks that require little or no prior experience with a focus on medium- to long-term plannable tasks.

Supporting local farmers by connecting them with motivated volunteers, including residents, second-home owners, and visitors.

Preserving traditional agriculture and cultural heritage

Preserving traditional agricultural activities and the associated cultural heritage.

Transfer knowledge to youths and encourage them to be involved in locally grounded agricultural practices.

Maintaining the traditional village landscape.

Inspire individuals with a passion for agriculture and nature to actively participate in maintaining traditional farming.

Strengthening the local community

Developing an initiative focused on the local village community that encourages mutual aid and collaboration.

Bringing together people of different generations and backgrounds through shared tasks and experiences.

Helping newcomers and tourists get involved in village life and build relationships through meaningful participation.

Raising awareness and encouraging public engagement

Highlighting challenges facing traditional mountain agriculture, such as overgrowth or livestock care.

Educating volunteers on sustainable agricultural practices for biodiversity and climate resilience in mountain areas.

Promoting mutual understanding and strengthening relationships and empathy between volunteers, farmers, and the wider community.

	<p>Offering insightful, practical experiences to participants and a deeper understanding of ecological and agricultural systems.</p> <p>Fostering synergies</p> <p>Promoting cooperation between agriculture, tourism, and the local community to create mutual benefits.</p> <p>Maintaining agricultural and tourist infrastructure, as well as traditional landscapes, such as hiking trails and alpine meadows.</p> <p>Developing and adapting a local volunteering strategy</p> <p>Building a comprehensive framework that ensures fair conditions, prevents exploitation, and delivers meaningful support to local farmers, while providing volunteers with opportunities to develop new skills and engage in purposeful, rewarding experiences.</p> <p>Aligning the strategy to actively address challenges related to biodiversity loss and climate change by involving volunteers in sustainable and future-oriented agricultural and landscape management practices</p>
Brief Description (max 250 words)	<p>This initiative aims to support local farmers, who often have limited time due to farming being a second job. The solution proposes a volunteering framework that enables residents, second-home owners, and visitors to assist with essential agricultural and landscape maintenance tasks, while also offering volunteers meaningful opportunities to develop new skills and engage in purposeful activities.</p> <p>To facilitate participation, the initiative could potentially be integrated into the existing Törbel app, with a dedicated 'Community Support' section. This would provide an easy way for volunteers to be informed about specific tasks that contribute to the preservation of traditional farming practices and the natural landscape of the village, while aligning with sustainable and future-oriented community goals.</p>
Relevant RDD and RDD subcategory	Sustainable agri-food and ecosystem management
Relevant Challenge/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge 1: Insufficient landscape management and overgrowth • Challenge 3: Endangered agricultural activities and traditions
Specific Activities	<p>1. Desk study research</p> <p>The desk study will set the foundation for the initiative by assessing existing volunteer programs in rural contexts, with a particular focus on those that support farmers and strengthen community resilience. It will also identify practical, community-based actions that ensure fair, ethical volunteer engagement while contributing to sustainable agricultural practices, biodiversity conservation, and climate change. The findings of</p>

this study will serve as the baseline for designing the local volunteering strategy. (Responsible: BFH)

2. Establish a working group

Form a working group comprising local farmers, the local community trainer, municipal representatives (including LTF member), volunteer representative, BFH. Organize regular meetings to coordinate the co-creation of the initiative. (Responsible: LTF-member)

3. Concept development and draft of the local volunteering strategy

Develop a detailed concept for the local volunteering strategy, starting from the findings of the desk study research and including a clear mission, target audiences, and platform features. Gather evidence of interest and motivation from farmers, the community, and potential volunteers. (Responsible: Working Group, BFH)

4. Co-design of roles and responsibilities

As part of the strategy: Facilitate a participatory process to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all involved actors, ensuring mutual understanding, transparency, and effective collaboration. (Responsible: Working Group)

5. Inclusive volunteer profile definition

As part of the strategy: Develop a broad and inclusive understanding of who can engage in the initiative, ensuring accessibility for people of different backgrounds, generations, and experiences. Promote diversity by creating welcoming, low-threshold opportunities that support integration into village life, foster meaningful participation and allow for various skill sets, interests, and levels of time commitment. (Responsible: Working Group)

