

# Handbook on stakeholder engagement in the Turów Subregion in Dolnoslaskie Voivodeship

Support to the implementation of the just transition in Poland

**Technical Support Instrument**

*Supporting reforms in 27 Member States*



Source: Satellite image of the Turów opencast lignite mine. Photo: Google Earth. TwojaPogoda.pl



Funded by  
the European Union



Ministerstwo  
Funduszy  
i Polityki Regionalnej

This document was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of the author(s). The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

The project is funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, managed by the European Commission Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM).

This report has been delivered in October 2025, under the EC Contract No 300102042. It has been delivered as part of the project “Support to the implementation of the just transition in Poland”.

© European Union, 2025



The Commission's reuse policy is implemented by Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39 – <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2011/833/oj>).

Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed, provided that appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

**Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support**  
REFORM@ec.europa.eu  
+32 2 299 11 11 (Commission switchboard)  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 170 / Wetstraat 170  
1049 Brussels, Belgium

## Table of content

1. Introduction.....	7
2. Executive summary .....	9
3. Background and landscape assessment .....	13
4. Mapping stakeholders: identification, needs and involvement.....	18
5. Multi-level governance of just transition: different approaches to stakeholder collaboration platforms.....	32
6. Recommended structure for management of stakeholder engagement in the Turow Subregion ....	47
7. Stakeholder groups and good practices in engagement.....	56
8. Annex I: Literature .....	77
9. Annex II: Selected stakeholder group and brief summary of main challenges .....	80

## List of tables

Table 1. Key information about selected governance models .....	10
Table 2. Comparative overview of stakeholder analysis tools used for the Turów Subregion .....	19
Table 3. Selected stakeholder groups and brief summary of main challenges .....	22
Table 4. Four main stakeholder categories in the Power–Interest Grid .....	24
Table 5. Analysis of the main stakeholder groups in the Turów Subregion using the Traffic Light System and Engagement Ladder methods.....	28
Table 6. Regional Observatory of the Transition Process .....	34
Table 7. Coal Commission in Hungary .....	35
Table 8. Just Transition Observatory, Alentejo .....	35
Table 9. Zukunftsagentur, Rheinisch Region.....	35
Table 10. Examples - Objective of the initiative .....	36
Table 11. Examples - Scope of the initiative (1) .....	37
Table 12. Examples - Scope of the initiative (2) .....	37
Table 13. Examples - Scope of the initiative (3) .....	38
Table 14. Examples - Scope of the initiative (4) .....	38
Table 15. Examples - Scope of the initiative (5) .....	38
Table 16. Examples - Scope of the initiative (6) .....	38
Table 17. Summary of the screened initiatives' scope .....	39
Table 18. Level of institutionalisation of screened initiatives .....	39
Table 19. Examples - Governance structures.....	41
Table 20. Embedding level of each initiative in regional just transition governance.....	43
Table 21. Examples - Embedding in regional/national just transition governance .....	43
Table 22. Examples - Operational aspects (1).....	43
Table 23. Examples - Operational aspects (2).....	44
Table 24. Examples - Operational aspects (3).....	44
Table 25. Examples - Operational aspects (4).....	44
Table 26. Example - Stakeholder engagement approach .....	45
Table 27. Governance framework recommendations - Platform .....	52
Table 28. Governance framework recommendations – Working Groups support.....	53
Table 29. The Lewarde Mining History Centre, France .....	58
Table 30. Upgrading of MINOS factory site, Greece .....	59
Table 31. C-mine reuse project: Turning a former coal mine into a creative hub, Belgium .....	60
Table 32. Fund covering loss of wages in Ida-Virumaa, Estonia.....	62
Table 33. Future employment and skills in the Irish Midlands, Ireland.....	62
Table 34. Ruhr Region in Germany (North-Rhine Westphalia) .....	64
Table 35. Rhineland Lignite Mining District, Germany.....	65
Table 36. Transformation in the Silesian Voivodeship, Poland .....	66
Table 37. A case study of the Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant in Taranto, Italy .....	67
Table 38. Techport Innovation Centre, the Netherlands .....	70
Table 39. Regional Development Agency in Konin, Poland .....	70
Table 40. PISMO Incubator, Croatia.....	71
Table 41. EUTEens4Green Project, European Union.....	71
Table 42. SAŠA Incubator, Slovenia.....	74
Table 43. Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region (ICUK), Czechia.....	74
Table 44. Business Upper Austria, Austria .....	75
Table 45. Chemelot Circular Hub, the Netherlands .....	76
Table 46. Selected stakeholder group and brief summary of main challenges .....	80

## List of figures

Figure 1. The proposed structure for the Platform for the Transition of the Turów Subregion .....	12
Figure 2. The sources for the mapping process .....	18

Figure 3. Key objectives of applying analytical tools in stakeholder group analysis.....	18
Figure 4. Analytical methods used to analyse and guide the planning of stakeholder engagement....	19
Figure 5. Main stakeholder groups with their main functions and roles.....	21
Figure 6. Classification of the main categories of stakeholders in the Turów area in the Power–Interest Grid.....	25
Figure 7. Best practices selection process .....	41
Figure 8. Methods of stakeholder engagement identified in the examples .....	45
Figure 9. Four-step approach to establishing an observatory .....	48
Figure 10. Proposed governance structure of the Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion .....	52
Figure 11. Selected stakeholder groups for which good practices have been developed .....	56
Figure 12. Process of identifying and selecting good practices for selected stakeholder groups .....	56

## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Name/term
<b>ANS</b>	Academy of Applied Science
<b>CHILL</b>	Chemelot Innovation & Learning Labs
<b>DGB NRW</b>	German Federation of Trade Unions North Rhine-Westphalia
<b>DRI</b>	Direct Reduced Iron
<b>EEEOP+</b>	Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Program Plus
<b>ERDF</b>	European Regional Development Fund
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IG BCE</b>	The Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau, Chemie, Energie
<b>ILVA</b>	Acciaierie d'Italia
<b>IRT</b>	Institute for Regional Development
<b>ITI</b>	Integrated Territorial Instrument
<b>JTF</b>	Just Transition Fund
<b>JTO</b>	Just Transition Observatory
<b>PGE</b>	Polish Energy Group
<b>PGE GiEK</b>	PGE Mining and Conventional Energy
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research and Development
<b>RES</b>	Renewable Energy Sources
<b>ROTP</b>	Regional Observatory of the Transition Process
<b>SG REFORM</b>	Reform and Investment Task Force
<b>SERN</b>	Startup Europe Regions Network
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
<b>TJTP</b>	Territorial Just Transition Plan
<b>TOJT</b>	Territorial Socio-Economic Observatory on the Just Transition
<b>TSI</b>	Technical Support Instrument
<b>WSB</b>	German Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment
<b>YEE</b>	Youth Environment Europe
<b>ZRR</b>	Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier.

# 1. Introduction

This Handbook has been developed as part of the European Commission's Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM) Technical Support Instrument (TSI) project '*Support to the Implementation of Just Transition in Poland*' for the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy and the Marshal's Office of Dolnoslaskie. It serves both as a practical guide and a reference tool to strengthen stakeholder engagement in the context of the just transition in the **Turów Subregion**, comprising the zgorzelecki and lubański powiats<sup>1</sup> in the Dolnoslaskie Voivodeship<sup>2</sup>, Poland. This Handbook adopts the terminology **Turów Subregion** henceforth.

The aim of the Handbook is to highlight the key challenges and best practices identified for Turów Subregion in the context of planning, coordinating, and implementing cooperation with stakeholders to achieve a just transition. The Handbook includes a recommendation for a stakeholder engagement and collaboration platform in the territory.

The document is intended as a reference point for a wide range of actors who are either directly affected by, or actively involved in, the transition process. These include:

- employees in the lignite mining and power generation in the Turów Complex in Bogatynia,
- local and regional employers and business support agencies, and chambers of commerce,
- local, regional and national public administrations and their affiliated entities,
- civil society organisations and NGOs, including environmental and cultural groups,
- trade unions operating within the Polish Energy Group (PGE GiEK) or
- citizens, as well as vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including youth and local communities.

The Handbook is based on desk research, expert interviews conducted during a January 2025 scoping visit to the region, stakeholder consultations during the data collection phase, a study visit to the Rhenish Region in Germany, and written interviews identifying good practices from selected EU regions. This approach combines institutional perspectives with the lived experiences of local actors involved in or affected by the transition.

Given the complexity of the just transition and the diversity of stakeholder needs, the Handbook focuses on practical aspects of engagement, highlighting areas that require targeted action and tailored participatory methods.

It aims to support the effective implementation of just transition initiatives in mining and post-mining regions by presenting good practices in stakeholder engagement. These examples illustrate how common challenges have been addressed through inclusive, transparent, and context-sensitive approaches, offering transferable models for other territories undergoing similar transformations.

To ensure accessibility for a wide range of audiences, the Handbook has been designed to be concise while maintaining a clear and coherent structure. It includes:

- an overview of the regional context of the energy transition,

---

<sup>1</sup> Polish territorial administration. Poland has a three-tier administrative division. The country is divided into 16 voivodeships (highest level), 314 poviats (middle level) and 2,479 communes (lowest level).

<sup>2</sup> The Turów Subregion does not exactly align with the demarcation described in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship Development Strategy, which defines four subregions that serve as the foundation for planning and implementing regional development policy. These subregions are: the Jelenia Góra subregion, the Legnica subregion, the Wałbrzych subregion, and the Wrocław subregion. Each of these subregions has its own specific characteristics and development priorities, which are taken into account in the development strategies of the individual towns and municipalities within them. The Turów Subregion, which includes the Zgorzelec and Lubań poviats, is part of the Jelenia Góra subregion, available at: [https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Rozwoj\\_regionalny/SRWD\\_2030.pdf](https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/Rozwoj_regionalny/SRWD_2030.pdf)

- a characterisation of key stakeholder groups and the extent to which their needs and perspectives have been recognised,
- an analysis of coordination and governance structures including a recommended approach for the Turów Subregion,
- and a curated selection of good practices, offering actionable inspiration for stakeholder engagement at multiple levels.

The final section of each chapter a concise set of conclusions and recommendations, intended to support future actions by policymakers, public authorities, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

## 2. Executive summary

*This Handbook aims to support inclusive and strategic stakeholder engagement in the Turów Subregion, comprising the zgorzelecki and lubański poviats. It provides a practical framework for implementing collaboration structures, highlighting key challenges, opportunities, and governance recommendations.*

The **Turów Subregion** - located in the zgorzelecki and lubański poviats in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship and home to the Turów lignite Complex - is navigating a complex and uncertain transition, the planning of which requires coordinated efforts from a wide range of institutional actors. Stakeholders broadly agree that cooperation structures must be revised to prepare the subregion for a successful transition, irrespective of the next EU financial perspective. The subregion's cross-border location, adjacent to Germany and Czechia, adds further complexity due to labour market dynamics, demographic changes, and cross-border economic interdependencies.

### 2.1 Diagnosis of the situation in the Turów Subregion

**Landscape assessment.** The following landscape assessment summarises key findings from the analysis of the status quo and barriers to effective stakeholder collaboration in the Turów Subregion:

#### 1. Key asset: dynamic ecosystem of local initiatives and projects

Although the lack of a clear coal exit date has so far prevented the subregion from receiving dedicated support from the Just Transition Fund, bottom-up initiatives continue to advocate for transition funding at national and EU levels and implement projects strengthening subregional cohesion. Municipalities, NGOs, and regional institutions have launched a variety of projects focused on diagnostics, stakeholder mapping, and cross-border cooperation (e.g. Common Ground, BorderLabs, and Triland).

Notably, for the purpose of coordinating actions, two formal initiatives have laid the groundwork for cross-institutional collaboration on the subregion's future:

- Between 2020 and 2021, the Marshal's Office initiated a regional Working Group on the Just Transition Fund, which brought together stakeholders from the Wałbrzych subregion and the Zgorzelec poviat. It was established to develop Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTP) for these two areas. After the decision to allocate funds exclusively to the Wałbrzych subregion, the involvement of stakeholders from Zgorzelec poviat visibly decreased. The group is still active, however, without engagement from actors from the Turów Subregion.
- A bottom-up initiative – the Committee for the Transition of the Turów Subregion – was established in 2019 as an advocacy body for transition support. After a period of inactivity, it resumed its operations in the first quarter of 2025 and currently includes representatives from both the Zgorzelec and Lubań poviats (since June 2025), forming an important foundation for a future formalised cooperation platform.

