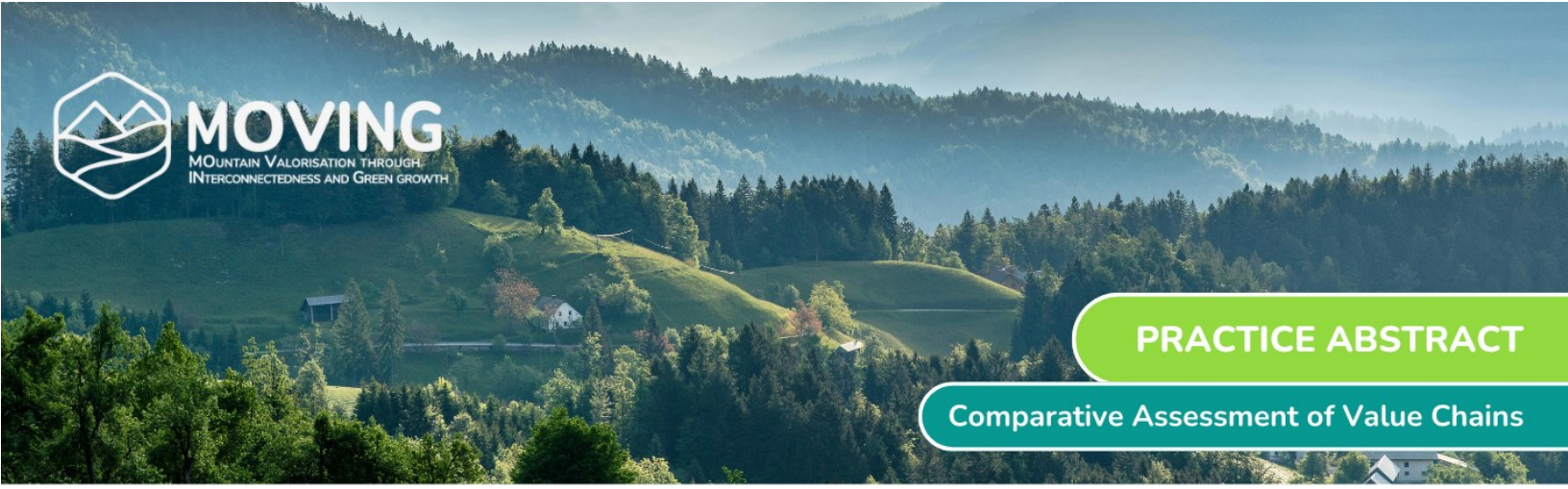

Comparing Mountain Value Chains: Understanding respective Potentials and Problems

Topic
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How are value chains impacting resilience and sustainability in European mountain regions and what barriers should be considered?

Assessing the impact of value chains (VCs) on resilience and sustainability in European mountain regions, MOVING categorised 23 VCs based on their contribution to social and demographic aspects, quality products, innovation, ecosystem services, and governance and cooperation.

We found that networks and cooperation improve VC resilience, but challenges like depopulation, the lack of skilled labour, gender imbalances, and low educational levels increase vulnerability. Quality schemes like PDO and organic production often foster cooperation and diversification, but small producers face unfavourable market positions. Skilled human capital, good access to advisors, financial capital, and good digital infrastructure were identified as the base for innovation, which is especially necessary in the context of changing environmental conditions.

Mountain VCs might use natural resources sustainably and create cultural landscapes. However, conflicting interests, hesitance to cooperate, and corruption (especially in Eastern Europe) can act counterproductively. Results showed that enhancing trust and collective action among VC actors, decentralising decision-making at the local level, and sharing information, machinery, and practices can boost sustainability and resilience.

We consistently found that VCs contribute to both private and public goods, but their valuable contributions often go unrecognised. We emphasise the need to raise awareness and provide fair compensation through communication campaigns.

Comparing our findings reveals the interconnectedness of various factors and challenges, underscoring the importance of collaborative efforts to address sustainability and resilience in mountain areas.

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