6. Compensation and ethical considerations

As part of the strategy: Establish non-financial compensation models that acknowledge the contributions of volunteers in a fair and respectful manner. Ensure that all forms of recognition promote equity and do not replace paid labour but rather complement local efforts. (Responsible: Working group)

7. Collaborative identification and prioritization of tasks

Facilitate a participatory process to jointly identify and prioritize relevant agricultural and community-support tasks, informed by scientific findings and aligned with local needs and capacities. The process should ensure

that tasks contribute to ecological resilience, are meaningful for volunteers, and mutually beneficial for farmers. (Responsible: Working Group and Farmers)

8. Co-design the volunteer experience

Develop a clear and engaging structure for the volunteer experience, including the overall process and flow of activities. Define key aspects such as logistics, accommodation, and meals, while also exploring options to enrich the experience through educational and cultural components. (Responsible: Working Group)

9. Platform integration & technical feasibility

Explore feasibility of integrating the volunteer initiative into existing digital tools, such as the Törbel app or black board. Evaluate technical requirements, user reach, licensing and development costs, and usability aspects. (Responsible: Municipal representative)

10. Communication & outreach strategy

Develop a targeted outreach strategy to promote the volunteer initiative through appropriate communication channels. Emphasize values such as cultural heritage, community engagement, and meaningful participation. Define a title for the initiative depending on the target audience and the activity focus. (Responsible: Working group)

11. Collaboration with existing platforms

Explore potential partnerships with established volunteer platforms (e.g. bergversetzer) to benefit from visibility, tools, and communities for promoting agricultural activities and volunteer recruitment. (Responsible: Working group)

12. Formal agreements

Facilitate the formal adoption of the local volunteering strategy through a transparent and participatory process that reflects the needs and priorities of the community. In parallel, establish formal agreements with key stakeholders to secure their commitment and active involvement in the initiative. This step ensures long-term collaboration, shared ownership, and a clear framework for implementation and support. (Responsible: Working Group)

13. Kick-off event for the initiative

Launch the initiative with a dedicated community day (e.g. “Urchigs-Terbil Hiking Day” or a communal “hay-day”) that brings residents together through shared landscape maintenance activities. This event

will mark the start of the initiative, serve as an opportunity to present the local volunteering strategy, and foster dialogue with the community to ensure it aligns with local needs. Participants will be invited to share their feedback and ideas, helping to shape the initiative in a participatory and inclusive way. (Responsible: Working Group)

14. Long-term sustainability

Develop a long-term plan to ensure the continuity of the local volunteering strategy and the initiative beyond the project period. This includes clarifying responsibilities for ongoing maintenance (technical, financial, and content-related) and identifying sustainable financing options if needed. (Responsible: Working Group, Municipality)

15. Explore the expansion of the initiative's scope

Assess the feasibility of broadening the initiative's scope to include non-agricultural activities, depending on local needs and demands once the initiative is well established. (Responsible: Working Group)

Targets

1. Desk study research

A clear overview of existing local and national initiatives and ethical standards, highlighting gaps and providing recommendations to help shape the volunteering strategy. The aim is to align with scientific findings on biodiversity loss and climate change impacts in the region and avoid exploitative volunteerism.

2. Establish a working group

Form a working group with at least 5 representatives (local farmers, LTF member/municipal representative, local community trainer, volunteer representative and BFH) and hold the first coordination meeting in October 2025.

3. Concept development and draft of the local volunteering strategy

Develop a concise concept paper – the draft of the local volunteering strategy (max. 5 pages) – outlining platform goals, features, and target groups, incorporating insights from the desk study research.

4. Co-design of roles and responsibilities

Create a 1-page responsibility matrix clearly outlining the roles of farmers, coordinators, municipality, and volunteers.

5. Inclusive volunteer profile definition

Identify and describe diverse volunteer groups focusing on inclusion, access and community integration (e.g. locals, visitors, students) with corresponding needs and motivations.

6. Compensation and ethical considerations

Develop and agree on at least 3 ethical, non-monetary compensation models.

7. Collaborative task identification and prioritization

Compile and validate a list of at least 5 priority volunteer tasks – aligned with ecological and community needs – based on input from at least 3 local farmers and endorsed by the working group and community representatives.

8. Volunteer activity design

Co-design at least one model agenda for a full-day volunteer experience, including task, rest, and optional learning activity.

9. Platform integration & technical feasibility

Complete a technical feasibility check for platform integration into the existing Törbel app and receive a cost estimate from Megaphone Communications.