.While these initiatives provide an important basis for cooperation, stakeholders emphasise the need to build on them to establish a comprehensive, formally mandated framework that would effectively coordinate and guide the just transition process.

#### 2. Underrepresented stakeholders and coordination gaps

The analysis indicates that several key stakeholder groups remain insufficiently engaged in the planning of the transition process. This particularly concerns:

- **PGE Conventional Power and Mining (PGE GiEK)<sup>3</sup> and national authorities**, which, despite their crucial role in decision-making regarding the future of the Turów Complex, participate only to a limited extent in regional planning.
- **Youth**, who exhibit low levels of awareness regarding the just transition, limited civic engagement, and high rates of outmigration from the districts of the Turów Subregion.
- **Trade unions and employees**, who largely remain outside the process, with no structured strategies for reskilling and a lack of baseline data enabling the assessment of transition-related needs.
- **Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)** – in the Turów Subregion, the involvement of social and civic organisations is limited due to low civic culture, few active NGOs, and limited independence among existing entities. As a result, their potential to engage in the just transition process remains largely untapped. Strengthening civil society is therefore crucial to ensure an inclusive and sustainable transition.

The absence of a formal coordination platform exacerbates the fragmentation of activities. The graphic tools applied in this Handbook, such as the Power–Interest Grid and the Traffic Light System (see Section 4.1), illustrate these gaps, indicating that while local and regional authorities demonstrate a high level of engagement, central-level administration and PGE GiEK remain largely passive, and youth and employees are at risk of being overlooked in the process. Local stakeholders emphasise the need to establish a platform that allows for the integration of diverse perspectives and creates a space for dialogue among all relevant and affected parties.

### 3. Existing potential in culture and cross-border cooperation

The stakeholder analysis has shown that cultural institutions, tourism assets, and cross-border ties remain underutilised despite their potential strategic relevance for the transition. These sectors could play a critical role in economic diversification and identity-building, but are currently undervalued in transition planning.

**Relevant examples of stakeholder collaboration platforms.** The Handbook draws from international best practices to recommend actions on stakeholder engagement and governance. By leveraging these practices, the Turów Subregion can develop a governance framework that ensures cooperation, clear ownership, and effectively balances diverse needs and priorities. Chapter 6 provides an extensive list of best practices for engaging underrepresented groups. The Handbook also includes a comparative analysis of four governance approaches designed to address similar challenges, each described in detail in Chapter 5.

Table 1. Key information about selected governance models

Region/Model	Key feature	Relevance to the Turów Subregion
Zukunftsagentur, Germany	Multi-tier governance, high institutionalisation, wide wide-reaching stakeholder buy-in	Model for institutional anchoring and long-term coordination
ROTP Śląskie, Poland	Regional observatory with trade union, university, NGOs' engagement	Demonstrates bottom-up evolution into formalised governance
Just Transition Observatory, Portugal	Two-tier council structure with youth and business representation	Useful for inclusive consultation and monitoring
Coal Commission, Hungary	Nationally mandated platform with working groups and local engagement	Shows how to secure national buy-in and structure stakeholder input

**Key recommendations.** To address existing bottlenecks in stakeholder engagement and the absence of a formal collaboration platform, this Handbook proposes targeted recommendations. Future efforts should prioritise the strengthening of coordination mechanisms, fostering cross-sectoral collaboration,

<sup>3</sup> PGE Górnictwo i Energetyka Konwencjonalna Spółka Akcyjna – a company belonging to the largest energy group in Poland – Polska Grupa Energetyczna S.A. (PGE), which extracts lignite and generates electricity and heat. It manages the Turów Complex.

and establishing a permanent platform that brings together all key stakeholders, including youth, workers' representatives, and social partners. The recommendations are grouped into two areas:

### 1. Engaging underrepresented groups – targeted actions

The stakeholder analysis identified several groups that remain insufficiently involved in transition planning in the Turów Subregion - namely, youth, workers, trade unions, cultural institutions, and business actors. Addressing this gap is essential for a truly inclusive just transition.

- **Youth.** Young people face limited opportunities for civic participation, education, and employment, contributing to high outmigration and disengagement. Engagement must shift from passive consultation to active involvement. Suggested actions:
  - Include youth representatives in planning bodies and working groups.
  - Support youth-led initiatives through dedicated funding, mentoring, training and capacity-building.
  - Draw on relevant models such as *EUTeens4Green* or the *PISMO Incubator* (Croatia), which empower young people via innovation labs and entrepreneurship schemes.
- **Workers and trade unions in the Turów Complex in Bogatynia.** Despite their central role in the lignite economy, workers and unions are largely absent from transition planning due to the lack of structured dialogue, limited reskilling options, and concerns over job security. Priority actions:
  - Conduct baseline assessments of skills, reskilling, and upskilling needs. Cooperation with the District Labor Offices in the Zgorzelec and Lubań poviats is recommended.
  - Establish safe, structured spaces for dialogue between workers, unions, and public authorities on local and regional levels.
  - Ensure trade union involvement in long-term transition governance.
- **Cultural and social actors.** Cultural institutions and civil society organisations are underutilised, despite their potential in promoting identity, cohesion, and diversification. Actions should include:
  - Support for cross-border cultural cooperation with neighbouring regions.
  - Investment in the preservation and promotion of regional cultural heritage.
  - Inclusion of women-led NGOs and local cultural initiatives in transition planning processes.
- **Business actors and entrepreneurship support institutions.** The local economy is highly dependent on a small number of large employers like the Turów lignite mine and power plant. SMEs face systemic barriers to growth. To enhance economic resilience:
  - Develop integrated ecosystems linking business, academia, and the public sector.
  - Promote collaboration platforms, building on models such as the *SAŠA Incubator* (Slovenia) and the *Chemelot Circular Hub* (Netherlands).

### 2.2. Establishing a Platform for the Transition of the Turów Subregion

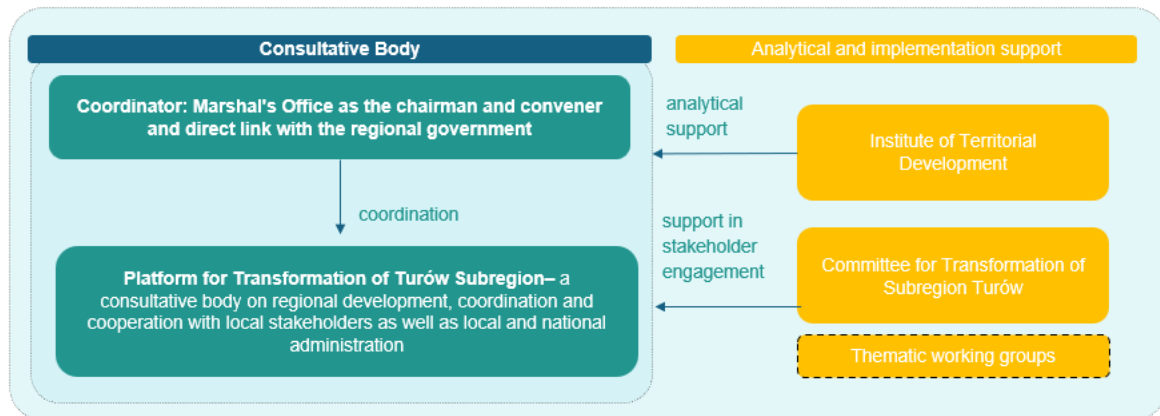
A formalised, multi-stakeholder consultation body – as proposed in Chapter 6 of this Handbook under the title “*Platform for the Transition of the Turów Subregion*” – should be established and overseen by the Marshal's Office. It should bring together representatives from all poviats and municipalities of the subregion Turów, relevant national ministries, key companies, PGE GiEK, trade unions, youth organisations, NGOs focusing on climate and energy, and broader civil society.

The Platform should be supported by the Institute of Territorial Development and dedicated working groups, functioning as a permanent body for consultation, coordination, and strategic governance, including planning and mobilisation of funding.

The Committee for the Transition of the Turów Subregion, reactivated in the first quarter of 2025, represents a *key component* of this governance structure by bringing together representatives of local government authorities and facilitating systematic engagement with local stakeholders.

A proposed governance model for the Platform is illustrated below and further elaborated in Chapter 6.

Figure 1. The proposed structure for the Platform for the Transition of the Turów Subregion



The Platform builds on efforts initiated by local public authorities and NGOs while seeking to mobilise the capacities of youth, cultural institutions, and grassroots community actors. Implementing such a Platform would support more coherent and inclusive transition planning, strengthen the region’s long-term socio-economic resilience, and ensure that the needs of all social groups are adequately addressed.

The effectiveness and success of implementing the transition in the Turów Subregion will depend on ongoing and genuine involvement from central government authorities, including the development of a post-coal vision for the region, as well as from PGE GiEK S.A.

## 3. Background and landscape assessment

### 3.1 Just transition in the Turów Subregion in the Dolnośląskie Voivodship. Context

#### Characteristics of the Turów Subregion in the context of the energy transition

The Dolnośląskie Voivodeship is one of Poland's 16 administrative regions (voivodeship), located in the south-western part of the country, sharing borders with Germany and the Czech Republic. The Turów Subregion, situated in the westernmost part of the voivodeship, exemplifies a subregion highly dependent on the lignite-based energy sector. The Turoszów Lignite Basin lies within the Żytawa-Zgorzelec depression, directly adjacent to the Czech and German borders. It is home to the Turów lignite mine and power plant Complex<sup>4</sup> - one of the most significant industrial employers in the region. The mine extracts approximately 7.8 million tonnes of lignite annually, supplying the nearby Turów power plant, which in turn contributes around 3-4% of Poland's electricity generation.<sup>5</sup> The transition of Turów Subregion is dependent on the coal exit strategy of the PGE Group for the mining and power plant complex in Turów. In June 2025, [PGE Polska Grupa Energetyczna](#)<sup>6</sup>, the owner of the Turów mining and power complex has announced its strategic commitment to exit coal by 2030. The group's long-term energy strategy includes achieving climate neutrality by 2040 through the adoption of low- and zero-emission technologies, including hydrogen and other clean electricity sources.<sup>7</sup> This corporate-level transition strategy represents an important signal of change and offers opportunities for aligning national and regional transition efforts.

In contrast, the Wałbrzych subregion in the eastern part of the voivodeship has already experienced a complete phase-out of coal. Until the 1990s, the region hosted four hard coal mines employing over 18,000 people. However, due to economic unviability and adverse geological conditions, coal mining was discontinued, contributing to a sharp rise in unemployment, social exclusion, and economic decline. **The rapid and poorly managed transition has had long-lasting consequences** as the Wałbrzych subregion continues to record one of the lowest GDP per capita rates in the country and faces depopulation and socio-economic challenges to this day.

**Currently, Turów is the only operational lignite**

**mine in the voivodeship.** Its licence runs until 2044, by which point the deposit is expected to be



<sup>4</sup> Encyklopedia PWN, <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Turoszowskie-Zaglebie-Wegla-Brunatnego:3990168.html>

<sup>5</sup> PGE, available at: <https://pgegiel.pl/nasze-oddzialy/kopalnia-wegla-brunatnego-turow#:~:text=Znajduje%20osi%20w%20po%20C5%82udniowo%20zachodniej%20cz%20C4%99%20wojew%20C3%B3dztwa%20dolno%20C5%9B%20C4%85skiego%20C,produkcji%20energii%20elektrycznej%20w%20pobliskiej%20Elektrowni%20Tur%20C3%B3w.>

<sup>6</sup> [PGE Polska Grupa Energetyczna](#) is Poland's largest energy sector company. [PGE Górnictwo i Energetyka Konwencjonalna](#) in Bełchatów is part of the PGE Group and has been managing the Mining and Power Generation Plant Turów in Bogatynia.

<sup>7</sup> Money.pl, available, 2025, Polski kolos kończy z węglem. Szybciej niż planował. Podał datę at: <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/polski-kolos-konczy-z-weglem-szybciej-niz-planowal-podal-date-6935772701182912a.html#:~:text=Polska%20Grupa%20Energetyczna%20zapowiedzia%20C5%82%20odej%20C5%9Bcie%20od%20w%20C4%99gla,roku.%20Zak%20C5%82ada%20osi%20C4%85gni%20C4%99cie%20zeroemisjno%20C5%9Bcie%20do%202040%20r.>

depleted. This foreseen closure places the Turów Subregion at the centre of regional just transition planning efforts.

