



Past - Present - Future



# FINALISATION OF REGIONAL ACTION PLANS

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**Final Action Plan on the topic “Fostering creativity and innovation in the environment of industry and its remains”**

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**11 2018**



T4.6.2



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PP3, city of Leoben



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## 1. Abstract

Industrial cultural and industrial tourism are chances for old industrial and mining regions to promote their heritage as well as living industry. Benefits can be gained by shaping the regions' image and regional identity but also by new approaches fostering creativity and creative industries in the environment of industry and its remains. The "Styrian Iron Route" houses spectacular heritage remains such as "Erzberg" and the blast furnace museum Radwerk IV. In addition the museum association Styrian Iron Route collects and presents the regions' heritage in 13 museums starting with the museum centre in Leoben. Living industry and mining is present at the Erzberg and at successful industrial companies and plants such as voestalpine in Leoben. These living industrial sites (industrial "skyline", industrial city quarters etc.) shape the visual appearance of the region and are "ambassadors" for the region's branding. In addition abandoned industrial sites (vacancies) can be used as an inspiring creative environment for creative industries or culture. To use the chances for improving the industrial "appearance" of the region and reviving old-industrial places, a local action plan has been worked out by a regional focus group. It lists short-term actions which are relatively easy to implement as well as long-term actions looking beyond InduCult lifetime.

## 2. Project Context

The Central Europe Project InduCult2.0 addresses Central European regions mono-focused on industrial production ([www.inducult.eu](http://www.inducult.eu)). Through InduCult regions utilise their tangible and intangible cultural assets of their industrial past, present and future in a synergetic way for positioning their regions as attractive places for working, living and recreation. Together with local stakeholders, they rediscover and develop the positive elements of industrial communities. Specifically, the partnership intends to:

- promote and establish the idea of Industrial Culture in Central Europe;
- strengthen the distinct culture of industrial regions and utilise it as location factor;
- empower industrial regions by re-activating their pioneer spirit.

Involved are eight representative regions from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia and Poland. They are supported by two scientific partners from Germany and Austria.

Each of the regions has prepared an "argumentation papers" on their specific industrial culture and its benefits. This provides the basic frame for developing and implementing actions in the field of Industrial Culture and therefor for promotion of a Central-European (respectively European) Industrial Culture.

Actions are to be developed by the regions in three fields: Actions on ...

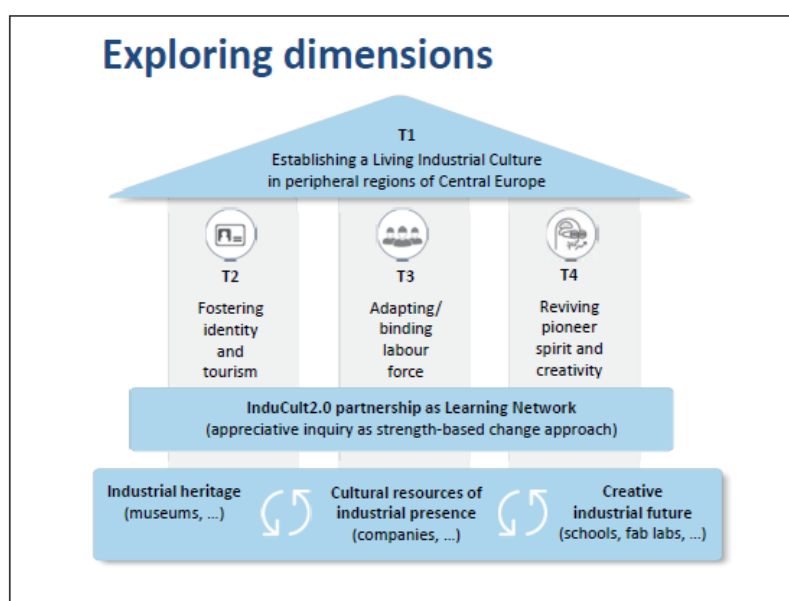
... cultural measures for fostering regional identity (T2)

... cultural initiatives influencing industrial labour market and company commitment (T3)  
... cultural measures promoting creativity and pioneer spirit (T4).

### 3. Introduction & objectives

Industrial Culture (IC) is a young member of the European culture family. Its roots can be found in many European regions, which 200 years ago were not only cradles of industrialisation, but have been up to now sites of industrial production. A typical representative is the region “Styrian Iron Route” and the adjoining Mur-Mürz-valley. Over the centuries the hegemony of industrial production and mining has created a specific cultural climate, which - apart from visible monuments and artefacts - can be experienced in specific values, traditions, skills and a distinctive way of living. Nowadays the region is one of the most important industrial regions in Austria, with the city of Leoben and the Styrian Iron route - with the global steel player voestalpine, the mining university and the ore mine “Erzberg” (where according to the legend, ore has been extracted for more than 1300 years) - in its centre.

Local players and stakeholders are not always aware of the strengths and potentials of their existing industrial culture. In an innovative way of interpreting industrial culture and beyond restricting it to cultural heritage, it can be linked with recent developments; can be used as a location and image factor and for building a strong regional identity. To bring these potentials into mind and form a broad regional awareness, an argumentation paper was developed by a regional focus group to sort out key arguments which are relevant for different groups of stakeholders (industry, politics, cultural actors, schools and youth etc.). Based on this argumentation paper actions for the three “pillars” (T2-T4) of Industrial Culture are to be developed and implemented in the region.



The three local action plans in the fields of intervention show a strategic approach of how to proceed to a living culture in the region.

This action plan deals with the topic “Fostering creativity and innovation in the environment of industry and its remains” (T4). It strives to foster creative economies and innovative spirit in the challenging old-industrial environments of the Styrian Iron Route. It focuses on utilizing the attractive assets of old-industrial sites for establishing creative and cultural centres and to change the appearance of industrial quarters.