10. Communication & outreach strategy

Define a title for the initiative and produce at least one outreach material (e.g., flyer, social media post, or short video) to support public promotion and volunteer recruitment.

11. Collaboration with existing platforms

Initiate contact and hold exploratory talks with at least 1 existing volunteer platform (e.g. bergversetzer) to assess collaboration potential.

12. Formal agreements

Secure formal endorsement of the local volunteering strategy and obtain at least 4 written commitments from key stakeholders to ensure shared responsibility and long-term collaboration.

13. Kick-off event

Organize one community launch event with at least 10 participants, to present the volunteering strategy, promote engagement, and gather community feedback.

14. Sustainability for the local volunteering strategy

	Clarify long-term initiative management (data input, technical upkeep, funding) in a brief sustainability plan (max. 2 pages).
Location of implementation	Törbel Moosalpregion (Canton of Valais) Switzerland
Geography and territorial context	Mountain area
Integration of relevant crosscutting	<p>Biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation can be integrated into the volunteer initiative by aligning tasks with sustainable agricultural practices. The desk study in activity 1 will provide the foundation for this by identifying relevant community-based actions and ethical engagement models. The specific integration of the cross-cutting priorities can be finalized once the exact tasks are defined. Among these could be:</p> <p>Biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable pasture maintenance: Remove invasive species that harm native pasture plants. • Support well-managed grazing and herding to prevent overgrazing and promote balanced plant growth. <p>Climate change adaptation:</p> <p>Törbel like other alpine regions potentially faces: More extreme weather events, water shortages in alpine pastures during hot summers, more frequent landslides and erosion affecting access to pastures and water sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response support for extreme weather events (e.g. clearing paths, removing fallen trees, fixing fences). • Grazing management & fodder preparation for weather extremes. • Erosion & landslide prevention on pastures & trails. <p>Social justice and inclusion:</p> <p>The initiative can engage people who face barriers to traditional employment, such as older adults & retirees, women & single parents, new residents, people with disabilities, young people & students. These should be considered in Activity 5 (Volunteer profile) and 7 (Task identification).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign lighter farm tasks to people with limited mobility.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide flexible volunteering schedules so that single parents or people with care responsibilities can contribute without disrupting their other obligations. • Activity 1 and 6: Define compensation options for volunteers to comply with ethical standards.
Forms of Innovation considered	<p>Digital & Technological Innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative could be integrated into the existing Törbel app to connect farmers with volunteers. <p>Social, organizational & governance innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local volunteering strategy, developed based on the desk study, encourages structured and ethical volunteer involvement in support of sustainable farming. • The initiative fosters a culture of mutual aid by encouraging locals, second-home owners, and guests to contribute to farm work. • Farmers who struggle with labour shortages get help from a structured and reliable volunteer network. • Encourages intergenerational collaboration, where younger volunteers assist elderly farmers while learning traditional farming methods. • Farmers could collectively set up governance structures (e.g., a rotating coordination system) to ensure fair volunteer distribution.
Gender Sensitive Planning aspects	<p>To ensure gender sensitivity, the initiative should consider how different genders experience, participate in, and benefit from farming and volunteering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring equal access & participation, especially engage female farmers in the working group. Ensure both men and women can access all types of tasks, not just those traditionally assigned to their gender. • Offer flexible scheduling for volunteers, so single parents or caregivers can still participate. • Recognizing & reducing barriers for female farmers.
Resources/Capitals needed	<p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional agricultural activities <p>Natural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastures, meadows, forests etc. <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Törbel community app (developed and provided by Megaphone Communications AG) • Materials and tools for volunteers provided by farmers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential accommodation for external volunteers needed <p>Social capital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential partnerships with existing volunteer platforms in Switzerland (bergversetzer, Bergwaldprojekt etc.) <p>Human Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with residents, second-home owners, Kailash International Retreat Centre <p>Financial Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs for expanding the Törbel app <p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage data of the Törbel app Potential survey about motivation and engagement of farmers and potential local volunteers
Main stakeholders involved and their contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTF-Member from Törbel municipality BFH (supporting in coordination and set-up of this solution) Fours farmers that were present at the workshops Local Community Trainer (Technical support in setting up the solution, e.g. designing an activity form) Megaphone Communications AG (app developer and provider) Municipality of Törbel (potentially long-term responsibility)
