

Submitted Abstract

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First Author First Name Last Name	Adrienne Grêt-Regamey
Submitting Author First Name Last Name	Adrienne Grêt-Regamey
Correspondence	gret@ethz.ch
Co-Authors >> E-Mails will be not listed	Blanco, Victor; Luthe, Tobias
Organisations	Planning of Landscape and Urban Systems (PLUS), ETH Zürich, Switzerland
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Abstract

Mountain regions face substantial challenges and opportunities arising from global change. The capacity of mountain regions for (systemic) innovation will be determinant to the success of sustainability transitions envisioned by social actors of mountain communities. We provide insights about innovative capacities in mountain regions and propose how to strengthen these capacities in order to support regional sustainability transitions. Accordingly, we present a multimethod approach to assess and strengthen innovative capacity of mountain communities, with respect to the achievement of their visions for sustainable regional development. We do so by a) analysing innovation systems' collaboration networks, to evaluate the innovative capacity of communities; b) co-constructing visions with mountain stakeholders and assessing innovation requirements to meet these visions; and c) proposing changes to the collaboration networks that address regional innovation system (RIS) weaknesses to help achieve visions through innovation. We empirically illustrate this approach for two mountain regions in the Alps with different types of RIS. Our analysis furthers the understanding on the type and magnitude of RIS changes required to more effectively address desired transformative visions in mountain regions. We also show how innovative capacities differ between both regions. Accordingly, we discuss implications of our approach for the assessment of innovative capacity and the transition of mountain regions.