## 4. Applied Approach

In a design thinking process (which is based on the method of appreciative inquiry) the regional focus group developed a catalogue of actions for each of the three InduCult work packages in 2017. Some were selected for implementation within the project period until 2019; other concepts require long-term planning. Subsequently, the focus group met again in November 2018 to discuss the lessons learned from the pilot tests in the region and beyond to provide input to the final regional action plan.

The design thinking workshops were coordinated by Cities Next, a civic innovation company from Vienna, which led through the design thinking process with 15 stakeholders who accompanied the 4 workshop slots and the concept creation. The stakeholder group consisted of members of the city government, the tourism board, local universities and schools, industry, museums, regional organizations and associations and creative artists. The 4 phases of the design thinking workshop based on the model of appreciative inquiry led the participants through a discovery phase of discussing and evaluating the resources, expertise and talents of the region, the dream phase in which ideas were developed and visions articulated, a design phase where concepts were prototyped and a destiny phase which guided the concepts through a business canvas model to evaluate the chances and risks, the effectiveness and efficiency of the concepts.

The following action points were selected for InduCult2.0 Topic 4 - “Fostering creativity and innovation in the environment of industry and its remains”.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Short-term actions

#### 5.1.1 Regional facelifts

A temporarily “facelift” measure in the industrial quarters of Porubsky/Leitendorf in Leoben has been carried in autumn 2018 with means of culture (see deliverable report

4.3.4). It was based on large-scale pictures on the outside and will continue to stay the whole next year 2019.



## 5.2 Middle and long-term actions

### 5.1.2 Continuation of regional facelifts

Several ideas for regional facelifts were developed by the focus group, which include light projections, graffiti, big scale photos/paintings/posters etc.

At the moment there is no budget directly available to continue the facelift-work in 2019. However, the city of Leoben knows about the possibilities and will get back to the ideas when there is a certain “demand”, respectively when there are other city development measures, where the facelift concept could fit in.

Responsible: City of Leoben

Costs: whole cost range possible

#### 5.2.1 Culture space at Porubskyhalle

A “low-cost” measure in form of a container solution to use the abandoned factory building “Porubskyhalle” has been developed in form of a concept. Such a multifunctional container solution could be used as a stage as well as exhibition space and shall be built on-site at this location.

Costs: 50.000 Euro (funds still have to be ensured)

Responsible: City of Leoben

Time of realisation: depending on funding

### 5.2.2 Storytelling on industrial sites

Industrial infrastructures can be viewed as an irritant element in the rural landscape. The focus group's participants were divided in their opinions on how to 'beautify' industrial buildings or to accept their architectural functionality and rather develop a visual identity for each town throughout the region.

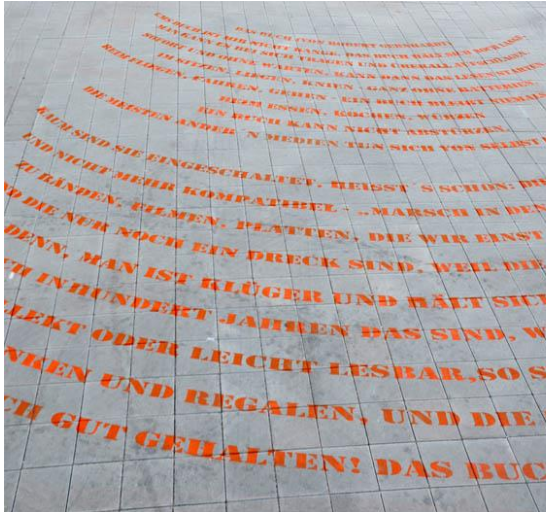
Based on the repeated voices to bring out the stories of local heroes who built the identity and success of region, it was decided to create multi-sensory storytelling events based on interviews with these local heroes. The memories, values and messages would be projected or in any other artistic form visually, acoustically and emotionally represented on places and spaces throughout the region; either on industrial sites or onto key landmarks. These artistic interventions are based on interviews carried out with local heroes (= scientists, entrepreneurs, creative artists, everyday-heroes).

Goal is to accentuate industrial buildings as part of the appearance of the city/town by reframing its negative visual appearance and to define visual identities of the towns throughout the region Steirische Eisenstrasse. The main artistic elements will focus on the faces of people and their stories told in various visual but also multi-sensory ways.



*The Crown Fountain in Chicago portrays 1000 Chicago citizens and has managed to build local pride amongst inhabitants over the many years since its inauguration in 2004. The oversized faces from street artist and photographer JR have received local and worldwide recognition, as they present locals and portray their local cultures, attitudes and issues.*





*Different forms and materials presenting societal messages, poetry and the outcry from a generation that requires to be heard.*

These figures act as inspiration for artistic interventions introducing the local heroes of the region Steirische Eisenstrasse, their lives' highlights, their memories, their values and their regional pride.

Costs: not known yet, further refinery of project idea necessary

Responsible: City of Leoben

Time of realisation: depending on funding

## 6. Conclusion, outlook and sustainability

By the end of 2018 the regional focus group on Industrial Culture has worked out and provided input for a regional action plan on the topic of "Fostering creativity and innovation in the environment of industry and its remains". It includes both short-term activities and activities beyond 2019. Creating a new identity, which is fuelled by the participation and engagement of citizens, requires frequent or long-term measures. That also requires the financial and educational resources to allow crucial steps towards transformation of the identity and image of cities and towns along the Steirische Eisenstrasse. Hopefully the city of Leoben will be able to provide such resources to continue the process of image shaping also in the field of the city's exterior appearance