Main and other Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers Alpine association of Törbel Agricultural associations Residents of Törbel Second-home owners Guests/tourists Buddhists/Guests at the International Retreat Centre Kailash
Target groups at risk of exclusion	<p>Young people</p> <p>Older people</p> <p>New residents/second-home owners</p>
Timeframe (M to M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform integration & technical feasibility (June to August 2025) Desk study research (August to October 2025) Establish a working group (September 2025) Concept development and draft of the local volunteering strategy (November 2025 to February 2026) Co-design of roles and responsibilities (November 2025 to February 2026)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive volunteer profile definition (November 2025 to February 2026) • Compensation and ethical considerations (November 2025 to February 2026) • Collaborative identification and prioritization of tasks (November 2025 to February 2026) • Co-design the volunteer experience (March to April 2026) • Communication & outreach strategy (April to May 2026) • Collaboration with existing platforms (April to May 2026) • Formal agreements (May to June 2026) • Kick-off event for the initiative (between May and November 2026) • Long-term sustainability (September to November 2026) • Explore the expansion of the initiative's scope (November 2026 and beyond RURACTIVE)
Indicative cost	<p>Estimated costs to expand the Törbel community app with basic information features: CHF 1,000</p> <p>An addition that allows administrators to post details such as agricultural activity descriptions, locations, and schedules without interactive elements.</p>
Indicative funding sources	Budget for all place-based solutions (CHF 35.000)
Long Term Impact Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic: The initiative supports the local economy by providing help to farmers and fostering synergies with tourism. It encourages sustainable economic activity without replacing paid labour. • Environmental: The initiative contributes to biodiversity and climate resilience by engaging volunteers in sustainable land management and agricultural practices, helping to preserve alpine landscapes and natural resources. • Social: The initiative strengthens community bonds by encouraging collaboration between locals, newcomers, and visitors. It fosters intergenerational exchange, mutual support, and volunteer participation in village life. • Cultural: The initiative helps preserve Törbel's agricultural traditions and cultural heritage by involving volunteers in traditional practices and supporting knowledge transfer from older to younger generations, reinforcing a shared sense of identity.
Communication and Engagement	<p>The communication approach aims to raise awareness and encourage participation in a community-based volunteer initiative that supports local farmers, preserves cultural landscapes, and fosters intergenerational engagement. The strategy targets three main groups: residents (including farmers to offer activities), visitors/guests, and second-home owners. Promotional activities may include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital updates via local apps (farmer WhatsApp group, Törbel app), websites, black board, and social media to launch the initiative locally and to continuously share volunteer opportunities and stories. • Partnerships with local businesses, accommodations, and community groups to spread information. • Print materials at key village spots like shops, info boards, tourist infos, and cafés. • Word-of-mouth promotion through farmers and residents. • Seasonal events like “Volunteer Days” to combine hands-on work with social experiences. • Small incentives to encourage engagement and repeat involvement.
Sustainability consideration	<p>The volunteer initiative is designed with long-term sustainability in mind by building on local structures, fostering community ownership, and integrating into existing tools like the Törbel app. It avoids dependency on external support by empowering local actors to maintain and adapt the platform beyond the project’s duration.</p>
Synergies with other solutions	<p>Open Call Challenge: Revitalization of the village centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers could support the transformation and maintenance of shared community spaces, for example by creating green areas. • The initiative could coordinate targeted projects in the historic village centre to make the space more attractive and functional. • Involvement in village centre projects could strengthen the connection between locals, second-home owners, and visitors. <p>Open Call Challenge: Efficient agricultural irrigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative could highlight the importance of sustainable water use and serve as a bridge between traditional and modern irrigation practices. <p>Törbel packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural products produced with the support of volunteers could be featured in the Törbel packages (e.g. cheese). • Events, activities, and offers from the Törbel packages could be made available to volunteers (e.g., as a form of compensation). • Volunteer activities could be integrated into the Törbel packages, for example, as part of "discovery days" where tourists can actively participate in and support traditional farming practices. <p>Living lab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative could generally help to mobilize stakeholders and resources for the implementation of Living Lab measures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and incorporating the history of the commons to develop future-oriented community-based models of collaboration (linking synergies with living lab). • The desk study research could potentially be integrated in the living lab.
Synergies with local policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects for Regional Development (PRD/Projekte zur regionalen Entwicklung PRE) • New Regional Policy (NRP) • Cantonal structure plan (Kantonaler Richtplan) • Cantonal Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030 der nachhaltigen Entwicklung des Kantons Wallis) • Agricultural Laws and Agricultural Policy 2030+

