



Just Transition Platform – Project fiche:

REVITALISATION AND ACCESS TO THE POST-INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE OF UPPER SILESIA

Poland, Silesian Voivodeship

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

Member State:

Poland

Region:

Silesian Voivodeship

Sector:

Culture and Tourism

Total project budget (€):¹

~31 100 000 (PLN 130 206 315.54)

Sources of funding (in €):**EU Funding:**

~18 550 000 (PLN 77 651 372.92) (European Regional Development Fund (2014-2020))

National & Regional funding:

~12 550 000 (PLN 52 554 942.62)

Project duration (in months):

84 months (October 2016 – September 2023)

Responsible managing authority / agency / company:

City of Zabrze / City of Chorzów

Summary²

The 'Revitalisation and Access to the Post-Industrial Heritage of Upper Silesia' project, co-financed under the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014-2020, focuses on the protection and development of cultural resources. The project includes the reconstruction and extension of the Coal Mining Museum and the development of the Queen Louise Adit complex in Zabrze as well as the redevelopment and revitalisation of the former Royal Steelworks power plant hall building, together with the shaft "Hutniczy" shaft headroom for the needs of the Museum of Metallurgy in Chorzów.

The main goal is to make the post-industrial cultural heritage of Upper Silesia accessible, protect it, and offer a unique cultural and educational

experience. Specific objectives encompass improving monument conditions, enhancing urban spaces, expanding cultural and educational activities, providing tourist facilities, and promoting cultural participation. The project also aims to eliminate barriers for disabled and excluded individuals and improve conditions for scientific and research activities while building an effective network.

The project's integrated nature combines the revitalisation of post-industrial infrastructure in two cities, Zabrze and Chorzów, creating a new tourist brand that promotes innovation, tradition, and modernity, benefiting the entire region both culturally and economically.

1 All budgetary information are sourced from: [Rewitalizacja i udostępnienie poprzemysłowego Dziedzictwa Górnego Śląska - Muzeum Górnictwa Węglowego w Zabrzu 2023 \(muzeumgornictwa.pl\)](#). The average exchange rate for the year 2014 (PLN 4.1855 to EUR 1) was used to convert the sums to EUR.

2 See: [Rewitalizacja i udostępnienie poprzemysłowego Dziedzictwa Górnego Śląska - Muzeum Górnictwa Węglowego w Zabrzu 2023 \(muzeumgornictwa.pl\)](#)

Type of activities:

The project undertook many different types of activities, which can be summarised as follows:

1. **Redevelopment and Revitalisation:** Extensive construction and renovation works were undertaken to adapt industrial spaces for cultural and educational purposes. This included the repurposing of old factories and mining shafts.
2. **Preservation and Restoration:** The project aims to conserve and restore large-scale exhibits and historic mining machinery, thereby creating a new purpose for them. This type of activity plays an important role in conserving and enriching the industrial heritage and boosting cultural and tourist activities.
3. **Integrated Approach:** The project combines efforts between Zabrze and Chorzów, creating a synergy between cultural institutions. This collaboration leads to a new tourist brand that promotes the region as a place of innovation, tradition, and modernity, benefiting the local economy and cultural landscape.

Goals and approach:

Combining the potential of two unique cultural institutions will enable the development of a new tourist brand, promoting the whole region as a place of innovation, combining traditions with modernity and an attractive tourist destination, both for visitors from Poland and abroad. The common offer, complementary scopes, completely new groups of recipients, all of this will positively affect the development of not only the institutions directly involved in the project, but also the entire voivodship, contributing to the improvement of its image and attractiveness – generating positive socio-economic effects.

Important outputs, results or achievements:

The project successfully preserved and revitalised key industrial sites, such as the Royal Steelworks power plant hall and the 'Hutniczy' shaft headroom in the Chorzów Museum of Metallurgy.

The project also expanded cultural and educational opportunities, providing an improved quality of service to visitors through the creation of permanent and temporary exhibition spaces, notably in the Queen Louise Adit in the Coal Mining Museum of Zabrze.

Efforts to remove barriers for disabled and excluded individuals have made culture more accessible to a wider audience at both sites.

By integrating revitalisation efforts across Zabrze and Chorzów, the project established a unique cultural brand, promoting the region as a hub for innovation, tradition, and modernity.