The Turów Subregion comprises two poviats: zgorzelecki and lubański. **This Handbook adopts the terminology Turów Subregion henceforth.**

- **Powiat zgorzelecki** includes seven municipalities: the town and rural municipality of Zgorzelec, the urban municipality of Węgliniec, the rural municipalities of Sulików and Bogatynia, and the town of Bogatynia itself. The county covers 838.1 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of approximately 89,200 (2020). As of 2024, the unemployment rate stood at 5.1%.
- **Powiat lubański** also comprises seven municipalities, including the town of Lubań, the spa town of Świeradów-Zdrój, and several rural municipalities such as Leśna, Siekierczyn, Olszyna and Platerówka. The county spans 428 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to roughly 51,400 people (2023), with a relatively low unemployment rate of 6.7% in 2024.

## 3.2 Just transition process in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship

### Just transition planning

In recent years, the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship has taken important steps to prepare for the socio-economic transformation of its coal-dependent areas. The Board of the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship developed two Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs), each reflecting the specific conditions and development needs of a different area.

1. The first plan focused on the **Wałbrzych subregion**, where the legacy of coal mining continues to pose significant environmental and socio-economic challenges. The area requires extensive revitalisation efforts, including the remediation of post-mining damage and the creation of sustainable employment pathways to mitigate the long-term effects of industrial decline.<sup>8</sup>
2. The second TJTP was prepared for the **zgorzelecki powiat**<sup>9</sup>, home to the Turów lignite mine and power plant - one of the country's largest coal-fired complexes. Despite its strategic importance, the Turów area was ultimately excluded from funding under the Just Transition Fund (JTF), as a coal exit date for the Turów Complex was neither set nor communicated by the PGE Group.

Under the European Funds for Dolny Śląsk 2021–2027 regional programme, the voivodeship received €581 million from the JTF, **all of which was allocated to the Wałbrzych subregion**<sup>10</sup>, while the zgorzelecki powiat remained ineligible due to the absence of a formal coal exit commitment.

### Existing collaboration structures

As part of the TJTP development process, between 2020 and 2021, the Marshal's Office coordinated a regional [Working Group on the Just Transition Fund](#) (PL: Grupa Robocza ds. Funduszu Sprawiedliwej Transformacji)<sup>11</sup>, bringing together stakeholders from both the Wałbrzych subregion and the zgorzelecki powiat. However, following the decision to allocate funds exclusively to the Wałbrzych subregion, the engagement of representatives from the Zgorzelec powiat gradually declined, and their participation in the Working Group became minimal. Consequently, the limited presence of this key stakeholder contributed to weak activity on the part of local authorities in coordinating transition-related actions. This situation coincided with the establishment of a new, complementary Working Group aimed at

<sup>8</sup> Instytut Rozwoju Terytorialnego, available at <https://irt.wroc.pl/strona-470-analiza-powiazan-funkcjonalnych-w.html>

<sup>9</sup> Territorial Just Transition Plan for the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship 2021-2030. The Zgorzelec powiat, available at: [https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/FST/TPST\\_pow\\_Zgorzelec\\_4.0.pdf](https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/FST/TPST_pow_Zgorzelec_4.0.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> European Funds for Lower Silesia 2021-2027, available at <https://funduszeuodolnoslaskie.pl/poradnik/4659-fundusze-europejskie-dla-dolnego-slaska-2021-2027>

<sup>11</sup> Working Group on the Just Transition Fund, available at: <https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/gospodarka/fundusz-sprawiedliwej-transformacji/grupa-robocza-ds-fst/>

strengthening stakeholder collaboration and ensuring the continuity of planning and implementation processes in the context of the just transition. In 2019, a bottom-up initiative was established by local authorities from the zgorzelecki powiat under the name *Committee for the Turów Subregion*<sup>12</sup>. Its purpose was to advocate for transition support at the regional, national, and EU levels. The committee suspended its formal activities between 2021 and 2024 but resumed operations at the beginning of 2025, holding two formal meetings between January and July. During the meeting in July 2025, the Committee was formally expanded to include representatives from the lubański powiat. This development marks a step toward the establishment of a formalised, multi-stakeholder cooperation structure for the Turów Subregion, as outlined in Chapter 3 of this Handbook.

Re-establishing a widely recognised and formally mandated coordination structure, as well as fostering cross-sectoral dialogue in the Turów Subregion, will be critical in the context of planning for the upcoming EU financial perspective. It is also one of the key recommendations of this Handbook. Even in the absence of dedicated funding for the zgorzelecki and lubański powiats under the JTF, the establishment and long-term implementation of a cooperation platform could significantly improve the coordination of local initiatives and projects, support regional development efforts, and help ensure that the Turów Subregion is not overlooked in Poland's broader decarbonisation agenda.

### **Economic and social impacts of lignite phase-out in the Turów Subregion**

As noted above, no final decision has yet been made regarding the closure of the Turów lignite mine. However, given the long-term economic and social implications, preparations for this scenario should begin now. Experience from other coal regions in the European Union demonstrates that the earlier key groups, such as workers, local communities, social partners, and businesses, are engaged in planning the transition, the greater the chance of achieving a fair and orderly transformation.

**The Turów Subregion shows a multi-faceted dependency on the lignite mining and energy production sectors.** The Turów Complex, located in the town of Bogatynia in zgorzelecki powiat, remains operational; however, economic conditions may not allow for full utilisation of the deposit's potential within the timeframe of the concession. Zgorzelecki powiat is currently the most coal-dependent region in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship, both in terms of employment and the contribution of these sectors to the local economy. It is estimated that approximately 55% of the municipal budget of Bogatynia comes from taxes and fees paid by PGE GIEK S.A.

Employment at the Turów Complex has been steadily declining. Over the past two decades, employment at the mine has decreased by around 60% (from more than 9,000 people in the 1990s to around 3,600 in 2024), while employment at the power plant has declined by approximately 20% over the last ten years<sup>13</sup>. Currently:

- The complex supplies around 3-4% of Poland's electricity, powering approximately 300,000 households.
- The mine and power plant employ a total of around 3,500 people – 2,300 at the mine and 1,200 at the power plant.
- Around 80% of employees reside in the municipality of Bogatynia and the Zgorzelec powiat. Roughly, 16 % of the Bogatynia municipality's population are employed in the mine and power plant and about 4 % of the Zgorzelecki powiat total population are employees of the Turów complex.
- The largest age group among employees is 41–50 years (approximately 40%), with the average age of production workers at the mine at 48 years and at the power plant at 46.5 years.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, around **50 companies provide services to the mine and 60 to the power plant**, accounting for approximately **1,800 additional jobs in the supply chain**.<sup>15</sup> As such, the overall

<sup>12</sup> Committee for the Subregion Turów, <https://storie.pl/komitet-transformacji-regionu-turosowzowskiego/>

<sup>13</sup> Data from the presentation by representatives of the Marshal's Office of the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship presented during the study visit.

<sup>14</sup> Data from the presentation by representatives of the Marshal's Office of the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship presented during the study visit.

<sup>15</sup> Data from the presentation by representatives of the Marshal's Office of the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship presented during the study visit.

economic significance of the complex - direct, indirect, and induced - is substantial for the local labour market and municipal budgets.

As operations at the complex are gradually reduced, younger individuals and those with transferable skills may be able to find employment within the local economy relatively quickly, albeit not necessarily under comparable pay and conditions. However, for workers with limited or highly specialised qualifications, especially in mining, reskilling and re-employment will be significantly more challenging. Their reintegration into the labour market will require dedicated support programmes and active policy interventions.

It is also important to emphasise that the **Turów Subregion location bordering both Germany and the Czechia** adds a further layer of complexity. These neighbouring countries represent well-developed, high-demand labour markets, and Polish workers from the border region frequently seek employment across the border, drawn by better pay and working conditions. In the absence of attractive employment alternatives in the local area, there is a high risk of accelerated workforce outflow and a so-called “brain drain,” which could undermine the region’s development potential and weaken social cohesion.

The phase-out of lignite will therefore bring not only economic consequences, such as job losses and reduced municipal revenues, but will also negatively impact the cultural identity and social cohesion of local communities, which for decades have been shaped by the presence of the energy complex. Additionally, significant demographic consequences are anticipated. As employment and development prospects worsen, an increasing number of residents, particularly younger people, may choose to leave the region in search of better opportunities. Such migration would diminish the region’s human capital and, in the longer term, could make it more difficult to rebuild the local economy and implement alternative development models.

### **Towards a cohesive transition: local actors, projects, and the potential for cooperation in the Turów Subregion**

The Turów Subregion is witnessing increasing activity in preparation for a just transition. Although the region has not received support from the JTF, regional and local public institutions, civil society organisations, and social partners are implementing a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening socio-economic readiness for the upcoming changes.

Based on an analysis of available materials and stakeholder interviews, it is evident that most current projects focus on assessing the status quo, diagnosing stakeholder needs, and identifying development potential. While these efforts represent an important step toward laying the groundwork for the transition, there remains a lack of an integrated coordination mechanism that would enable strategic process management and enhance synergy between individual initiatives.

The Institute for Regional Development (IRT), a unit affiliated with the Marshal’s Office of the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship, plays a leading role in planning and implementing transition-related activities. It is currently involved in several key projects, including:

- Development and implementation of [the Three-Country Concept](#) (PL: *Koncepcja Trójziemia*). Within the framework of the BorderLabs CE project, funded by the Interreg Central Europe programme, the “Trójziemie” just transition concept is being developed. This concept is founded on strengthening territorial cooperation across the Poland–Czech Republic–Germany area, with a particular emphasis on the integration of economic, social, and environmental actions.
- [The smartENT project](#), funded through the Interreg Poland–Saxony programme, which focuses on improving transport accessibility and integrating public transport services, including cross-border fare solutions.
- A strategic [LIFE project – New Paradigm of Emission-free Advancements and Resourceful Lifestyles in Poland](#), aimed at developing a sustainable development model and accelerating the achievement of climate neutrality in Dolnośląskie Voivodeship. The project is currently in the preparation phase and will be submitted to CINEA at the beginning of September 2025.

In addition to the IRT-led initiatives, a range of other projects is being actively implemented by diverse civil society, expert, and local government actors. Among the most notable are:

- The [Triland project](#), led by the Association for the Development of Energy Innovation ([STORIE](#)) supporting the socio-economic integration of cross-border regions and directly referring to the concept of Trójzienie.
- The [Common Ground](#), funded by the Robert Bosch Foundation and focused on building social dialogue,
- The collaboration between the Instrat think tank and the ZKlaster Energy cluster, exploring local models for energy transformation.

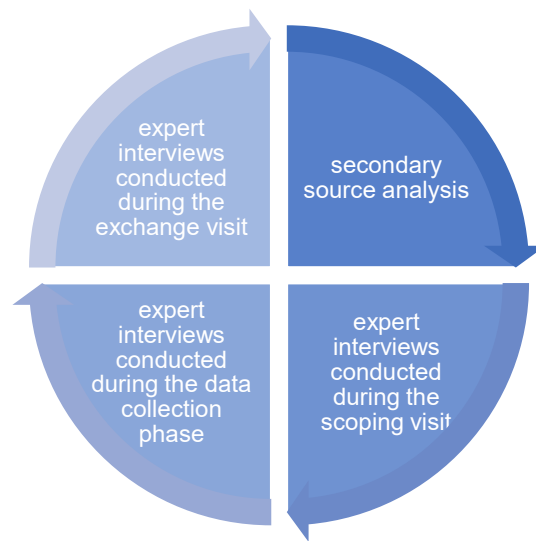
Municipal and county-level representatives are actively engaged in many of these activities. Nevertheless, **certain groups particularly youth, trade unions, and employees of the Turów mine and power plant remain or social organisations are underrepresented in the planning and implementation of transition processes**, as it will become apparent in the next chapter 4.

A major challenge remains **the absence of an institutionalised cooperation platform** that would facilitate regular information exchange about ongoing initiatives, improve coordination, and promote the use of outcomes from completed projects. Fragmented information flows and limited organisational capacity risk duplicating efforts or losing valuable knowledge generated through past interventions.