6.3. Transdisciplinary living lab in Törbel for future mountain socio-ecological systems – action plan

Solution 3 - Transdisciplinary living lab in Törbel for future mountain socio-ecological systems

Objectives of the solution

Overall objective: To establish a transdisciplinary living lab in Törbel

Creating a transdisciplinary learning environment in a real-world alpine setting

Provide a practice-based learning environment for BFH-HAFL students, researchers and practitioners from diverse disciplines (e.g., agriculture, forestry, environmental sciences).

Enable transdisciplinary collaboration and new applied projects with local stakeholders on new topics and challenges in mountain areas.

Serve as a host village (“Gastgeberort”) for BFH- HAFL courses, excursions, and research internships, promoting real-world education addressing topics of biodiversity, climate change, and social justice and inclusion.

Enhancing visibility of Törbel as research and learning laboratory on Commons

Promote Törbel’s cultural, ecological, and scientific relevance through partnerships and public outreach.

Position the village as a rural innovation ecosystem.

Contribute to long-term social and ecological resilience of the village by aligning research with local priorities.

	<p>Host public events (e.g., “Science Talks”, “Ostrom talks” Summer Schools, workshops, or guided research excursions) to share findings and bridge research and real world.</p> <p>Build mutual trust and knowledge exchange between researchers, students, local actors, and institutions.</p> <p>Promoting long-term collaboration between science and the local community</p> <p>Establish an ongoing partnership between the village and the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH).</p> <p>Create a replicable model for rural “living laboratories” that engage in continuous science-practice exchange.</p> <p>Support community involvement in shaping research questions and developing solutions.</p> <p>Supporting local decision-making through science participation</p> <p>Facilitate participatory processes to identify solutions for the challenges of the village (such as overgrowth or water scarcity).</p> <p>Conduct applied research on these topics (e.g. via master or bachelor students’ work) and ensure that results are relevant, actionable, and accessible to the community.</p> <p>Preserving and strengthening local knowledge and commons-based traditions</p> <p>Contribute to capacity building and awareness among local stakeholders on commons governance (by bridging generations and disciplines through storytelling and positioning Törbel as an international learning site for commons-based innovation).</p> <p>Integrate traditional knowledge (e.g., Ostrom’s commons theory, “Gmeiwärch”) into current land and resource management.</p> <p>Encourage community reflection on sustainable land stewardship practices</p>
Brief Description (max 250 words)	<p>The proposed solution – BFH Living Lab in Törbel – envisions the creation of a transdisciplinary living lab in Törbel, led by BFH-HAFL, Bern University of Applied Sciences and aims in fostering long-term collaboration between science and society for sustainable mountain research. This living lab will serve as a real-world testing ground for education, applied research, and innovation in addressing rural socio-ecological challenges. BFH-HAFL students from fields such as agriculture, forestry, and environmental sciences will gain hands-on learning experiences through site visits, collaboration with local stakeholders, and develop practical solutions for Törbel. Researchers from diverse disciplines will work</p>

	<p>together with the community as partners to identify sustainable development challenges, co-develop practical solutions, and test their effectiveness in real-world settings.</p> <p>Research activities will focus on landscape governance and management (e.g. overgrowth and pasture maintenance), natural hazards, biodiversity, water scarcity, as well as challenges related to forests or to commons (=Allmende).</p> <p>In addition, Törbel will also be a venue for scientists and practitioners to foster dynamic knowledge exchange and actively facilitating science-to-practice and practice-to-science collaboration.</p> <p>The initiative seeks to create a win-win situation: bringing fresh perspectives, knowledge, and visibility to the village while offering valuable learning experiences and practical insights for students and researchers. It also supports the promotion of Törbel's cultural and natural heritage and contributes to long-term community resilience.</p>
Relevant RDD and RDD subcategory	<p>Sustainable agri-food and ecosystem management</p> <p>Nature-based and cultural tourism</p> <p>Culture and cultural innovation</p> <p>Local services, health and wellbeing</p>
Relevant Challenge/s	All challenges
Specific Activities	<p>BFH is responsible for all activities as main leader of this solution</p> <p>1. Establish a working group</p> <p>Form a working group comprising BFH, municipal representatives and local stakeholders. Organize regular meetings to coordinate the development of the living lab)</p> <p>2. Participate in the Swiss Living Lab conference</p> <p>Attend the first national conference of Swiss Living Labs on August 20th, 2025, at ETH Zurich to present the Törbel Living Lab initiative, exchange experiences with other practitioners, gain inspiration from keynote speakers, and contribute to shaping a national Community of Practice for real-world experimentation and transdisciplinary collaboration</p> <p>3. Co-develop a Living Lab roadmap and intervention plan with the community</p> <p>Select a suitable venue in Törbel as a hub for the living lab. Explore options for organizing recurring meetings to share research results. Launch the project with a kick-off event, bringing together community members, researchers, and students to present the living lab, clarify roles and set shared goals. Include field visits and story-sharing on local knowledge and landscape practices</p>

