



ÖTZTALER  
MUSEEN



GEDÄCHTNIS-  
SPEICHER

HEIMAT  
MUSEUM

TURM  
MUSEUM

## Sustainability Concept of the Ötztal Museums

Status: Spring 2026

## **HISTORICALLY ROOTED**

With the medieval tower in Oetz and the early modern farmstead ensemble in Lehn/Längenfeld, the Ötztal Museums are among the oldest buildings in the valley. Their very history makes them witnesses of time: our buildings remind us of our past, of the path our society has taken over the centuries, of achievements and of farewells. As museums, they symbolize the profound social transformations of the past hundred years. Built by a mountain-farming community shaped by subsistence and circular economies, they now stand before us as relics of a bygone culture—“musealised” by a globalised modern service and knowledge society.

## **OUR MISSION**

The history of our buildings defines their mission: to serve as a memorial to the hardships and crises of the past—such as hunger or natural hazards—while also acting as a beacon for the tradition of sustainable ways of living that supported families with a minimal ecological footprint, and could continue to do so in the future.

Our museums were built from the stones of the Ötztaler Ache, from the limestone of the Tschirgant rockslide in the Sautens “Forchat”, and from larch, spruce, and stone pine from the nearby forests. Our local history and open-air museum tells the story of sustainable food production—from grain grown within the hamlet to bread baked on site—and sustainable clothing, from flax cultivated behind the house to linen shirts worn a year later. Our mills along the stream tell the story of traditional renewable energy use, with water powering four different machines in the museum.

As buildings, as museums, and through the themes they convey to their audiences, the Ötztal Museums are uniquely positioned to advocate for environmental and climate protection, for conscious resource use, and for sustainable economic practices—both in the valley and within our own operations. We interpret the stories of the past to offer visions for the future.

## **OUR CONTRIBUTION**

The Ötztal Museums pursue sustainability as a holistic approach: ecological, social, cultural, and economic.

## **STRATEGIC GOALS (TIME HORIZON 5–10 YEARS)**

- Climate-neutral museum operations (energy & mobility)
- Strengthening regional value chains
- Deep social anchoring within the local population
- Sustainable visitor management in harmony with nature and cultural landscapes
- Long-term financial stability

## **1. ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **ENERGY & BUILDINGS**

The museums are located exclusively in historic buildings—offering opportunities for resource-efficient use:

- Transition to 100% renewable energy from Austria
- 100% LED lighting

### **MOBILITY & ACCESSIBILITY**

As rural museums, our sites are strongly shaped by individual car travel.

- Communication of climate-friendly travel options
- Bicycle-friendly infrastructure (parking facilities)
- Shuttle services for events

### **RESOURCES & WASTE**

- Waste separation systems for visitors

- Reduction of single-use materials
- Sustainable exhibition design (modular systems, reusable materials)
- Regional and ecological procurement (e.g., printed materials on recycled paper)
- Digitisation of administrative processes

## **2. SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### REGIONAL ROOTEDNESS

The museums are identity-shaping places in the Ötztal.

- Involvement of local associations and schools
- Volunteer programmes with training opportunities
- Community dialogue formats (“story cafés”, participatory exhibitions)
- Cooperation with regional producers (museum shop, events)

### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Workshops on traditional craft techniques
- Training programmes for the preservation of historic cultural landscapes
- Educational events on climate change in alpine regions
- Programmes for children and young people
- Cooperation with schools in the Ötztal

### ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

- Gradual structural adaptations (where permissible under heritage protection)
- Easy-to-read language in educational materials
- Multilingual information materials
- Offers for socially disadvantaged groups

### **3. CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Preserving intangible cultural heritage is at the core of our mission.

- Documentation of regional traditions and oral histories
- Digital archiving of historical collections
- Cooperation with research institutions
- Contribution to the knowledge and preservation of historic cultural landscapes and building culture
- Promotion of traditional craftsmanship

### **4. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

#### REGIONAL VALUE CREATION

- Preference for regional service providers
- Museum shop with regional products
- Cooperation with gastronomy and tourism

#### FINANCIAL DIVERSIFICATION

- Funding (Province of Tyrol, federal government, EU programmes)
- Sponsorship from regional businesses
- Membership and friends' associations
- Event formats (sustainable cultural events)

### **6. TOURISM & VISITOR MANAGEMENT**

The Ötztal is a strong tourism region. Sustainability here means balancing visitor numbers with regional quality of life.

- Off-season offers (spring/autumn)
- Small-scale, quality-oriented events instead of large-scale ones
- Visitor management through timed-entry tickets
- Cooperation with sustainable tourism initiatives

## **7. DIGITALISATION & INNOVATION**

- Virtual access to collections and exhibitions to reduce travel
- Digital educational formats
- Sustainability concept published on the website

## **8. MONITORING & EVALUATION**

An annual sustainability report documents:

- Energy consumption
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Visitor demographics
- Regional value creation
- Social projects

## **9. COMMUNICATION**

Sustainability should be visible:

- Transparent communication on the website and social media
- Pursuit of certification under the Austrian Ecolabel “Green Museum”
- Labelling of regional products in the shop
- Storytelling: “Experience sustainability at the museum”

## **10. CONCLUSION**

As regional museums in a rural area, the Ötztal Museums have significant potential to become a model region for sustainable cultural work. By combining:

- regional identity
- ecological responsibility
- social engagement
- economic stability
- a long-term, resilient museum model can emerge—one that connects history, cultural heritage, and the future of life in the alpine region.

## **HELP US!**

We kindly ask for your support:

- Use our waste separation facilities
- Travel by public transport or
- Form carpool when travelling to and from our events
- Use our paper guides during your visit and return them afterwards if you no longer need them