## 4. Mapping stakeholders: identification, needs and involvement

This chapter provides a structured overview of the key stakeholder groups identified in the just transition process in the Turów Subregion, located in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship. It highlights the importance of comprehensive stakeholder mapping as a fundamental step in planning a transition that is inclusive, evidence-based, and responsive to local social, economic and institutional conditions, as the results can be used to design targeted interventions and outreach to identified groups. The mapping process was based on several sources, illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The sources for the mapping process



The mapped stakeholders have been classified and assessed using various techniques explained in the below paragraph and the results of each assessment are included further down in this chapter. In the context of the just transition process in the Turów Subregion, it is crucial to observe and assess the different levels of local embeddedness and influence among stakeholder groups.

### 4.1 Integrated stakeholder analysis

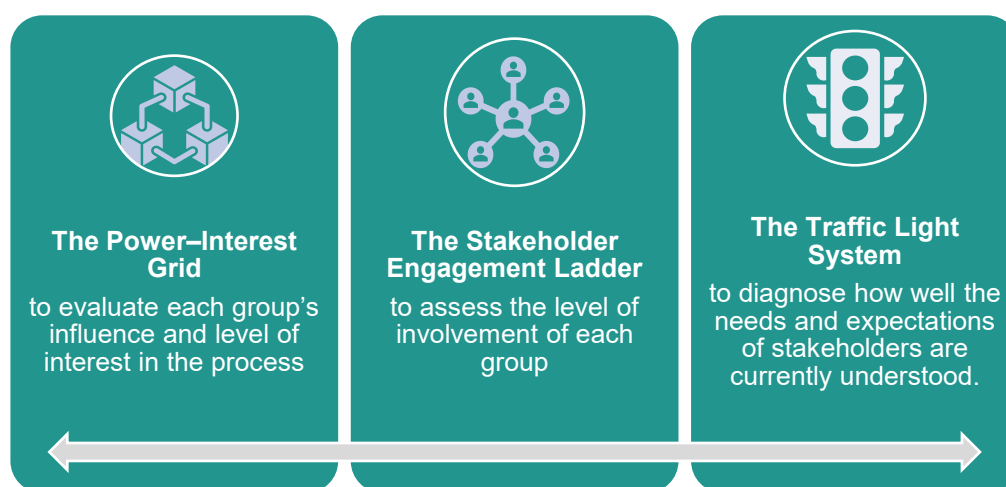
Effective stakeholder analysis is essential to ensuring that the just transition process in the Turów Subregion is inclusive, legitimate, and responsive to the needs of the people it affects. In a socially and economically complex transformation, decisions cannot be made in isolation or based solely on technical considerations. They must reflect the interests, challenges, and aspirations of a wide array of local actors – from public authorities and employers to civil society, youth, and vulnerable groups. To support this objective, a set of analytical tools was applied to achieve 4 main aims.

Figure 3. Key objectives of applying analytical tools in stakeholder group analysis



This multidimensional analysis helps ensure that no group is left behind, while also providing strategic guidance for targeting communication, participation, and support efforts. In this context, three complementary methods were used to guide stakeholder engagement planning in the Turów Subregion.

Figure 4. Analytical methods used to analyse and guide the planning of stakeholder engagement



Each method offers a different lens through which to assess stakeholder dynamics. Combined, they form a robust analytical framework for designing inclusive, transparent, and targeted engagement processes.

Table 2. Comparative overview of stakeholder analysis tools used for the Turów Subregion

Tool	Main purpose	Key dimensions	Type of insight provided	Application in Turów Subregion
<b>Stakeholder Engagement Ladder</b>	To assess how involved each stakeholder group is in the planning and implementation process	Current vs Desired Level of Engagement	Identifies gaps between actual and expected stakeholder participation; supports planning of tailored engagement strategies.	Applied to all groups to define participation ambitions and strengthen inclusivity in decision-making.
<b>Power-Interest Grid</b>	To classify stakeholders based on their influence and level of interest in the transition process.	Power (Influence) and Interest	Enables strategic positioning of stakeholders: who to collaborate with, who to inform, and who to monitor.	Used to tailor cooperation, identify potential allies, and highlight groups needing targeted involvement strategies.
<b>Traffic Light System</b>	To assess the level of awareness and understanding of stakeholder needs and expectations in the transition planning process.	Colour-coded awareness level: Green, Orange, Red	Highlights which stakeholder groups are well understood, partially known, or at risk of being overlooked.	Used to diagnose blind spots in planning and prioritise improved recognition of underrepresented groups.

### List of stakeholders and categorisation based on engagement and embeddedness level

Eleven main stakeholder groups have been identified, representing diverse interests, varying levels of influence, engagement and interest, and different degrees of vulnerability to the impacts of the energy transition. The identified groups are:

1. National authorities – national public administration
2. Regional public administration and its entities
3. Local public administration and its entities
4. Universities and research institutes
5. Non-governmental organisations, including environmental associations
6. Employers, business support agencies and chambers of commerce
7. Trade unions within the PGE GiEK Turow mining and power plant in Bogatynia
8. Employees of the mine and power plant in Bogatynia and the Turow complex
9. Vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including Youth, youth associations, cultural organisations
10. Local media
11. PGE GiEK

Based on desk research, expert interviews, and an assessment of their functional roles and scope of activity, stakeholder groups have been categorised according to their **level of local engagement and embeddedness**. This classification aims to facilitate engagement planning and the design of tailored cooperation and outreach mechanisms.



#### Strong local influence – direct and daily engagement

These actors are directly rooted in the region and exert substantial engagement and embeddedness over the local socio-economic landscape. Their involvement is essential for the success of the just transition



#### Regional strategic engagement with local relevance – (in)direct and strategic influence, regional and local cooperation

Although not embedded at the municipal and local level, these actors hold a **strategic and coordinating role**. The Marshal's Office, as the managing authority for EU funds (including the JTF), plays a key role in programming and overseeing implementation at the voivodeship level. In cooperation with the activities of the mine owner, the PGE Group and PGE GiEK, their decisions have a direct impact on development paths, investment priorities and the structures of stakeholder engagement in the Turów Subregion.



#### Moderate local engagement – indirect engagement, regional/local cooperation

These stakeholders operate at the interface between local and broader regional or thematic levels. Their influence is often realised through individual projects, advocacy, or communication



#### Limited local engagement – strategic engagement, systematic and nationwide

These actors primarily operate at the national or supra-local level, influencing high-level policy and strategy. While their decisions affect the region, they are less involved in local implementation and day-to-day dynamics

Figure 5. Main stakeholder groups with their main functions and roles



The stakeholder analysis carried out for the purposes of this Handbook and the Turów Subregion also included a detailed assessment of the challenges, needs, expectations, and capacities of individual groups to actively participate in the just transition process. Particular attention was given to those **stakeholders who are strongly embedded in the local context and directly affected by the socio-economic consequences of lignite phase-out.**

The data and information collected during the research phase made it possible to identify key challenges related to the transition and to highlight areas requiring targeted support and engagement, as presented in Table 3 below. This table provides an **overview of selected stakeholder groups and the principal challenges they face in the context of a just transition.** It serves as a foundation for designing focused engagement strategies and developing good practices for participatory and inclusive planning. A detailed analysis is available in the Annex 2.

Table 3. Selected stakeholder groups and a brief summary of the main challenges

Group of stakeholders	Brief summary of main challenges
<b>Local public administration and its entities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Limited administrative capacity.</b> Shortage of human resources and weak administrative capacity to coordinate the transition process and related activities.</li> <li>2. <b>Lack of political leadership and advocacy.</b> The absence of strong political representatives and sustained advocacy mainly at the national level.</li> <li>3. <b>Insufficient community engagement.</b> The lack of systematic mapping of local needs and limited participation of residents in the transition process.</li> <li>4. <b>Demographic decline and migration.</b> This includes population decline, ageing, and youth migration to neighbouring Germany and the Czech Republic</li> <li>5. <b>Lack of coordination platform.</b> Lack of a coordinating structure and model for engagement and activities in the area of just transition in the Turów Subregion.</li> </ol>
<b>Regional development agencies, employers and business organisations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>High economic dependency on mining.</b> This dependency makes the region vulnerable to economic downturns and business closures if mining activities reduce or cease.</li> <li>2. <b>Skills mismatch and workforce challenges.</b> Many workers possess mining-specific technical skills but lack foundational skills needed for other industries. This shortage also affects workers employed in companies and entities related to the supply chain for mines and power plants.</li> <li>3. <b>Insufficient entrepreneurial support and infrastructure.</b> The region lacks a comprehensive entrepreneurship development strategy, effective business support structures, and investors.</li> <li>4. <b>The absence of a dedicated institution or coordinating body responsible for fostering entrepreneurship and supporting business development</b> across diverse sectors limits the region's capacity to stimulate innovation, attract investment, and diversify its economic base in preparation for the just transition.</li> </ol>
<b>Youth</b>  Vulnerable and underrepresented social groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Low civic and public engagement among youth.</b> Young people are generally not active in local public life or decision-making processes.</li> <li>2. <b>Limited awareness and interest in the just transition.</b> The energy transition is perceived as distant or irrelevant by most young people in the region.</li> <li>3. <b>Youth outmigration to larger urban centres and abroad.</b> Many young people leave for Wrocław, Germany, or the Czech Republic and do not return.</li> <li>4. <b>More attractive labour markets across the border.</b> Higher wages (in euros), better working conditions, and easier access to housing in Germany and the Czech Republic contribute to brain drain.</li> <li>5. <b>Mismatch between existing education paths and local labour market needs.</b> Educational and vocational systems often do not align with emerging sectors linked to the green or digital economy.</li> <li>6. <b>Limited visibility and impact of existing youth structures.</b> Initiatives like youth councils exist but lack influence and broad participation.</li> </ol>
<b>Trade unions in the Turów mine and power plant in Bogatynia</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Balancing cooperation and conflicting interests.</b> While trade unions cooperate and consult with each other, internal divergences in priorities and perspectives may hinder the ability to reach consensus on key strategic issues related to the transition.</li> <li>2. <b>Declining social engagement.</b> PGE's gradual withdrawal from local social engagement and a reduction in community-oriented support have intensified the challenges faced by trade unions, weakening established social dialogue channels with other stakeholders.</li> <li>3. <b>Limited collaboration with the region and low involvement in the just transition process.</b> Trade unions have so far had limited structured cooperation with regional and local authorities and stakeholders. Their engagement in the planning and coordination of the just transition remains weak, including a lack of proactive anticipation of the socio-economic impacts of the lignite phase-out on workers and communities. They have been more involved in the national-level meetings.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Reactive rather than strategic posture.</b> Trade unions are perceived as focused primarily on short-term issues related to employment security, wages and working conditions. There can be limited strategic engagement in long-term planning for skills development, reskilling or economic development in the context of the transition.</li> <li>5. <b>Insufficient visibility in multi-stakeholder forums.</b> Trade union voices are not sufficiently present or visible in local and regional discussions on the future of the Turów Complex. This limits their influence on decisions affecting the labour market, reskilling frameworks and the design of worker support programmes.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Employees of the mining and power plant Turow</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Lack of reliable data on reskilling and transition needs.</b> No structured assessments have been conducted to identify the scope or nature of reskilling required among workers.</li> <li>2. <b>Avoidance of the topic due to stress and uncertainty.</b> Discussions around mine closure generate anxiety, leading both management and trade unions to avoid engaging with future skills planning.</li> <li>3. <b>Absence of planned reskilling initiatives.</b> There are currently no strategies or programmes in place to assess or address workforce transition needs.</li> <li>4. <b>No baseline for transition planning.</b> The region lacks essential information on how many workers may need support, in what timeframe, and in which direction(s).</li> <li>5. <b>High specialisation of technical skills.</b> Although workers possess a wide range of skills, these are mostly tailored to the mining and energy sectors and are not easily transferable to other industries.</li> <li>6. <b>Risk of unpreparedness for socioeconomic consequences.</b> Without a clear understanding of workers' profiles and without targeted support, the region risks being ill-equipped for the impact of downsizing or closure.</li> <li>7. <b>Utilisation of existing skills of mine and power plant employees.</b> One of the key challenges in the just transition process is the insufficient utilisation of the existing skills of mine and power plant employees, encompassing mining, energy, production management, and local industrial sectors. The lack of alignment between these skills and the development of high-growth sectors limits the employability of workers and their active participation in the transition process. Consequently, the region risks underusing its local professional potential and reducing its socio-economic resilience, thereby hindering the creation of sustainable and long-term employment opportunities in the context of the phase-out of lignite.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Social and cultural organisations, especially in cultural tourism area</b></p> <p>Vulnerable and underrepresented social groups</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Culture and tourism not recognised as strategic sectors.</b> These sectors are undervalued in local and regional transition planning, despite their potential for economic diversification.</li> <li>2. <b>Lack of investment in tourism infrastructure.</b> Mining sites are not developed or promoted as visitor destinations. Assets such as the legacy of the Turów mine and proximity to Görlitz remain largely untapped.</li> <li>3. <b>No regional strategy for repurposing post-industrial areas.</b> There is no overarching vision for how to sustainably transform these spaces to support long-term development.</li> <li>4. <b>Skills gap in tourism and cultural sectors.</b> While the workforce is technically skilled, competences are sector-specific and not easily transferable to services or cultural industries.</li> <li>5. <b>Limited local expertise in creative and tourism-related professions.</b> Few opportunities exist for training in areas like cultural management, event coordination, or heritage interpretation.</li> <li>6. <b>Low engagement of youth and cultural actors.</b> Young people, artists, and creative professionals are not systematically involved in shaping the region's future or new economic models.</li> </ol>

The analysis also highlights **asymmetries in the availability of information and previous engagement across different stakeholder categories**. In particular, gaps remain in understanding the specific expectations of trade unions, the cultural assets of the region, and the potential for supporting local entrepreneurship. Additionally, the involvement of underrepresented groups, including young people and civil society organisations, is limited and requires further facilitation.

