

2025 12 Top.Tirol Interview Questions - was not published

Overarching Question: Could an “Alpine Silicon Valley” emerge in Tyrol and how could such a regional innovation ecosystem realistically develop.

- I don't believe that Tyrol could or should build an 'Alpine Silicon Valley'. Silicon Valley is excellent in what it does because of a unique combination of circumstances, including abundant venture capital, world-class universities, and an entrepreneurial culture second to none - all of which attract top talent from all over the world.
- Tyrol has its own unique combination of circumstances - including a long and rich history, cultural depth, a resilient and courageous population, entrepreneurial spirit, and unmatched environmental beauty - all of which create an opportunity to develop the first sustainable, resilient, and regenerative alpine region.
- Silicon Valley will continue doing what it does best. Tyrol could take advantage of its unique opportunity to develop the first sustainable, resilient, and regenerative alpine region, a showcase and inspiration for others to copy.

1. From your perspective, what are the essential ingredients for a thriving regional innovation ecosystem?

- This vision of transforming a non-sustainable alpine economic region like Tyrol into a regenerative one, will require multiple transformations, e.g. from an extractive agriculture to a regenerative one, from mass-tourism to eco-tourism, from global supply chains to regional supply chains, from mass transit to regional e-mobility, from extractive energy production to renewable energy production, and from extractive linear businesses to circular businesses.
- This does require a different mindset and different leadership qualities.
 - The individual and collective mindset need to embrace this vision of

creating a healthy regional ecosystem for all living beings, where everybody thrives, driven by abundance and not scarcity; embracing environmental, social and economic returns, not just financial profits.

- And it requires different leaders, conscious systemic leaders who sense and feel the larger system, whose commitment to the whole radiates to nurture similar commitments in others. It requires leaders who catalyze collective leadership and build networks of trust. These types of leaders learn from the emerging future; they shift collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future; they deeply understand that the quality of their outcomes depends on the quality of their inner state, their own mindset.

2. Do you think Tyrol has the potential to develop into an “Alpine Silicon Valley”? If yes, what strengths could it build on? If not, what is missing?

- I do believe that Tyrol has the potential to develop into the first ‘Regenerative Alpine Region’. But it will not be easy.
- The awareness to work on this top-down is currently missing, as everybody is trying to deal with the symptoms of the poly crisis as opposed to the root causes.
- We know what to do: We first need to build trust and relationships between all societal silos; we then need to co-develop a common vision and a common Theory of Transformation, identifying and prioritizing the top impact themes that we need to solve. And we need to put regulations in place that help transform existing industries while enabling new and regenerative ones to emerge.
- The good news is: Right now there is a lot happening from the ‘bottom up’ and what I call from the ‘middle out’. We have top notch entrepreneurs and enterprises that take sustainability and circularity serious. We have new players in town like the Impact Hub Tyrol (which I co-founded and support), and the young generation is ready to jump into action if we provide them with the right opportunities.

3. Which role should public institutions, universities, and private capital play in building such an ecosystem?

- They all play a big role. Private capital alone cannot solve systemic issues like social injustice, climate change mitigation, and inequality. Neither can

politicians or the not-for-profit sector alone. We need radical collaboration between all of them, including artists, religious institutions, and activists. We also need to include the young generation as well as the retirees into this process of transformation.

4. How important is the presence of mission-driven entrepreneurs and impact-oriented investors for the early stages of such a cluster?

- Impact entrepreneurs and impact investors are essential in the early stages of such a transformation. They are naturally aligned in their desire to do something positive for our environment and our society. Pure profit maximization at the expense of social and environmental impact will not lead to the desired result of a regenerative alpine region.
- Another essential ingredient for success is philanthropic capital and public subsidies, which need to be activated for co-creation, community development, education, convenings, process development and execution, co-visioning, etc.

5. If you were to advise regional decision-makers in Tyrol, what would be the top three actions you would recommend to kick-start this development?

- Build trust between the different silos in society by organizing town-halls, convenings, workshops, etc.
- Co-Develop the vision of a regenerative, resilient, and sustainable alpine region with representatives from all silos (with gender, age, and sub-region diversity and representation)
- Develop and prioritize top regional impact themes (like regenerative agriculture, eco-tourism, circular economy, renewable energy, etc.)