

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF COWORKING CENTRE

Regional Test Case Documentation

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PP4, Microregion Sokolov - East



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Abstract

Can you imagine that you will have a dream job where you will use your hobbies? We want to support people who are courageous and going to their dreams in the new coworking centre. But we are at the real beginning because we have only ideas how to create the coworking centre and we tried to describe conditions for quick realization of the project. This test case was focused on the textual preparation of a coworking centre in the new building against the Grange Bernard near Sokolov. The main aim is creation of a place which will support the use of a talent, artistic aptitudes or creativity in the livelihood.

1. Introduction

The Karlovy Vary Region is one of three structurally affected regions in the Czech Republic which was strongly focused on the industry. The region needs quick restructuring which will improve an unfavorable statistic as lower proportion of graduated people in high schools or universities, low salaries, low numbers of innovation, brain drain and low Gross Domestic Product. The CCI is a great potential for our region because it is a field with high added value which could improve competitiveness of the region among other Czech regions. The development of the CCI could contribute to economic and social growth. Creativity and artistic talent are not supported in the region, so it is important to create centres where people could meet with others, develop their talent and knowledge of business. This place could be the co-working centre in the Grange Bernard.

2. Objective

This test case was really important as the textual preparation of the new coworking centre. We realized the need for creation of coworking space in Karlovy Vary Region from the beginning of the InduCCI project but we didn't know where it could be placed and what could be its main focus (topic). We decided to prepare the space based on regional discussions. We knew that we need to know the opinions of regional stakeholders for the creation of a place because it will fit better to people who work in CCI. It was a novel situation because no one asked CCI stakeholders for their ideas before.

Who is the target group? These are the people who need education in business and creative thinking or cooperation with others. These people will come to the new centre, educate themselves and develop their creativity. They will create their own business which will use their potential and talent. The test case will support the creation of the coworking centre in the future, which will contain a coworking room, leisure room, meeting room, educational centre, 8 workshops rooms and exhibition space. The whole space will be available for every participant of the centre.

3. Applied approach

We prepared the proposal for the new co-working centre with respect to regional conditions. We found out that CCI really needs institutional support thanks to the Analysis of Regional CCI Policy which was created within the project InduCCI. It was the first analysis with the topic CCI which searched its potential for the Karlovy Vary Region. But the first idea to create the co-working centre originated much earlier. We realized the need for the support of a creative business thanks to the previous project SHIFT-X which was focused on improvement of innovation capacities and using of cultural and industrial heritage.

The first step which we did was creation of a textual document called Preparatory Analysis of a Co-working Space in the Area of Microregion Sokolov-East in August 2020 where we decided about a final location where we will create the centre. We decided for Grange Bernard (a new building that will be created against the current Grange Bernard). The second step was creation of the feasibility study which will be a background for creation of the new building. The feasibility study was prepared based on two online discussion meetings with regional stakeholders. The next step will be creation of the new building and the co-working centre inside. We are planning to organize some preparatory activities in the building of the current Grange Bernard. We used the experience from the second partnership meeting in Linz for writing textual documents. We were visitors to the Tobacco Factory where we saw a co-working space, Fab Lab and start-up rooms. It was a great inspiration for our own co-working centre.

We were influenced by the epidemic situation and we had to organize only online meetings with stakeholders. But we organized meetings with the aim to be like face-to-face meetings. There we used experience from the web tool www.padlet.com which was introduced at the third partnership meeting. “Padlet” is the online board where you can add contributions from more participants in one moment.

4. Results

We started the test case with the preparatory analysis where we analysed regional CCI fields in the area near Sokolov with the aim to determine the main focus (topic) of the future coworking centre. We found out that traditional crafts are historically very well supported and there is opportunity to develop them in cooperation with other CCI fields. From this reason, coworking centre will have 8 workshop rooms with craft tools and modern technologies and coworking office where could cooperate for example designers with joiners, blacksmiths etc. With this analytical part we also searched a possible space where could be placed the coworking centre.

The information which we received with the feasibility study was prepared with the help of discussions with regional stakeholders. We found out that regional stakeholders have an interest in building a new co-working centre. The feasibility study is very important as a starting point for preparation of the new coworking centre in the Grange Bernard. We determined the purpose of the centre and we described the needed budget, rooms, employees, equipment etc. We consulted this proposal with regional stakeholders because we wanted to fulfill their expectations for the new centre. Thanks to the meetings with regional stakeholders, we found out that we do not have enough institutional support for real workers in CCI in the region. The leadership of Karlovy Vary Region created an Innovation Platform for CCI where we are meeting with regional stakeholders, but real support of a target group isn't still available.

The method of the test case was prepared in a good way. We found out that it is very important to communicate the intention for creation of the co-working centre with CCI stakeholders.

5. Goal Achievement and Lessons Learned

We achieved all our goals which we had in the beginning. The main goal was preparation of the coworking centre with help of regional stakeholders. We organized two discussion online meetings with stakeholders. Because of the epidemiological situation, we had to organize online meetings instead of face to face meetings but it was not really different because we set up meetings to be as much as possible similar to face-to-face meetings. The preparation of the coworking centre was achieved by preparatory analysis and feasibility study. This type of preparation fulfilled our expectation because it was sufficient for detection of the main focus of the centre and its particular rooms. It will be easier to continue with building of the co-working centre in the future because of this preparation.

We learned that it is very needed to speak with regional stakeholders when you are planning activities connected with CCI. Without their opinions you can not plan activities for the target group which will really fit their needs.

6. Outlook, Sustainability and Transferability

We will continue with our effort with the aim to create the new coworking centre as soon as possible. The creation of the centre will depend on the support of the leadership of the Karlovy Vary Region. We discussed the proposal for the coworking centre with the leadership of the region in meetings of Innovation Platform for CCI. This platform was created with the aim to connect regional CCI stakeholders. The Karlovy Vary Region will create a new “4K Office” which will also help with our future initiative. This 4K Office will support regional CCI initiatives in their activities (advice, financial support etc.). Our test case could be used in other Czech regions which have not so much developed CCI as an example of good practice. Thanks to our activity you can see how many steps must be done before you will create the coworking centre and what activities could be included.

We have a very good background for the creation of the co-working centre now. Another step will be creation of the Project Documentation for the New Building (Plans) in 2022. The co-working centre could be built in 2023. We are planning to use the Just Transition Fund which is a great opportunity for our region to start the restructuring. We are planning to organize preparatory steps in the building of the current Grange Bernard. Here may arise the support educational centre for CCI (courses: management, marketing, crafts or course called The Journey for Knowledge of CCI which was produced within InduCCI).

If it will be all as we planned, we will build the new coworking centre in the future and then we can contribute to the smooth restructuring of Karlovy Vary Region, which will be more focused on creative fields. We don't forget that regional industry is still important and we will create new networks between industry and creative minded people with the aim to support innovations.

7. Annexes

Annex 1 Preparatory Analysis of a Co-working Space in the Area of Microregion Sokolov-East

Annex 2 Feasibility Study for Co-working Centre in Czech language