Based on the challenges identified through this analysis, **relevant good practices** from other coal-dependent regions in Poland and across the European Union were mapped and reviewed for those selected stakeholders. These examples inform the recommendations presented later in the Handbook and provide inspiration for practical solutions to common transition-related issues.

### Power–Interest Grid Analysis

Power–Interest Grid helps systematically position stakeholders based on two main dimensions:

- **Level of power** – the ability of a group to shape the direction, decisions, or outcomes of the transition process (e.g. through political leverage, control over financial resources, institutional authority, or social mobilisation capacity);
- **Level of interest** – the extent to which a stakeholder follows, engages in, or considers the just transition process relevant to their interests and needs.

The Power–Interest Grid allows stakeholders to be classified into four main categories

*Table 4. Four main stakeholder categories in the Power–Interest Grid*

High power – high interest <b>Key Players</b>	High power – low interest <b>(Keep Satisfied)</b>	Low power – high interest <b>Keep Informed</b>	Low power – low interest <b>Monitor</b>
<i>Actors with high influence and a high level of engagement</i>	<i>Actors with high authority but a low current level of engagement</i>	<i>Stakeholders with limited influence but high interest require constant communication and opportunities to express their opinions</i>	<i>Groups with little influence and a low level of current engagement</i>
Stakeholders that should be actively engaged throughout the process and treated as co-decision-makers, stakeholders and partners (e.g. local administration, major employers, regional public authorities)	Actors with strong influence who may not yet be fully engaged. They should be monitored and occasionally involved, especially in strategic and directional aspects (e.g. certain national institutions)	Stakeholders with limited influence but strong interest in the process and outcomes. They should be regularly informed and offered channels to express their views (e.g. social or environmental organisations, youth, etc.)	Groups with limited influence and low current engagement – they should be observed and monitored, but do not require intensive involvement (local media, citizens, etc.)

Applying this approach to stakeholder analysis in the Turów Subregion, it also enables the tailoring of appropriate communication and cooperation strategies for each group from information-sharing and consultation to co-management and joint decision-making. Figure 3 presents a typology of selected stakeholder categories in the Turów Subregion within the Power-Interest Grid.



The final category, *Monitor*, includes groups with low influence and limited engagement, such as individual citizens or academic institutions without a strong local presence. While their current impact may be minimal, they should not be entirely excluded from communication efforts, as their role may grow during later phases of the transition.

In conclusion, the stakeholder map points to the need to strengthen integration between local, regional, and national levels and to structure dialogue with groups showing high interest but limited decision-making power. An effective transition strategy therefore requires not only formal recognition of stakeholder competences but also the creation of meaningful spaces for co-participation and representation of social interests.

### **The Traffic Light assessment and Stakeholder Engagement Ladder**

**Traffic Light assessment** was used to evaluate how well the needs, challenges, and expectations of different stakeholder groups are currently researched and understood. This simple yet effective tool allows for a qualitative diagnosis of the level of awareness and consideration given to each group in strategic planning. Each stakeholder group is assigned a traffic light colour, based on the current level of awareness and understanding of their situation:

■ **Red light – low awareness**

The needs and interests of this group are poorly understood; there is a lack of systematic engagement or reliable data, and a risk of marginalisation.

■ **Orange light – partial awareness**

Some information or engagement exists, but it is incomplete, fragmented, or insufficiently developed.

■ **Green light – high awareness**

The stakeholder groups' needs are well understood, and have been researched. Regular dialogue and collaboration are in place.

In the analysis conducted for selected stakeholder groups in the Turów Subregion, this method helped to assess how well each group is currently included and understood in the planning of the just transition. It revealed:

■ Strategically important groups whose needs are well recognised

■ Groups with some visibility but a need for deeper engagement

■ Groups at risk of being overlooked in the transition process

The results of this assessment serve as a foundation for planning targeted communication, consultation, and engagement efforts, ensuring that the just transition process is inclusive and responsive to the region's full spectrum of stakeholders. The results are presented in Table 5 together with results of the **Stakeholder Engagement Ladder Mapping**. The latter one allows practitioners to assess not only the current level of stakeholder involvement in planning and implementation, but also to define the desired level of engagement for each group. Furthermore, this technique allows for the diagnosis of relationships with various stakeholders and points to areas needing improvement. It provides a tool for monitoring progress in stakeholder engagement over time.

There are different versions of hierarchy within this model, but for the purposes of this Handbook, we have selected five levels of participation:








1. **Informing** – one-way communication, usually top-down (e.g. online information, leaflets, announcements, awareness campaigns).






2. **Consulting** – soliciting feedback or opinions from stakeholders, often through surveys or public hearings.
3. **Involving** – engaging stakeholders more actively in planning and discussion processes (e.g. thematic workshops, conferences and meetings).
4. **Collaborating** – co-creating solutions and sharing responsibility in decision-making processes (e.g. permanent working groups, joint steering committees or co-design sessions).
5. **Empowering** – giving stakeholders real influence and shared control over implementation and outcomes.

A central feature of our proposed approach is distinguishing between the **current level of engagement** and the **desired level of engagement**:

- The **current level** describes how a stakeholder group is involved today – based on observations, past collaboration, or institutional roles.
- The **desired level** reflects the strategic ambition for how involved that group should be in order to make the transition process inclusive, effective, and legitimate.

Table 5. Analysis of the main stakeholder groups in the Turów Subregion using the Traffic Light System and Engagement Ladder methods

	Group of stakeholders	Awareness Level_Traffic Light		Participation Ladder		
		Traffic light	Justification	Current level	Desired level	Comments
1	<b>National administration</b>		Engagement at the national level remains formal and, to some extent, strategic, with limited evidence of active awareness of local social and employment impacts. Limited buy-in and lack of vision. As key stakeholders responsible for the overall vision of the transformation, their lack of involvement may delay or hinder the process. Without their active participation, the process will encounter discrepancies between strategic planning and local needs.	Informing	Consulting / Involving	Currently informed on general goals; deeper consultation needed
2	<b>Regional public administration and its entities</b>		Regional authorities are actively participating in both planning and coordination, showing a clear understanding of territorial challenges and priorities	Involving	Empowering	Highly engaged in coordination; more structured and horizontal collaboration is recommended
3	<b>Local public administration and its entities</b>		Local administrations are on the frontline of transformation and show a good understanding of community needs, although capacity constraints persist	Involving	Collaborating / Empowering	Operationally involved; better inter-sectoral linkages needed
4	<b>Regional development agencies, employers and business organisations</b>		These stakeholders could contribute to strategic planning, but current involvement and cooperation with other actors and sensitivity to social aspects of transition remain weak	Consulting	Involving / Collaborating	Limited coordination role; potential to drive entrepreneurship growth
5	<b>Universities and research institutes</b>		Higher education institutions are involved through research, but their role in shaping practical workforce or community strategies remains limited	Informing	Consulting / Involving	Engagement remains project-based but should provide expertise and advice
6	<b>Non-governmental organisations, environmental associations</b>		NGOs and environmental groups voice concerns, but their influence varies significantly depending on organisational capacity and the thematic scope of activities	Consulting	Involving / Collaborating	Selected entities active in advocacy and projects; need stronger role in co-designing solutions
7	<b>Youth</b> Vulnerable and underrepresented social groups		Youth voices are largely absent from planning structures; their concerns and aspirations are not systematically acknowledged or addressed	No action/ Informing	Involving	Underrepresented despite high relevance to long-term outcomes. Marginal involvement;

						inclusion is necessary for social equity
8	<b>Trade unions in the Turow mine and power plant in Bogatynia</b>		Formally included in discussions but rather on the national level, unions tend to focus on job protection rather than long-term worker reintegration or skill planning	No action	Involving / Collaborating	Little engagement; crucial to anticipate socio-economic impacts
9	<b>Employees of the mining and power plant in Turow</b>		There is no data-driven assessment of workers' transition potential, leading to low institutional awareness of retraining or career support needs	No action	Consulting / Involving	Limited awareness and participation in planning
10	<b>Social and cultural organisations</b> Vulnerable and underrepresented social groups		Civil society actors contribute to cultural life but are not integrated into economic or structural transformation strategies, especially those in the cultural tourism area	No action/ Informing	Consulting / Involving	Participate in cultural dialogue; potential for regional identity building
11	<b>Local media</b>		Local media reports sporadically on transition-related events or participate in projects, but to a certain extent actively shape narratives or amplify community needs	Informing	Consulting / Involving	Provide information; the role in shaping public discourse is underutilised
12	<b>PGE GiEK</b>		PGE GiEK plays a central role but shows limited engagement with regional or participatory frameworks beyond corporate or state-level strategy. Their decisions and strategy depend on a top-down strategic plan at the government and ministerial levels	Informing	Collaborating	Little engagement. Key player, hitherto passive – needs to be involved in joint planning

The combined use of the *Traffic Light System* and the *Ladder of Participation* enabled a detailed diagnosis of stakeholders' awareness of the challenges, needs, and expectations, as well as their actual and desired engagement in the just transition process in the Turów Subregion.

The *Traffic Light System* facilitated a qualitative assessment of how well the situation of each stakeholder group is recognised within strategic planning processes. The vast majority of stakeholder groups were assigned an orange light, indicating a partial or fragmented understanding of their circumstances. Of particular concern is the presence of four groups in the red category—namely, youth, employees of the Turów Complex, trade unions, and cultural organisations—signalling significant knowledge gaps and a risk of marginalisation in transition planning and implementation.

The application of the *Ladder of Participation* further allowed for the identification of both current and desired levels of stakeholder engagement. The findings showed that the dominant approach remains one-way communication (informing) or limited consultation. However, for many stakeholders, such as civil society organisations, youth groups, employers, universities, and trade unions, the recommended level of engagement is active involvement, collaboration, or even co-decision-making, particularly in areas such as strategic planning, development of support instruments, and monitoring progress.

The discrepancies between levels of awareness and stakeholder engagement point to the need for:

- a **deeper understanding of the needs and expectations of under-recognised groups**, particularly youth, workers, and cultural and social organisations;
- **strengthened dialogue** with groups that show high interest but possess limited decision-making power;
- **increased involvement of strategic actors**, such as the central government and PGE GiEK, in regional cooperation and co-governance mechanisms;
- implementation of tools to monitor participation progress and assess the effectiveness of communication and consultation measures.

### **Key insights from the combined stakeholder analysis**

The stakeholder analysis, conducted using three complementary methods, has revealed critical areas requiring attention in the next phases of just transition planning in the Turów Subregion.

#### **KEY CONCLUSION: Insufficient engagement of key actors – central government and PGE GiEK**

Although both of these groups possess significant influence (high power), their actual participation in regional planning and cooperation mechanisms is limited (low interest / low engagement). In the case of the central government, there is a lack of a structured vision, with a deficit of dialogue and feedback between national policy and the local needs of the Turów Subregion. Similarly, while PGE GiEK is formally included in planning, it does not actively engage in co-decision-making or in designing specific solutions for the Turów Subregion. Their actions and decisions are closely dependent on government and ministry decisions, which represent a significant limitation in the context of implementing the transformation process.

