

## Diversify and sustain rural economic activity

Rural-urban linkages also arise from the distribution of employment and the exchanges of goods between rural and urban areas.

- A major dimension of functional rural-urban linkages is commuting. As employment opportunities are predominantly concentrated in and around cities and towns, people commute to these areas from their residential location. To reduce commuting and its follow-up costs, it seems desirable to re-balance employment locations between urban and rural/mountainous areas and promote employment in remoter locations. Recommendations in this regard relate to economic diversification, more hybrid forms of work and its locations (telework, telework centres) and the support and development of rural small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Rural economic activity can also help to strengthen rural-urban linkages and cohesion. Local agricultural and craft produce should be supported and should try to build upon close urban markets, as it is e.g. done via the AMAP (english: Association for the maintenance of local agriculture) associations or different territorial labeling strategies (e.g., Regional Nature Parks) in France.
- Last, it seems important to sustain rural agricultural activity, providing not only food products but also the maintenance of environmental services to the population, among other things the attractiveness of a cultural alpine landscape (as a basis for tourism, recreation and quality of life). However, among the analysed AS projects, there is *no one* that makes recommendations in this direction.

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