



Just Transition Platform – Policy approach:

REGIONAL OBSERVATORY OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS (ROPT)

Poland, Silesia

This document is part of a series presenting information and lessons learned on policy approaches at national, regional or local level supporting a just transition to a climate-neutral economy. The Just Transition Platform (JTP) assists EU Member States and regions to unlock the support in this transition. Visit the JTP website: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform_en

Total budget (in €):

PLN 1 606 855, EUR 349 001

Region:

Silesia

Sector:

Several sectors

Financing conditions (co-financing rate in %):

~93 %

Sources of funding:**EU funding:**

European Regional Development Fund (2014–2020): PLN 1 497 464, EUR 325 187

National funding:

n/a

Regional funding:

n/a

Duration:

19 months, April 2022–October 2023

Responsible Managing Authority:

Silesian Voivodeship

Summary

The Regional Observatory of the Transition Process (ROPT) is designed to support and improve the management of the region's socio-economic transformation process. Its main purpose is collecting and disseminating knowledge about the socio-economic processes taking place in the region, effective transformation activities and tools, and innovative technologies supporting the process of diversification towards a green digital economy. Furthermore, the ROPT aims to promote professional reorientation in

the region by initiating cooperation between local partners from areas undergoing the transition, research and development institutes, and business entities. In addition, it seeks to increase the engagement of regional stakeholders and ensure a smooth implementation of the Just Transition Fund (JTF). By facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing, the ROPT is playing a critical role in supporting the region's transition towards a sustainable and resilient economy.

Type of policy measure/activities:

The project implementation is divided in three modules: research, participation, implementation. As part of the research module, ZZG and GIG will study several topics, including the expectations of employees of mines and mining-related companies towards the transition, the visions and plans of the main stakeholders towards the challenges of the region's decarbonisation, the role of trade unions, the impact of the closure of mining plants on the local labour market, and predicting future skills and the potential of entrepreneurs. Under the participatory module, the Silesian Voivodeship and GIPH will organise a series of workshops for local communities and entrepreneurs, seminars in the sub-regions and a final conference. Finally, the implementation module foresees the development of a stakeholder database in the Silesian Voivodeship, the monitoring of just transition related activities and projects ongoing in the area, and the organisation of study visits to other coal regions.

Goals and approach:

The main goals of this policy approach are the following:

- support the management of the socio-economic transformation process in the Silesian Voivodeship;
- collecting and disseminating knowledge about the socio-economic processes taking place in the region, effective transformation measures and tools, innovative technologies supporting the diversification process towards a green, digital economy;
- promoting frameworks for professional reorientation in the area by initiating cooperation of local partners and R&D units with business entities;
- identifying and engaging the local stakeholders in the transition process.

Important outputs, results or achievements:

The project has already achieved significant results. The research module has made substantial progress, with all eight study reports expected to be finalised by the end of July. The participatory module has also seen success, with most of the tasks now completed. Around 300 people overall participated in the eight local economic development workshops, aiming at developing socio-economic solutions and identifying the role of local development. Additionally, around 200 people participated in the series of six seminars held in mining sub-regions, initiating an exchange of knowledge on the socio-economic processes taking place locally. Furthermore, three

out of six workshops dedicated to entrepreneurs, inventors, and technology pioneers have been organised on topics of energy, green economy and ICT. For the implementation module, the stakeholder database has been created and is continually being updated. Moreover, a list of 20 strategic projects which will receive the JTF has been drafted. This measure aims to oversee their activities and monitor their progress. Two study visits are planned for the summer of 2023, the first to Dolnośląskie region and the second to Wielkopolskie region and Łódzkie region.

Scalability¹ and transferability²:

The concept of a Regional Observatory is not new, rather it was inspired by similar projects, making it inherently transferable. Although every region has distinctive and specific challenges, and different level of engagement within the JTF, the Observatory can serve as an example, e.g. for fostering collaboration with stakeholders, or replicating research topics. Additionally, most of the tools outlined in the three modules are flexible and can be scaled up. However, this approach has already been demonstrated on a large scale, as Silesia is the largest coal region in the EU, and it has been proven successful.

¹ Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.

² Transferability entails that a policy approach can be applicable to a similar setting and replicated.

Key success factors and lessons learnt:

One of the key success factors of this project was the establishment of a strong cooperation among the consortium partners, which are also involved in different just transition related activities outside the project. Secondly, there has been a high level of participation in the various activities organised, such as seminars and workshops, which has facilitated the sharing of knowledge and best practices. These sessions have also sparked inspiring discussions on how different stakeholders can help each other and cooperate in the future. Finally, the Observatory has provided small municipalities with a contact point, making them realise that they are not alone in this process, thereby increasing their confidence in the transition. Overall, the project has tried to convey the message that the just transition is not only about the closure of coal mines, but also about the economic diversification, the workers, and the broader challenges for communities and municipalities, including finding a new identity after the coal phase-out.

Key challenges:

The transition process is one of the biggest challenges for the region of Silesia given the scale of the transition and the impact of the coal phase-out on the local communities. The Regional Observatory aims to become a flagship project of the regional policy by raising public awareness and highlighting the importance of the planned just transition. To do so, it has to however secure continuous financial support to carry on with its activities which are currently being financed through the regional operational programme.

Central framework conditions³:

Given that Silesia is one of the largest EU coal regions and the largest beneficiary of the JTF, there is a pressing need for coordination and collaboration among various projects and initiatives. To achieve this, ongoing support is required from the government and the managing authority.

Moreover, bringing actors together to discuss and collaborate towards the shared goal of a just transition is crucial. This requires the active participation of various stakeholders, including local communities, industry representatives, civil society organisations, and policymakers. By fostering collaboration and dialogue, it becomes possible to develop a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by the transition process and exploit synergies among existing projects and initiatives in the region.

Outlook:

As the first pilot project is coming to an end, there are plans underway to launch the next two editions of the project, namely 'Regional observatory of the transition process ROTP 2.0 / 3.0'. These editions will extend the scope of the pilot project and broaden the number of partners involved, with a foreseen allocation of approximately EUR 5 million within the JTF. The second part will run from 2024 to 2026, followed by the third part from 2026 to 2029. An additional module will be introduced, which will focus on preparing the local transition strategies and the call for proposals for projects under the JTF. The ultimate goal is to design and implement more advanced, targeted, and efficient projects.

³ Framework conditions encompass the institutional, informational and socio-economic factors that determine a given environment (contextual information), e.g. market conditions, access to finance, tax regulation, infrastructure and support.

Partners & contacts:

Project leader: Silesian Voivodeship

Partners:

- The Central Mining Institute (GIG) – scientific community;
- Mining Chamber of Industry and Commerce (GIPH) – organisations of employers;
- The Trade Union of Miners in Poland (ZZG) – employee organisations.

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Website:

<https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/content/rusza-regionalne-observatorium-procesu-transformacji-ropt?t=Sprawiedliwa-transformacja>

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