#### **Conclusion 1: High levels of engagement among local and regional authorities**

The results confirm that local and regional governments demonstrate a strong understanding of transition-related challenges, possess relevant organisational resources, and show technical expertise. They are actively involved in all stages of planning and coordination. However, their continued effectiveness will depend on the availability of institutional resources, coordination mechanisms, and crucially, direction and support from the national level.

#### **Conclusion 2: Workers and trade unions – key stakeholders requiring urgent attention**

The analysis highlighted a very low level of awareness of the challenges and an absence of systematic engagement in the transition process. Workers and their representatives lack reliable information on restructuring plans and are not involved in the design of support systems or reskilling strategies. This represents a critical gap which, if unaddressed, could undermine the overall success of the transition.

### **Conclusion 3: Untapped potential of youth and the cultural sector**

These groups have limited visibility in transition planning and a low level of awareness of the processes involved. Yet their involvement, as future beneficiaries and as initiators of community and cultural activities, could play a key role in forging a renewed socio-economic identity for the region.

The just transition in the Turów Subregion can build upon a solid foundation laid by local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, and active community leaders. However, **it cannot succeed without a clear commitment to cooperation and a strategic vision from national-level actors.**

It is essential to establish an institutional collaboration framework that allows for an integrated approach to planning and implementation, bringing together actors with varying capacities but equally critical roles in shaping a resilient and inclusive future for the region.

Further recommendations are provided in the next chapters.

## 5. Multi-level governance of just transition: different approaches to stakeholder collaboration platforms

### 5.1 Context

As outlined in Chapter 3 Background and landscape assessment, the lack of an institutionalised coordination mechanism significantly hinders the region's ability to plan, implement and align just transition activities across sectors and governance levels. This fact was observed and discussed during the fact-finding mission conducted in January 2025 and in-depth interviews conducted in March and April. In this chapter, we focus on describing different collaboration structures and draw from examples of commissions, councils, and observatories across Europe, which have demonstrated successful work in planning, implementing, and/or monitoring the just transition processes. Those best practices are then used to derive recommendations for the Turów Subregion.

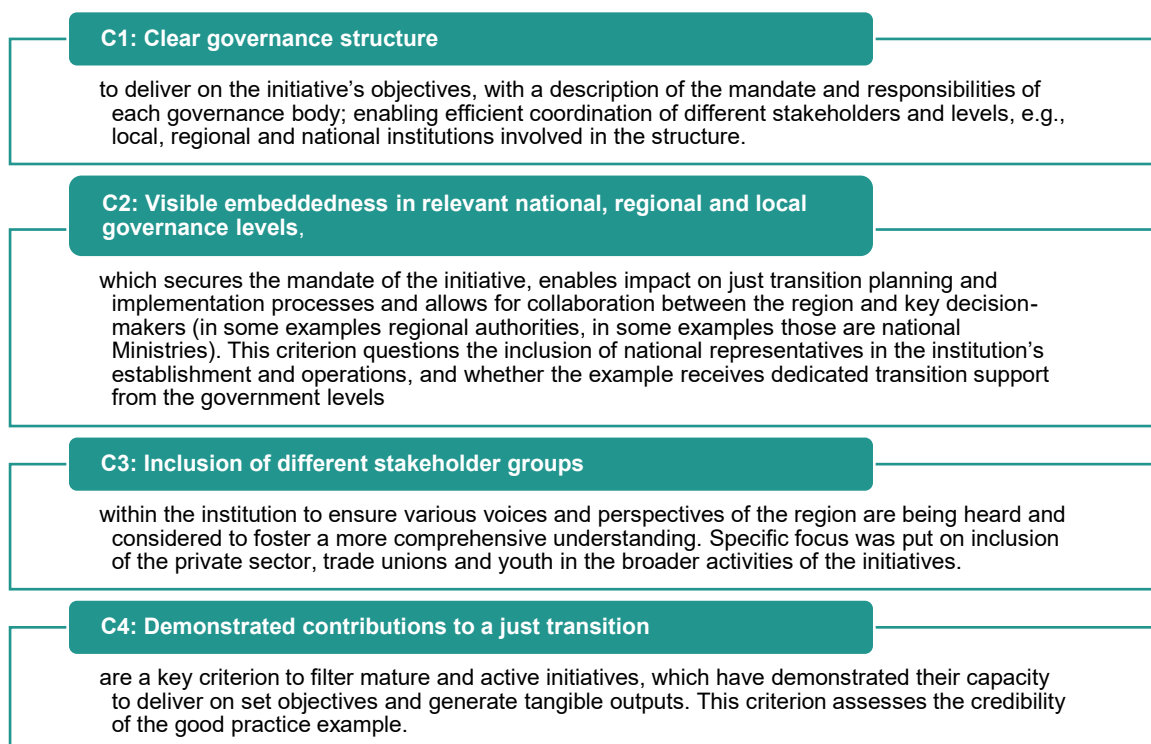
### 5.2 Methodology

The methodology of selecting and analysing best practices to recommend a stakeholder collaboration structure for the region has been designed to target the main challenges of the Turów Subregion. Those challenges have been identified during the fact-finding mission in the region and further deepened by additional interviews, among others with local authorities, the Marshal's Office, representatives of PGE Group and local NGOs. The following challenges, in detail described in Chapter 4 Mapping stakeholders: identification, needs and involvement, are used as a reference in the selection criteria of good practices:

- Dispersed decision-making power over the (future of) the Turow mine and power plant. The complex fell under the remit of various ministries and now falls under the Ministry of Climate and Environment and the Ministry of State Assets.
- Weak representation of the Turów Subregion in government and central public administration.
- Withdrawal of PGE Group from prior projects and working groups.
- Need for a leader for the transition process and a clear collaboration structure with designated institutional responsibilities and resources.
- Limited experience in implementing a just transition in Dolnośląskie, as the mining in Wałbrzych ceased more than 20 years ago.

Considering the main challenges presented above, the criteria have been designed to filter the most relevant good practice examples to benefit the Turów Subregion.

Figure 5. The applied criteria for good practice selection

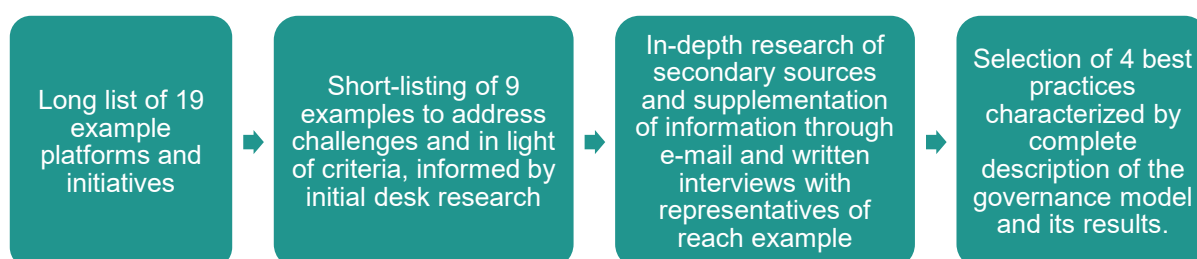


Based on available literature, online sources like the Just Transition Platform Knowledge Hub, JTPeers experts database, as well as consortium contacts and experiences from previous projects, **a long list of 19 examples of just transition observatories and stakeholder collaboration platforms was generated.** This list was filtered to focus on the initiatives which could be informative for the Turów Subregion, given the challenges listed above and satisfied the above, resulting in 9 relevant initiatives<sup>16</sup>. Additional desk research on details of those structures and clarifying written interviews with representatives of those structures have been initiated and conducted to identify the examples where the most extensive information was available. **Four key examples have been identified in this process and learnings were pulled to inform the recommendations.** These short-listed good practice institutions are: Regional Observatory of the Transition Process (ROTP) in Śląskie, Poland; Coal Commission in Hungary; Just Transition Observatory Alentejo in Portugal and Zukunftsagentur in Germany.

Figure 6 illustrates the selection process of best practices and desk research.

<sup>16</sup> [Chemelot Circular Hub](#), [Upper Nitra's action plan for a Just Transition](#), [Just Transition observatory Asturias](#), [Just Transition Observatory Śląskie - "Regional observatory of the transition process \(ROTP\)](#), [Coal Commission in Hungary](#), [Just Transition Observatory Western Macedonia](#), [Just Transition Observatory Alentejo](#), [Upper Austria - inclusion of unions and employers as shareholders of the TJTP](#), and [Zukunftsagentur](#)

Figure 6: Best practices selection process



A comparative analysis was conducted to identify the distinctive elements of the initiatives and derive a framework for setting up a collaboration platform for stakeholders in a just transition region, which would feature a range of options for each of the design elements. The framework design has been additionally informed by the concept paper on ‘Setting up and Implementing a Territorial Socio-Economic Observatory on the Just Transition (TOJT)’ developed by just transition experts as part of the Working Group of Just Transition Platform.<sup>17</sup>

Section 5.3 introduces key data on the four examples which have been the subject of the comparative analysis. Section 5.4 consists of the results of the comparative analysis of the design elements derived thereof. Chapter 6 presents recommendations for the collaborative structure to be set-up in Turów territory.

### 5.3 Overview of short-listed best practices

This section introduces key data on the four examples selected for the comparative analysis: the Regional Observatory of the Transition Process (ROTP) in Śląskie, Poland; the Coal Commission in Hungary; the Just Transition Observatory Alentejo in Portugal; and the Zukunftsagentur in Germany. The colour coding of each example makes it easier to identify the references to one of the four initiatives in subsequent paragraphs.

Table 6. Regional Observatory of the Transition Process

<b>Name</b>	Regional Observatory of the Transition Process (ROTP) in Śląskie, Poland
<b>Timeline</b>	2022-2029
<b>Funding</b>	2022-2023: co-financed by the ERDF, 2024-2027 (+2): JTF, subsequently plan to co-finance the project with funds from the next 2028-2034 financial perspective.
<b>Why included</b>	Example of how a bottom-up initiative evolved into a project supported from ERDF, and later into a formalised partnership embedded into just transition governance and paid by the JTF. The ROTP was intended from the outset as a partnership-based initiative, with space for various stakeholders to contribute experience and potential. Successful engagement of trade unions.
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusion of the scientific community, NGOs, trade unions, and employer organisations</li> <li>- Well-embedded into the regional Just Transition Governance</li> <li>- Supporting the Monitoring Committee in monitoring</li> <li>- Key role in implementing stakeholder engagement through workshops, campaigns and labs</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of the ROTP in Śląskie</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform catalogue on Just Transition measurement approaches</a>
<b>Source 3</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform Case study: Regional observatory of the transition process in Śląskie</a>

<sup>17</sup> [Just Transition Platform Working Groups - Action 5: Setting up and Implementing a Territorial Socio-Economic Observatory on the Just Transition – Concept Paper](#) as well as [Just transition measurement approaches: A catalogue for just transition regions](#)

<b>Source 4</b>	E-mail communication with Marshal's Office of the Śląskie Voivodeship, Department of Regional Development and Transition.
-----------------	---

Table 7. Coal Commission in Hungary

<b>Name</b>	Coal Commission in Hungary
<b>Timeline</b>	2021-2029 and beyond
<b>Funding</b>	Partially funded by the LIFE IP North-HU-Trans project
<b>Why included</b>	Successful set-up of a formalised, legitimate structure delivering on similar aims as the ones followed by the Turów territory's stakeholders: need to coordinate inputs and project ideas for the implementation of Just Transition, need to conduct effective stakeholder engagement and feed into the processes orchestrated by the regional government, close cooperation with the ministries and focus on decarbonisation of the power plant.
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Commission's structure differentiates between core members and decision-makers and further relevant stakeholders who are included in consultations and awareness raising activities. The Commission's work is supported by working groups delivering dedicated actions proposals and topics to be discussed, supported further by awareness raising activities for youth and general public.</li> <li>- Successful set-up of a multistakeholder consultation platform (in this case national and not regional level) and obtaining a mandate from the central administration.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of the Coal Commission</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	E-mail communication with the Commission's Secretariat, including materials prepared for the purposes of JTPeers Exchanges by the Secretariat

