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Additional information about the INTERREG project idea:

Title: *Informed strategies towards Triple Transformation of Coal Mining cultures. Supporting sustainable tourism and job growth*

by the [Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze](#), Poland

We are undergoing dynamically changing context of the modern world, bringing several challenges, and the Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze is willing to focus on local ecosystem by preserving and promoting interesting local heritage (post-industrial coal mining culture) and it aims to diversify and reinforce regional Just Transition policies. We aim at equipping local & regional policy actors with the awareness of benefits deriving from financial instruments like micro-granting (cascading grants), enabling to activate civil society projects, that falls both: under the heritage and local traditions preservation and the entrepreneurship and creative sector job growth. Some relevant examples, for coherence and shared lessons, will be taken from the other funded projects (by Creative Europe or Horizon Europe EU programmes), which have successfully delivered best practices in financial mechanisms supporting local creative ecosystems. With a commitment to **sustainable tourism**, the museum is willing to foster ecological awareness and community engagement, aligning with the region's transition towards a zero-emission economy. This involves educational programs, especially for youth, and integrating green practices into museum services and facilities, promoting both economic growth and environmental stewardship. The museum leads efforts to safeguard mining brass bands and the cult of Saint Barbara, vital elements of regional identity. While heterotopies stand for understanding of those post-industrial heritage sites as alternative spaces with potentials, own cultural, historical, and economic significance. And the digitization and VR solutions preserve tangible and intangible heritage.

Policy instruments addressed:

It is highly important in our project to give a priority towards the reinforcement of regional and local policies encircled around Just Transition and all related implications, that impact especially the social aspect (unemployment, discontinuity of tradition etc.) and the local economy following the net-zero emission standards, is entirely changing. Project aims to **diversify and reinforce regional Just Transition policies**, which are tackling but at the same time underprioritizing culture. We cooperate with the Marshall Office of Silesian Voivodship as part of the Program Council and in general as part of the activities Coal Mining Museum. For us it is crucial to amend the existing policy documents concerning the Just Transition, to present the perspective of Triple Transformation where especially cultural plays more significant role in securing well-being of local inhabitants, who are undergoing a very significant and immense change happening in this decade (after hundreds of years of coal mining, this sector is closing due to climate change implications, Green Deal, and net-zero emissions goals). It is crucial to present within the consortium the best and most efficient practices on how to 'close the gap' between the local policy makers and cultural professionals, that is causing some difficulties in mutual understanding and most likely in not involving cultural agenda into policy documents (to more significant extend).



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Sustainable tourism:

With a commitment to sustainable tourism, we will be addressing the needs of Triple Transformation in the activities of local partners, deeply rooted in the culture of the place. Activities will be based on promoting both economic growth and environmental stewardship, securing the intangible local cultural (like safeguarding mining brass bands and the cult of Saint Barbara, vital elements of regional identity), while involving educational programs, especially for youth. The strategies for a tailor-made sustainable tourism, which serves as the baseline, would be collected, shared and co-designed – to deliver more coherent offer, characterizing 21st touristic offer for a wide range of target groups. Project, given the international format, may much better secure the data collection activities, exchanges on touristic trends & needs – to answer those by the future activities. The project is highly important locally, in the region of Silesia region, Poland where the Coal Mining Museum is located. The reasons behind are of being capable of involving Silesian Marshall Office (policy actor) and showing the path to follow for the other local entities. The regional Just Transition policies need to be improved and more culturally oriented, which will also benefit the whole region for the development of sustainable tourism solutions. That would lead to job creation, better visibility, and a more coherent approach to Just Transition, which must be more anchored locally.

Key features of the project decoded:

Triple Transformation: This refers to three simultaneous or sequential transformations happening within the targeted areas. These include shifts away from reliance on carbon-based industries, changes in economic structures, and transitions toward more sustainable practices.

Just Transition Areas: These are regions that are undergoing or are expected to undergo substantial economic and social changes due to shifts away from carbon-intensive industries. The concept of a "just transition" emphasizes ensuring that these changes are fair and equitable for all stakeholders, particularly workers and communities that are at highest risk of being severely affected by the transition.

Post-Carbon Futures: This indicates a focus on envisioning and planning for futures that are not dependent on fossil fuels or other carbon-intensive sources of energy. It suggests exploring alternative energy sources, sustainable practices, and technologies to mitigate climate change and reduce carbon emissions.

Heterotopia of Post-Industrial Heritage: "Heterotopia" typically refers to spaces or places that exist outside of normal societal structures or norms. In this context, it implies that the postindustrial heritage sites within the targeted areas are seen as unique or alternative spaces with their own cultural, historical, and economic significance. The project may aim to explore how these heritage sites can be repurposed or reimaged in the context of sustainable development and tourism.