4. Define potential future projects to be developed by HAFL researchers or addressed by students

Identify locally relevant topics in the fields of forestry, agriculture, food, and landscape. Develop a catalogue of project ideas suitable for student theses or applied research, ensuring alignment with both academic curricula and local priorities

5. Disseminate the Living Lab and build partnerships

Disseminate the Living Lab via social media and scientific community networks and build partnerships with other (research) institutions (e.g. MRI, SAB) in Switzerland and abroad (e.g. sister living labs, and relevant practitioners)

6. Coordinate activities outlined in the roadmap (January 2026 to June 2027)

Plan and implement activities in Törbel, such as research stays for BFH-HAFL students as part of specific courses, as well as knowledge exchange workshops and seminars for HAFL and other researchers. Ensure active collaboration with local stakeholders and alignment with identified challenges

7. Develop a replicable model of the Transdisciplinary living lab for future mountain socio-ecological systems to be set up in other regions and countries (February to June 2027)

Develop guiding materials and a concept to set up a Transdisciplinary living lab for future mountain socio-ecological systems in other countries and regions. Disseminate these guidelines, e.g. via MRI, FAO, UN Mountain Partnership and other projects (e.g. Margistar EU Cost Action), where HAFL maintains strong partnerships.

Targets

1. Establish a working group

Form a working group with at least 5 members (e.g. 2-3 BFH representatives, 1-2 local stakeholders, 1-2 municipal representatives) and hold the first coordination meeting in October 2025.

2. Participate in the Swiss Living Lab conference

In August 2025, present the Törbel Living Lab initiative at the conference's marketplace through a creative display, and initiate contact with at least three other Living Lab projects to explore opportunities for knowledge exchange or collaboration.

3. Co-develop a Living Lab roadmap and intervention plan

Establish a formal cooperation agreement between HAFL and the municipality of Törbel to define the roles and goals of the living lab. Select a “living lab venue” and hold a kick-off event in September with participation of at least 10-15 stakeholders.

4. Define potential future projects

Develop a catalogue of at least 5-8 potential project topics that are locally relevant and align with HAFL curricula, categorized by discipline (e.g. agriculture, forestry,) and format (e.g. bachelor thesis, semester project).

5. Disseminate the Living Lab and build partnerships

Develop and implement a communication plan outlining key message, target audience, and channels (e.g. HAFL website, social media, newsletters); produce at least two dissemination outputs per year (e.g. blog posts, short videos, posters). Ensure a collaboration with at least 2 partners (external and BFH partners) for knowledge exchange or co-projects.

6. Coordinate activities outlined in the roadmap

Organise at least three intervention activity types (e.g. Törbel hosts students and researchers, HAFL organises knowledge sharing events for Törbel).

7. Develop a replicable model

Develop a set of guidelines detailing the steps for establishing a Transdisciplinary Living Lab in other mountain regions, ensuring the approach is sustainable, inclusive, and adaptable for replication in diverse contexts. Present the model at one conference and share it via strategic channels.

Location of implementation	Törbel Moosalpregion (Canton of Valais) Switzerland
Geography and territorial context	Mountain area
Integration of relevant crosscutting	Biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as social justice and inclusion will be integral to the design and implementation of the transdisciplinary Living Lab in Törbel. These cross-cutting priorities will guide both the selection of research themes and the structure of participatory processes. Early-stage activities – such as the establishment of the working group and the community-led challenge identification procedure – will help define locally relevant topics and

inclusive engagement strategies. The integration of these priorities will be refined collaboratively as the Living Lab develops, ensuring that environmental sustainability and social equity are embedded throughout its research, education, and community-based actions. Among these could be:

Biodiversity:

- Activity 6: Organize biodiversity mapping walks with students and locals (e.g. map the *Tulipa sylvestris*).
- Host “Intergenerational Biodiversity Walks” to reconnect youth and elders through shared knowledge about wild plants, their uses, and their decline. Support this by locals with ecological knowledge or involvement in NGOs like WWF.