Scalability³ and transferability⁴:

The scalability and transferability of the industrial heritage revitalisation project to other EU regions present intricate challenges and opportunities. The project's unique key resources, such as post-mining corridors and machinery, demand a meticulous analysis of the availability of land with mining area characteristics for successful replication. The viability of transferring the actions taken hinges on whether the selected area possesses distinctive features worthy of revitalisation.

Considering the project as an investment in cultural heritage and post-industrial tourism, its scaling faces complexities due to its uncommon and unparalleled nature. The geographical and industrial potential of other regions must align with the specific resources found in the original area, influencing the adaptation of the project's scaling to the fields of the economy that are undergoing phase-out. Careful analysis becomes the linchpin for decision-making, guiding the endeavour to replicate this innovative project in a manner that respects the unique characteristics and industrial heritage of each prospective region within the EU.

³ Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.

⁴ Transferability entails that a policy approach can be applicable to a similar setting and replicated.

Tools for supporting economic diversification and reskilling/upskilling via projects:

- Capitalising on unique regional strengths for innovation
- Capitalising on regional cultural heritage to facilitate the transition away from the industrial past.

Key success factors and lessons learnt:

The success of revitalising industrial heritage in Upper Silesia hinges on several key factors. First, the managing authorities of the city of Zabrze highlighted the possession of distinctive resources for revitalisation that are challenging to replicate as a crucial advantage. These unique features help set the project apart. Additionally, a strategic approach to financing is paramount. The project's success depends on adeptly combining various funding sources, ensuring a steady cash flow, and maintaining financial liquidity. This financial resilience not only safeguards against uncertainties but also fosters the project's resilience in the face of economic challenges.

Furthermore, a pivotal success factor involves navigating the closure of the mining industry in the region. Effectively managing this transition is essential for the revitalisation efforts, as it not only addresses historical challenges but also paves the way for the region's transformation. By proactively addressing these key success factors, the revitalisation project can establish a solid foundation for the preservation and celebration of Upper Silesia's industrial heritage, contributing to its cultural significance and economic vitality.

Key challenges:

Key challenges associated with the project concern the assessment of the feasibility of the site. Before refurbishing can take place, technicians and specialists need to ascertain that the present infrastructure or mine does not pose a danger to the public should it be repurposed. For example, this means investigating the geological characteristics of the site in the case of a mine. This work can be quite resource-intensive and expensive and requires specialised personnel, which translates to high costs to the managing authorities.



Central framework conditions⁵:

Silesia is located in southwestern Poland, bordering with Slovakia and Czechia. The Silesian Region is the most industrialised in Poland. Almost 12.4 % of the Polish gross domestic product (GDP) is being generated here which ranks the region in the second position within the country. The Silesian Region is famous for its well-developed automotive, energy, metallurgical and mining industries as well as food, electromechanical and IT industries. A major industrial

and cultural centre, Zabrze is also one of Poland's oldest mining settlements. It was economically dependent upon the coal and coke industry, metalworks, chemical plants, and plants producing electrical power. In that context, this project aims to boost the culture and tourism sector while highlighting the industrial past of the town and region that was brought about.

Outlook:

The ongoing efforts to revitalise post-industrial and post-mining areas reflect a commitment to conserving cultural heritage. For example, Queen Louise Adit's revitalisation has been a pivotal step for the city of Zabrze in this direction.

The immediate future involves sustaining and promoting the achieved results, with a key emphasis on increasing tourist traffic from both domestic and foreign visitors. The preservation and promotion of cultural heritage remain integral to this phase,

ensuring the longevity of the project's impact. Other, more innovative measures are also being considered. For example, the city of Zabrze is currently exploring new opportunities for revitalisation. This forward-looking approach includes the development of additional recreational areas, reinforcing the city's identity as a hub for post-industrial tourism.

⁵ 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.

Project partners:

- City of Zabrze
- City of Chorzów
- Silesian Voivodeship
- Museum of Metallurgy in Chorzów
- Museum of Coal Mining of Zabrze

Website / social media:

<https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/projects/Q86188>

Sources:

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- Museum of Coal Mining in Zabrze: Revitalisation and access to the post-industrial heritage of Upper Silesia project. Available at: <https://muzeumgornictwa.pl/projekty/projekty-2/rewitalizacja-i-udostepnienie-poprzemyslowego-dziedzictwa-gornego-slaska>
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