

## **Project Idea 3th Interreg Call – Doughnut Economy**

### **Project idea: Doughnut Economics as compass and practical tool for the transformation of industry regions, applied to hydrogen economy and circular economy**

#### **Background:**

The primary objective of this project is to adopt a more integrative approach towards the transformation of industrial city regions using Doughnut Economics. This new concept offers a compass to consider social and environmental aspects of transformation, on the local/regional and the global scale. The project focusses on circular economy and hydrogen economy.

#### **Challenges:**

Industrial regions have a relatively big environmental footprint, and must undergo a deep economic transformation in order to respect the planetary boundaries and align with national and EU sustainability goals. At the same time they face social and financial pressures to make the transformation just, fair, and affordable. Big investments are needed, putting pressure on public finances, and transformation leads to volatility on regional labor markets with significant impacts on the working population. This multi-faceted transformation asks for an integrative approach that considers social and environmental aspects simultaneously, as well as taking local/regional and global impacts into account.

The challenge for city regions is to avoid a silo-based fragmented approach, and take an integrative perspective in industrial transformation that takes all these aspects into account simultaneously. This project seeks to apply Doughnut Economics in industrial city regions as conceptual and practical instrument to do this. The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries envisions a world in which people and planet can thrive in balance – in other words, it offers a compass for guiding 21st century prosperity. In the last few years, the general concept of Doughnut Economics has been translated into a varied set of practical tools that can be applied in cities and regions.

With the largest steel plant and hinterland harbour of Europe, Duisburg sits at the heart of these challenges and at the same time has the potential of becoming a leading city for green and circular industry in Europe.

#### **The Project aims to:**

- Exchange experiences and learnings among the partner city regions on how to organise the economic transformation in an integrated way
- Apply Doughnut Economics to shed new light on the economic transformation and its governance in industrial city regions
- Discover, design and test new effective governance approaches, derived from Doughnut Economics, that avoid silos & fragmentation
- The project will focus on two key (and related) topics: the circular economy and the transformation to a hydrogen-powered industry.



### Target Regions:

The project will target industrial city regions located within various EU member states, with a focus on regions where significant steel production activities are concentrated like in the Ruhr-Region. Specific regions/countries to be included will be determined based on factors such as production volumes, industrial infrastructure, and policy relevance.

### Elements of the project:

Capacity building: learning to analyse & assess the regional economic transformation applying Doughnut Economics and its tools; Train-the-trainers to teach leaders to engage with regional stakeholders and apply this.

Exchanges: Mutual visits to understand the transformation challenges and learn from each other

Experimentation: Local experiments –involving all relevant stakeholders- to concretely apply Doughnut Economics tools for an integrative approach

Policy learning: share the lessons from the local experiments within the consortium

## Some background on Doughnut Economics

The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries envisions a world in which people and planet can thrive in balance – in other words, it offers a compass for guiding 21st century prosperity, as shown in figure 1.

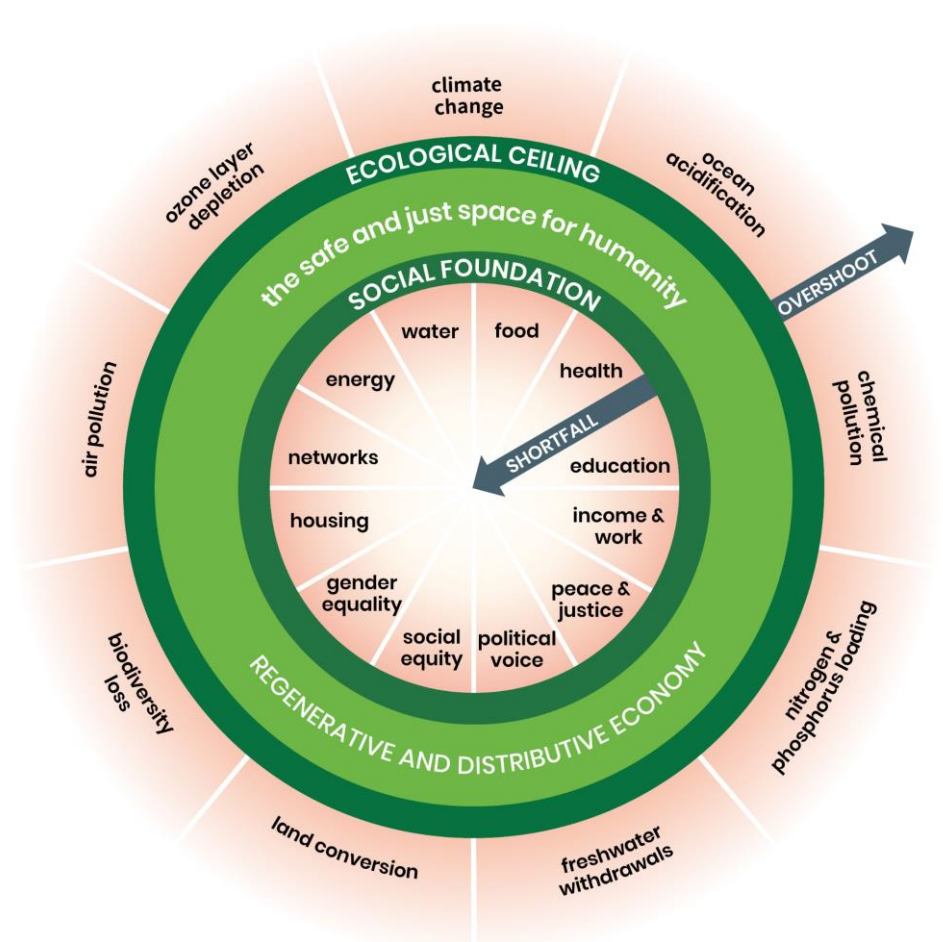


Figure 1 The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries (Raworth, 2017).

The Doughnut's **social foundation**, which is derived from the social priorities in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, sets out the minimum standard of living to which every human being has a claim. No one should be left in the hole in the middle of the Doughnut, falling short on the essentials of life, ranging from food and water to gender equality and having political voice. The Doughnut's **ecological ceiling** comprises nine planetary boundaries, drawn up by Earth-system scientists in order to identify Earth's critical life-supporting systems and define the global limits of pressure that these systems can safely endure. Humanity must live within these ecological boundaries if we are to preserve a stable climate, fertile soils, healthy oceans, a protective ozone layer, ample freshwater, and abundant biodiversity of all other living beings on Earth. Between the social foundation and the ecological ceiling lies a doughnut-shaped space in which it is possible to meet the needs of all people within the means of the living planet – an ecologically safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive. However, if humanity's goal is to get into the Doughnut, the challenge is that we are currently far from doing so.