Climate change adaptation:

- Invite local climate experts to co-host events (e.g., from WWF, MRI, MeteoSchweiz, or FOEN).
- Include climate-related risks (e.g., drought, snowpack loss, forest dieback) in research questions.

Social justice and inclusion:

- Prioritize inclusive participation in all processes.
- Ensure equal participation of women, young and elderly people (groups at risk of exclusion).
- Foster intergenerational exchange formats (e.g., storytelling nights or "knowledge cafés").
- Design kick-off and future workshops to be accessible for all, including multilingual materials and physical accessibility.
- Ensure that benefits (e.g., from pilot projects or external investments) are equitably shared.
- Promote the Living Lab as a community resource open to all, not just formal partners or landowners.

Forms of Innovation considered

Depending on the topics and approaches that emerge through the participatory process, the Living Lab may give rise to different forms of innovation, shaped by the specific context and the nature of collaboration between community members and researchers. Among these could be:

Digital & Technological Innovation:

- Use participatory mapping tools (e.g., open-source GIS) to co-develop visual representations of local challenges like land overgrowth, biodiversity hotspots, or seasonal water availability.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use digital monitoring tools (e.g. Marteloscope) to map overgrowth. <p>Social, organizational & governance innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage intergenerational knowledge exchange by pairing students with older residents in fieldwork, preserving traditional ecological knowledge while co-learning on emerging challenges. • Enable community-led governance of research priorities through participatory decision-making and annual reflection workshops. <p>Financial & business model innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a sustainable “Host Village” model that enables Törbel to serve as a long-term education and research partner by securing stable funding through institutional collaborations or other funding themes, while creating a replicable framework for other alpine communities.
Gender Sensitive Planning aspects	<p>Gender-sensitive planning will be embedded in the design and implementation of the Living Lab to ensure equitable participation, representation, and benefit-sharing across all genders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring gender balance in the working group and among participating researchers, students, and local stakeholders. • Encouraging female student participation, particularly in disciplines with traditionally low female representation (e.g., forestry, alpine research). • Collecting gender-disaggregated data on roles, decision-making, and resource access in land use and commons governance.
Resources/Capitals needed	<p>Cultural :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local traditions and customs related to commons governance (e.g., Gmeiwärch, Burgergemeinde) • Community identity tied to alpine heritage and communal land use. <p>Natural :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests, pastures, and biodiversity-rich landscapes for research and fieldwork. • Commons areas (e.g., Allmende) as study sites for governance and sustainability. <p>Infrastructural :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café RausZeit that could serve as a Living Lab hub. • Community spaces (e.g., multipurpose halls, school rooms) for workshops and events. • Existing trails, signage, and landscape features for field teaching and excursions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential student housing or accommodation options (e.g., Ferienhaus Törbel). <p>Social:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active local associations and institutions (e.g., alpine farming association). Partnerships with mountain associations or institutions (e.g. SAB, MRI). Potential partnerships or exchange with other Swiss Living Labs. Established partnerships and networks within BFH, including relevant study programs (agriculture, forestry, and environmental sciences). Access to BFH's academic modules, courses, and research groups that can engage with the Living Lab. <p>Human Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with a local stakeholder who works for WWF and offers biodiversity-related learning activities, supporting integration of conservation and education in the Living Lab. Students, researchers, and lecturers from BFH and other academic institutions. External facilitators or moderators for participatory and co-creative processes. <p>Financial Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for coordination, workshops, and student projects. <p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge shared through interviews, surveys, or participatory mapping.
Main stakeholders involved and their contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BFH as main leader of the living lab Municipality of Törbel as local governance partner LTF-Member or other local stakeholder as main contact point
Main and other Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents of Törbel BFH students and lecturers Researchers and academic staff Local institutions and organisations
Target groups at risk of exclusion	<p>Women</p> <p>Young people</p> <p>Older people</p> <p>New residents/second-home owners</p>
Timeframe (M to M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a working group (July to September 2025)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the Swiss Living Lab conference (August 2025) • Co-develop a Living Lab roadmap and intervention plan with the community (September to December 2025) • Define potential future projects to be developed by HAFL researchers or addressed by students (November 2025 to February 2026) • Disseminate the Living Lab and build partnerships (August 2025 to September 2027) • Coordinate activities outlined in the roadmap (January 2026 to June 2027) • Develop a replicable model of the Transdisciplinary living lab for future mountain socio-ecological systems to be set up in other regions and countries (February to June 2027)
Indicative cost	Potential costs are not yet clearly defined but may include expenses for student field stays (which could be covered through university study funds), public events (e.g., “Science Talks,” guided tours), and meetings or networking events with partners and sister living labs.
Indicative funding sources	Budget for all place-based solutions (CHF 35.000)
Long Term Impact Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic: The living lab supports the local economy by positioning Törbel as a sustainable research and education destination, attracting students, researchers, and visitors. It fosters new partnerships and potential innovation-driven opportunities. • Environmental: The living lab contributes to the conservation of alpine biodiversity and promotes climate change adaptation and mitigation by enabling applied research and participatory land management practices. It facilitates the integration of traditional and scientific knowledge to sustainably manage natural resources, helping to maintain ecosystem services and landscape resilience over time. • Social: The initiative strengthens community cohesion by fostering inclusive participation across genders, generations, and social groups in research and decision-making processes. It promotes knowledge exchange between locals, students, and researchers, enhancing local capacities and empowering residents to actively shape their socio-ecological future. • Cultural: The living lab preserves and revitalizes local cultural heritage by integrating traditional knowledge systems and commons-based governance practices into contemporary research and education. It supports intergenerational dialogue and community storytelling, reinforcing Törbel’s identity and pride while enabling innovation rooted in local values.