Table 8. Just Transition Observatory, Alentejo

<b>Name</b>	Just Transition Observatory, Alentejo, Portugal
<b>Timeline</b>	Since 2024
<b>Funding</b>	n/a
<b>Why included</b>	The JT Observatory Alentejo is relevant for Turów territory, as it has been recently set-up (still in early stages) and provides an example approach to stakeholder engagement, and just transition monitoring. It brings diverse stakeholders together through a two-level governance structure (Permanent Council and General Council). The JTO provides a multistakeholder engagement and monitoring platform that integrates with the regional transition governance.
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The observatory has a two-level governance structure, to accommodate the inputs of a wider group of stakeholders. A permanent council with an executive function is led by the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of Alentejo. The council is supported by the so called 'general council' consisting of a wider range of stakeholders – local business associations, trade unions, youth associations, training entities.</li> <li>- The observatory facilitates coordination across governance levels, promotes inclusive participation and independent monitoring.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of the Just Transition Observatory Alentejo</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform catalogue on Just Transition measurement approaches</a>
<b>Source 3</b>	E-mail communication with the Alentejo Regional Coordination and Development Commission

Table 9. Zukunftsagentur, Rheinisch Region

<b>Name</b>	Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier GmbH, Rheinisch Region, Germany
<b>Timeline</b>	2021-2038 and beyond
<b>Funding</b>	Partially funded by the German Federal Government under the Act on the structural transition of coal regions and the Act on investment in coal regions. Additionally, specific projects like the hydrogen region initiative are funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.
<b>Why included</b>	The Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier exemplifies how an intermediary agency can drive the implementation of Just Transition. Created by municipalities, business associations, and the IG BCE trade union, it has successfully built consensus on lignite

	phase-out and reduced competition among local governments. By managing its own projects, the agency has gained deep regional expertise. It oversees planning, project calls, and monitoring. This model is relevant for Dolnośląskie due to similar challenges, such as transitioning from lignite and proximity to metropolitan hubs, and can leverage universities and research centres to support the transition.
<b>Best practice</b>	- Zukunftsagentur has its own assets and dedicated staff and acts as the main coordinating body. It operates in close collaboration with political, economic, and scientific stakeholders. - The successful governance structure includes: a supervisory board to provide recommendations and strategic guidance, a shareholders' assembly to decide on the essential guidelines and strategic decisions, and a regular dedicated conference to engage local stakeholders and ensure regional input.
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of the Zukunftsagentur</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">European Commission Case Study on Region Development Agency – Rhenish Lignite Mining Area</a>
<b>Source 3</b>	Study visit to the region organized as part of the project on June 10-11 2025

## 5.4 Overview of the structural elements of stakeholder collaboration platforms

This section consists of the results of the comparative analysis the design elements derived thereof. Six different design aspects have been defined and each initiative has been analysed according to this framework:

1. **Objective of the initiative**
2. **Scope of the initiative**
3. **Level of institutionalisation**
4. **Governance (structure, members)**
5. **Embedding in regional/national just transition governance**
6. **Operational aspects**

Each of the items is described below, accompanied by analysis insights and best practices identified (where relevant).

Additionally, this chapter is expanded in Section 5.4.7 by the additional examples which have been collected to demonstrate the maturity and effectiveness of the structures by featuring:

- stakeholder engagement methods applied by the initiatives, and
- contributions to just transition planning and implementation

examples are provided at the end of this section as best practices.

### 5.4.1 Objective of the initiative

*'Objective' refers to the primary goal or purpose that the initiative aims to achieve. It outlines the main focus and desired outcomes of the initiative, such as supporting economic diversification, improving labour market conditions, or enhancing regional development.*

**Analysis outcomes:** The objectives of the screened collaboration platforms are shaped by the needs and challenges of the regional/national just transition context and the existing governance structures. All four best practice examples presented in the section above have set the objective of supporting the just transition process of their region as their primary goal. Those objectives differ from being very concise to more detailed (see examples below).

*Table 10. Examples - Objective of the initiative*

Examples
Zukunftsagentur follows three goals: 1) Shaping structural change: The agency aims to actively guide the transformation of the Rhenish mining region into a model for sustainability, quality of life, and future-proof employment. 2) Leading in climate protection and regional development: It seeks to

position the region as a pioneer in climate action and modern regional planning. 3) Promoting participation: Citizens are to be informed and involved in shaping the transition.

ROTP's in Poland objective is to support and improve the management of the just transition process in Śląskie with a focus on labour market issues, economic diversification and potential post-industrial, post-mining areas.

Coal Commission in Hungary's objective is provide a platform for multistakeholder consultation to support the sustainable and just transition of the region and to support the implementation of the Hungarian Energy and Climate Plan.

## 5.4.2 Scope of the initiative

The 'scope' defines the extent and boundaries of the initiative. It includes the specific activities, tasks, and areas that the initiative will cover. This can range from research and analysis to educational events and pilot projects.

**Analysis outcomes:** The screened initiatives deliver on their objectives through activities that can be grouped into six categories:



- 1. Coordination across governance levels, support for decision-making and strategic planning.** Activities to ensure alignment and coordination among different governance levels, such as local, regional, and national authorities, e.g. facilitating or supporting committee meetings, providing data for strategic decisions, and collaboration with governing and monitoring bodies.

Table 11. Examples - Scope of the initiative (1)

Examples
Zukunftsagentur acts as a crucial intermediary between local and state (regional) levels, operating under a multi-level governance framework that involves close collaboration between the private sector, trade unions, regional authorities, ministries, and local stakeholders. The agency's role as an intermediary ensures that local interests are taken into account and effectively channelled to state-level decision-makers, and vice-versa, while keeping a natural position. Zukunftsagentur is responsible for developing long-term plans and strategies to guide the structural change process.
The Coal Commission provides a platform for multi-stakeholder consultation to support the sustainable and just transition of the North Hungarian region. It coordinates inputs and project ideas for the implementation of Just Transition, ensuring close cooperation with ministries and regional committees in coal regions. It develops action proposals to help regions implement just transition and coordinates a cooperation and experience-sharing platform.



- 2. Analytical and research tasks.** For example, conducting strategic and foresight research and analysis on economic, social, and environmental topics, publishing reports, and collecting statistical data.

Table 12. Examples - Scope of the initiative (2)

Example
Key pillar of ROTP's scope. ROTP successfully performs these tasks via generating reports, best practice guides, SWOT analysis, and contributions to the Territorial Just Transition Plans of the region.



- 3. Stakeholder engagement and cross-sectoral dialogues.** For instance, awareness-raising activities, stakeholder mapping, (international) conferences, workshops, and consultations for local stakeholders.

Table 13. Examples - Scope of the initiative (3)

Example
One of ROTP's key activity areas, delivered through educational and networking events, "Transition Cafés", discussion forums, campaigns and consultations.
The Zukunftsagentur has set up the 'Revier-Akademie' for individuals wanting to contribute to the transition, offering training and knowledge-sharing sessions, and networking opportunities. The Zukunftsagentur awareness raising activities, that target different groups, including students, local communities and industry professionals. It also anchored a broad stakeholder consultation in its governance – through the regular “neighbouring” conference for local stakeholders.



4. **Building ecosystems** for the implementation of just transition and regional development. This can include strengthening industrial cooperations, cooperation with educational and research centres, cross-regional cooperation support, and establishing dedicated working groups consisting of local actors, R&D centres, and entrepreneurial agencies that work on developing project ideas or attracting funding.

Table 14. Examples - Scope of the initiative (4)

Example
Zukunftsagentur collaborates with innovation centres and technology parks in the region, such as the Brainergy Park, to foster research and development in sustainable technologies.



5. **Progressing implementation** involves designing, implementing, or providing support to regional projects within the scope of the initiative. The extent of this activity depends on the resources available to the initiative.

Table 15. Examples - Scope of the initiative (5)

Example
The Zukunftsagentur provides support for the development and implementation of projects that contribute to the structural change in the Rhenish lignite area. This includes advising on proposals, securing funding, and overseeing the planning, project calls, and monitoring of the 'Economic and Structural Programme'. Examples include: Gigawattpakt: Expands renewable energy capacity, involving local municipalities, energy providers, and community groups, Modellregion Bioökonomie: Promotes bioeconomy practices by collaborating with farmers, agricultural associations, and environmental groups.



6. **Contributing to monitoring** involves the initiative's involvement in tracking and assessing the progress and outcomes of just transition implementation. The information and input gathered from stakeholders and the research and analysis the initiative performs can be used to monitor the regional just transition implementation.

Table 16. Examples - Scope of the initiative (6)

Examples
ROTP provides support to the Monitoring Committee by conducting research, analysis and monitoring of just transition in the region to predict future skills, analysing statistical and numerical data, as well as qualitative opinions, observations & concerns to support the regional transformation.
Alentejo: monitoring activities being key responsibility of the Observatory.

Table 17 provides an overview of the scope of the four selected initiatives based on the six categories mentioned above.

Table 17. Summary of the screened initiatives' scope

Scope / Initiative	ROTP	Coal Commission in Hungary	Just Transition Observatory Alentejo	Zukunfts-agentur
<b>Coordination across governance levels, support for decision-making, strategic planning</b>	Yes, support	Yes, lead	Yes, support	Yes, lead
<b>Analytical and research tasks</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Stakeholder engagement and cross-sectoral dialogues</b>	Yes (within and broader)	Yes (within and broader)	Yes (within the initiative)	Yes (within and broader)
<b>Building ecosystems</b>	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Progressing implementation</b>	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Contributing to monitoring</b>	Yes	Indirect	Yes	Yes

### 5.4.3 Level of Institutionalisation

This term describes how formally the initiative is integrated into existing structures and systems. It indicates whether the initiative operates as an informal group or has a formalised structure with official recognition and mandates from authorities. The level of institutionalisation can range from low to very high. At the higher end, the initiative might be a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) or an agency with a clear legal status, dedicated staff, and defined governance structures. This formalisation often provides legitimacy and stability, enabling the initiative to effectively coordinate and implement its activities within the broader governance framework, requiring secured funding.

**Analysis outcomes:** The level of institutionalisation of the screened initiatives differs, and for the purposes of this document, the examples are ranked as having a medium, high or very high level of institutionalisation. Among the examples, there is none with a low level of institutionalisation, which could be defined as groups operating without formal recognition or mandates from authorities, often relying on voluntary participation and with limited resources. Generally, inclusion of regional and/or national authorities in the launch and operation of the initiative leads to a more secure mandate and a higher level of institutionalisation. Additionally, having representatives from these authorities in the institution's governance structure ensures more secure execution of the institution's activities and enhances reliability. Table 18 provides an overview of the analysis results.

Table 18. Level of institutionalisation of screened initiatives

Level	Description	Example
<b>Medium</b>	Semi-formal structures with some level of formal recognition and partial funding from authorities. Operate based on defined roles and responsibilities, but lack dedicated staff.	The <b>JT Observatory Alentejo</b> has a structured governance model involving both permanent and fluid councils. Supported and led by Regional Coordination and Development Commission of Alentejo, but lacks dedicated staff.
<b>High</b>	Formalised initiatives with official recognition and mandate, dedicated staff, and defined governance structures. Secured funding and a clear mandate from authorities are a requirement.	<b>ROTP:</b> Partnership-based project launched and led by the Marshal's Office of the Śląskie Voivodeship, involving participants from the scientific community, employer organisations, trade unions, and NGOs. Fully funded.

		<b>Coal Commission:</b> Formalised initiative with a mandate from national authorities, managed by the Ministry of Energy and supported by an established Secretariat.
<b>Very High</b>	Highly institutionalised agencies operating as registered non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or agencies with clear legal status, dedicated staff, and well-defined governance structures.	<b>Zukunftsagentur:</b> A highly institutionalised agency with its own assets and dedicated staff. It acts as the main coordinating body for the structural change process, with a mandate from national authorities and close cooperation with regional and local governments, industry stakeholders, and civil society organisations.

#### 5.4.4 Governance (Structure, Members)

*Governance refers to the organisational framework and the people involved in managing and overseeing the initiative. It includes the structure of the governing bodies, such as councils or boards, and the roles and responsibilities of the members.*

**Analysis outcomes:** The analysed initiatives are each governed by a unique structure, reflecting their national, regional, and institutional contexts, funding type, as well as their scope. However, several common elements emerge across the cases:

1. **Multistakeholder engagement** is a shared priority, with all initiatives' structures involving a mix of public authorities at different levels, civil society, and economic actors<sup>18</sup>. The alignment of different mandates, competencies and perspectives of the stakeholders engaged is achieved through the institutionalisation of a multi-governance framework, see below.
2. **Multi-level governance** is implemented by almost all screened initiatives through **vertical coordination mechanisms**, such as supervisory boards, intergovernmental councils, secretariats and working groups - these models facilitate coherent policy delivery, reduce fragmentation, and ensure that strategic decisions are informed by both top-down policy objectives and bottom-up territorial realities. This layered governance structure is especially effective in just transition contexts, where the complexity of socio-economic transformation demands both political legitimacy and social ownership.
3. Support for just transition process being their central goal, the initiatives have set up dedicated **horizontal structures to deliver on the activities in scope**, whether research, coordination, or stakeholder mobilisation. The breadth of the topics covered differs among the initiatives, as described in section 5.4.2.
4. **Institutional anchoring varies, but all models aim to embed their work within broader regional or national governance frameworks**. More details are described in the next paragraph.