Coherence in Regional Policies: This is an effort to align various policies at the regional level to support the goals of sustainable development, economic diversification, and social equity. It involves coordinating efforts across different government agencies, stakeholders, and sectors to ensure a unified approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities in these areas.

Sustainable Tourism: This highlights the potential role of tourism as a driver of economic development in the targeted areas. Sustainable tourism practices aim to minimize negative



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impacts on the environment and local communities while maximizing benefits such as job creation, cultural preservation, and revenue generation.

Areas of planned project activities:

- **Social dimension: Protection and popularization of the tradition of mining brass bands and the cult of Saint. Barbara in Silesia**

The phenomenon of mining complexes has been consistently building regional identity for over a century, ensuring the integration of local communities. They represent both workplaces and the communities gathered around them. Mining brass bands consistently maintain a reservoir of values and symbols that build local identity, which allows them to be perceived as a symbol and lasting heritage of the region. In 2023, the cultural traditions of mining brass bands from Upper Silesia were entered into the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage by decision of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. The Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze was the coordinator of the preparation of the abovementioned. application and being aware that there is a need to further support members of mining orchestras in their activities undertaken to protect and popularize the inscribed element, in accordance with the provisions of the application: "For us, the key to maintaining the continuity of the impact of the phenomenon is the continuation of artistic, social and educational activities."

The phenomenon of the cult of Saint Barbara over the course of two centuries in the broad cultural context of the region consists of elements related to the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of the professional group of miners: piety customs (community prayers), images of Saint. Barbara located in the mines and the celebration of St. Barbara's Day. Barbara, popularly known as Barbórka. All these elements create a holistic picture of worship. The Mining cult of Saint Barbara in Upper Silesia is unique on a global scale. Nowhere else was a saint worshiped en masse on the premises of workplaces. The religiosity of the Upper Silesian people, shaped over the centuries, was and still is strong, of which a special example and an important role model is Saint. Barbara, whom Silesians gave the status of a unique companion in everyday life. The belief in the benefits of obedience to the Saint and the safety it provides at work, but also on the way back home, is still alive. Among the miners' brothers, it is believed that before December 4, Saint Barbara takes home several miners who are leaving for the eternal shift. The annual celebrations include religious and secular celebrations for miners and local communities in mining and post-mining towns. Miners wear ceremonial uniforms or work clothes and organize public marches through the places where they work, together with representatives of communities, associations, and local authorities. Parades are often led by miners' brass bands. Barbórka and mining traditions are of great importance today for identity, especially for communities in post-mining areas.

- **Digital dimension: Digitization of the resources of the tangible and intangible mining heritage of Silesia region**

The Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze has a collection digitization workshop with subsystems supporting the management and inventory of digitized collections (e-Museum). Scans of exhibits are made using various technologies in order to make them available online and/or further use for VR solutions. Additionally, in digital form, a database with information on museum resources



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is available, which serves as a "knowledge base" for interested people or a scientific zone (with the possibility of renting exhibits, making inquiries, and a picture gallery).

Digitization works respond to the need to document liquidated mining plants - the industrial heritage of Silesia. As part of the project, machines, and devices along with their surroundings were digitized in 3D technology. The aim of digitization activities is to scan and digitize coal mine facilities in their entirety (before their liquidation): not only documentation, but also buildings, structures, machines, devices, technological lines, equipment, and workings. Digitization is not only the cheapest, but also the most acceptable form of comprehensive heritage preservation and the starting point for creating interesting VR solutions.

- **Ecological dimension: Sustainable tourism and shaping the ecological awareness of the local community**

The Silesian Voivodeship is the largest mining region in the European Union, which is undergoing a transformation process that poses increasing challenges. The transition from a high emission to a zeroemission economy should take place with particular emphasis on the well-being of local people in terms of continued employment and the environment in which they live.

Educational activities shaping awareness of the green economy and ecology are carried out based on the concept of educating and educating society in the spirit of respect for the natural environment in accordance with the motto: think globally - act locally. They also develop the necessary motivation, attitudes, skills, and ecological behaviors.

Children and young people are the best investment in the future, which is why activities to increase awareness are primarily targeted at this group of recipients. Some of the activities are carried out for families in which Silesian traditions and customs are passed down from generation to generation. Educational activities enable the presentation of difficult topics in an accessible way and are a response to the problem of how to take care of the climate and carry out a just transformation while maintaining local and regional identity and bonds with history and industrial heritage.

Allowing local community participation in development planning processes is of great importance for sustainable tourism. This is an element that ultimately affects the quality of the services offered. The inhabitants of the region will play an important role in promoting environmentally friendly practices and encouraging visiting tourists to use and replicate pro-ecological activities. The development of the services of the Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze should not only generate new sources of income for local communities, but also translate into green priorities that are already effectively implemented. These include, among others: using renewable energy, or creating "green" relaxation and education zones: Park 12c, green area around the Water Tower, vertical garden, community garden (planned).



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