Communication and Engagement	<p>The Living Lab will foster continuous and inclusive communication between BFH-HAFL, the municipality of Törbel, local stakeholders, and academic partners. Engagement will be anchored through regular working group meetings, participatory workshops, and site-based activities involving students and researchers. Public events such as community “Science Talks,” exhibitions, and field visits will create opportunities for two-way knowledge exchange and storytelling. Communication will also include targeted dissemination via academic networks, social media, and BFH platforms to build visibility and attract new collaborators.</p>
Sustainability consideration	<p>The solution is designed to establish a lasting collaboration between Törbel and BFH by embedding research, education, and participatory processes into the village’s ongoing development. It builds on existing academic structures (e.g., study programs, research modules) and fosters local ownership through inclusive engagement and shared decision-making. By developing a replicable “Host Village” model and integrating the living lab into university curricula, the initiative ensures continuity beyond project funding.</p>
Synergies with other solutions	<p>The Living Lab in Törbel offers strong synergies with several other project components, reinforcing each initiative's goals through collaboration and shared resources. It also serves as an overarching framework that can support the continuation and integration of all solutions beyond the RURACTIVE project.</p> <p>Open Call Challenge: Revitalization of the village centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Living Lab could provide research and facilitation support for participatory planning processes related to the revitalization effort. • Workshops, exhibitions, and public talks organised by the Lab can animate underused spaces and contribute to social cohesion, while also generating data for action research. <p>Open Call Challenge: Efficient agricultural irrigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This challenge aligns with Living Lab research on water scarcity and traditional irrigation systems. • Student projects and applied research can explore sustainable water management solutions and support pilot testing. • The Lab also creates a platform for knowledge exchange between local farmers, students, and experts.

	<p>Törbel packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Living Lab could contribute educational and research-based content to enrich the Törbel packages, e.g. through student-led biodiversity walks or heritage-based storytelling. • Research findings can also inform how cultural and ecological values are embedded into the package offerings, enhancing their depth and appeal. <p>Volunteer initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers engaged in the agricultural and landscape tasks could directly contribute to Living Lab activities, such as data collection or participation in pilot interventions. • The Lab, in turn, can support volunteer coordination, offer training sessions, and analyse the impact of volunteer contributions. • Joint efforts around the commons and traditional practices can serve as valuable case studies for community-based resilience models.
<p>Synergies with local policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects for Regional Development (PRD/Projekte zur regionalen Entwicklung PRE) • New Regional Policy (NRP) • Cantonal structure plan (Kantonaler Richtplan) • Cantonal Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030 der nachhaltigen Entwicklung des Kantons Wallis)