These common aspects align closely with the principles outlined in **the concept paper on Territorial Socio-Economic Observatories (TOJTs)**, which advocate for observatories as inclusive, participatory, and evidence-based platforms that support social dialogue, community engagement, and policy co-design.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the paper highlights three key principles for the selection of partners for the initiative to ensure its sustainability and shared ownership:

(a) **Complementarity:** partners contribute with non-overlapping resources (knowledge, competencies, relations) to the alliance. (b) **Commitment:** political and scientific commitment are especially relevant to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Observatory. (c) **Compatibility:** partners share similar objectives and values and display a long-term cultural alignment. The role of civil society is valued by adopting principles of equity and trust.

<sup>18</sup> Though the depth and breadth of stakeholder engagement vary among the initiatives and is described in one of the further sections, see Section 5.4.7.

<sup>19</sup> [Just Transition Platform Working Groups - Action 5: Setting up and Implementing a Territorial Socio-Economic Observatory on the Just Transition – Concept Paper](#)

The differences between the initiatives' structures are best demonstrated based on two parameters:

1. **Verticality** - referring to the **number of governance levels** involved in the governance structure. Rather than reflecting the different territorial levels (e.g. local, regional, national), it captures the internal layering of governance bodies within the structure. High vertical governance is characterised by:
  - **tiered governance architecture**, such as presidencies, commissions, councils, and working groups,
  - **role differentiation**, where each body has a clearly defined function - strategic oversight, executive coordination, deliberation, or operational delivery,
  - **stakeholder stratification**, where actors are included in different bodies depending on their institutional role, legal mandate, or technical expertise (e.g. ministries in presidencies, trade unions in commissions, NGOs in working groups).
2. **Horizontality** – capturing the **breadth and diversity of stakeholders** involved in the governance process, as well as the **range of topics** addressed. High horizontal governance includes:
  - **cross-sectoral participation** from trade unions, civil society organisations, academia, business associations, youth groups, and environmental actors,
  - **inclusive deliberative structures** such as general councils, stakeholder forums, or working groups
  - **thematic width of the initiative.**

Figure 7 illustrates a relative ranking of the initiatives across those two parameters.

Figure 7. Best practices selection process

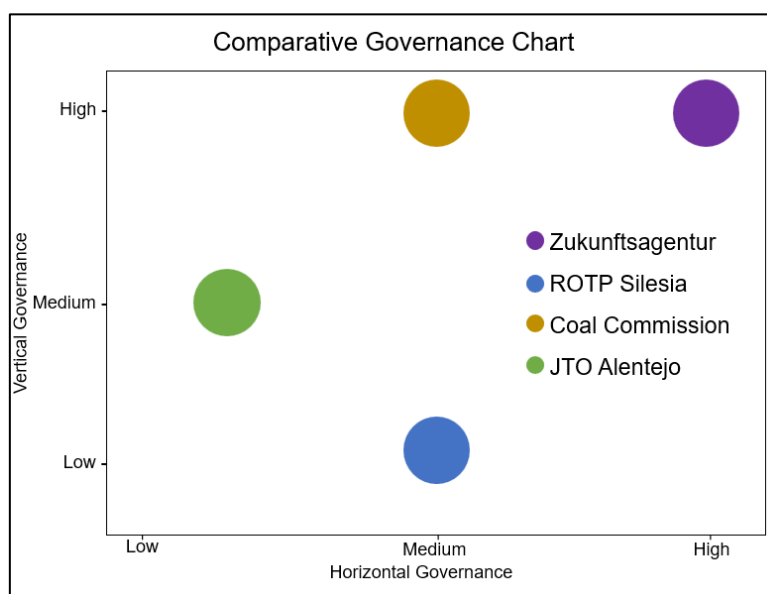


Table 19 highlights interesting governance aspects from screened initiatives.

Table 19. Examples - Governance structures

**Coal Commission – Hungary: high vertical, medium horizontal**

Good example of successful highly vertical governance, combining stakeholders with various mandates, roles, capacities and perspectives in its structure. The Coal Commission is a nationally mandated platform coordinated by the Ministry of Energy. Its governance structure includes:

- **A Presidency**, composed of high-level decision-makers from the Ministry for Technology and Industry, the Ministry for National Assets, and the Heves County Chamber of Commerce.
- **A President**, who is the Secretary General of the Heves County Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- **A Secretariat**, hosted by Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, which manages operations and supports coordination.
- **Working Group Meetings** that include a wide range of stakeholders - municipalities, Matra Power Plant, trade unions, and NGOs - selected through stakeholder mapping.

This structure ensures both institutional authority and broad stakeholder inclusion in decision-making and implementation.

#### **The Just Transition Observatory Alentejo: Medium vertical, low horizontal**

Layered governance model with two formal councils:

- **Permanent Council**: Chaired by the Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDRA), it has executive responsibilities including monitoring TJTP implementation, managing JTF funds, and developing indicators and digital platforms.
- **General Council**: A deliberative body that meets biannually and includes representatives from municipalities, trade unions, youth organisations, business associations, and national agencies. This council supports the Permanent Council and provides its position and perspective on certain just transition implementation topics.
- **Technical Unit**: Provides administrative and operational support to both councils, including documentation and reporting.

#### **The Zukunftsagentur in Rhenish Region: high vertical, high horizontal**

Operates under a state mandate and serves as the main coordinating body for structural change in the Rhenish lignite region. Its governance is structured around three key bodies:

- **Supervisory Board**: Provides strategic oversight and includes representatives from national ministries (e.g. Ministry for Economic Affairs, Industry, Climate Protection, and Energy; Ministry for Labor, Health, and Social Affairs; Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, and Transport), the State Chancellery, and major cities like Cologne and Düsseldorf.
- **Shareholders' Assembly**: consists of 18 shareholders who decide on the essential guidelines and strategic direction of the agency. Members include representatives from municipalities, regional authorities, and other stakeholders involved in the structural change process.
- **Anrainerkonferenz** (Neighbouring Conference): A participatory forum that ensures local stakeholders contribute to decision-making and regional alignment.

This tripartite structure enables clear separation of responsibilities and ensures both vertical legitimacy and horizontal inclusiveness.

#### **ROTP Śląskie – Poland: low vertical, medium horizontal**

The ROTP in Śląskie is a bottom-up project led by the **Marshal's Office**. It is embedded in regional governance. The project consists of eight institutional partners with defined roles, including universities, chambers of commerce, and trade unions. A **Steering Committee** and monthly working meetings to coordinate activities and ensure continuity. While less vertically integrated, ROTP excels in the operational delivery and with of topics covered within the project.

### 5.4.5 Embedding in regional/national just transition governance

*This term explains how the initiative is integrated into broader regional or national governance frameworks for just transition. It highlights connections and collaborations with regional authorities, ministries, and other stakeholders and whether the initiative has a (supportive) role in policy making, just transition planning, and implementation.*

**Analysis outcomes:** The degree to which a governance model is embedded in regional just transition governance frameworks is largely determined by its **mandate** -that is, the extent to which its outputs influence or are integrated into decision-making processes. Four intensity levels of this embedding have been identified:

**Level 1: Supporting:** The initiative provides auxiliary input, such as data, analysis, or stakeholder engagement, without formal influence on decision-making.

**Level 2: Monitoring:** The initiative tracks progress, evaluates implementation of the relevant funds and projects, collects data on key parameters (e.g., labour market monitoring) and informs adjustments to regional strategies.

**Level 3: Consulting:** The initiative is formally consulted on strategic decisions and contributes to shaping policy directions.

**Level 4: Managing:** The initiative holds executive or coordinating authority over the implementation of just transition activities.

Table 20 illustrates the embedding level of each initiative.

Table 20. Embedding level of each initiative in regional just transition governance

Supporting	Monitoring	Consulting	Managing
Coal Commission in Hungary			
Zukunftsagentur			
ROTP			
JTO Alentejo			

Table 21 highlights interesting examples on how screened initiatives are embedded in regional and national just transition governance.

Table 21. Examples - Embedding in regional/national just transition governance

Examples
The Coal Commission is formally consulted by ministries and regional authorities, particularly during the revision of TJTPs and in the Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Program Plus (EEEOP+). It does not directly manage implementation but plays a central role in coordination through its Presidency and Secretariat (see graphic below).
The ROTP has an extensive supporting function, conducts socio-economic analysis and supports the Monitoring Committee in tracking TJTP implementation. It also participates in shaping regional just transition strategies through the Regional Council for Just Transition, but does not hold managing authority over the process.

#### 5.4.6 Operational aspects

*Operational aspects describe the methods and environments in which the initiative operates.*

**Analysis outcomes:** The screened initiatives operate in different facets to ensure effective functioning. Four key operational aspects are highlighted below:

1. **Regular meetings** ensure the initiative's operations to be aligned, and well-planned. Regular working meetings keep the initiative updated, coordinated and facilitate effective communication. Having regular 'Steering Committee' meetings aim to provide strategic oversight and ensure that the project aligns with its goals and objectives.

Table 22. Examples - Operational aspects (1)

Examples
The ROTP holds monthly working meetings, and the Steering Committee meets at least three times a year to support the operations of the initiative.
The Commission in Hungary meets regularly in person in the region's 'Steering Committee meetings'. The agenda is jointly developed by the Ministry, Coal Commission's Secretariat and the President of

Coal Commission and the feedback surveys. These meetings bring high-level representatives and decision-makers together to shape the future of the Coal Commission.

2. **Team skill and knowledge enhancement** keep the initiative's members equipped with the necessary just transition expertise, and they foster a collaborative environment where participants can develop knowledge and innovative solutions.

Table 23. Examples - Operational aspects (2)

#### Example

The Coal Commission in Hungary invites speakers to its regular 'Steering Committee' meetings, where speakers present their knowledge on transition topics, followed by panel discussions.

3. **Working Groups** are useful tools for involving a wider array of stakeholders and enhancing the initiative's capacity. The outputs of the Working Group discussions can feed into the region's just transition planning and implementation via the initiative's proposals and reports.

Table 24. Examples - Operational aspects (3)

#### Example

The Coal Commission in Hungary has four Working Groups: Vision of Just Transition, Economy Support Alternative, Recultivation and Residential Energy Usage. The topics of these Working Groups are decided based on the needs of the region and local stakeholders. These Working Groups consist of member of the Commission but other relevant stakeholders are also invited to the discussions. The outcomes are usually in the form of proposals or key topics that the Coal Commission should meet and discuss in their 'Steering Committee' meetings.

4. **Physical presence in the region** helps the initiative to better engage with the region, understand the challenges and expectations, and develop projects to support just transition implementation.

Table 25. Examples - Operational aspects (4)

#### Example

The Zukunftsagentur operates from its main office in Brainergy Park, Jülich. This physical hub serves as a central hub for coordination and collaboration. The agency collaborates with innovation centres and technology parks in the region, such as the Future Mobility Part Aldenhoven and the Forschungsflugplatz Würselen-Aachen. These centres provide spaces for research, development, and collaboration on innovative projects.

### 5.4.7 Further examples based on the analysis of screened initiatives

This section includes further examples which have been researched to demonstrate the maturity and effectiveness of the structures by featuring:

- stakeholder engagement methods applied by the initiatives, and
- contributions to just transition planning and implementation.

Examples of stakeholder engagement methods applied by the initiatives

To engage stakeholders effectively for their stated aims, the screened initiatives have tested and implemented different engagement methods. These activities can take place in physical spaces or in an online format, depending on the opportunities and availability of the stakeholders. The methods of stakeholder engagement identified in the examples can be grouped into three categories as outreach, consultation and engagement activities based on the aim of the activity. Via these activities, a collaborative environment where stakeholders can engage constructively, develop innovative solutions, and work towards a just and sustainable transition can be created. By ensuring broad participation and support, these activities contribute to the legitimacy, reliability, and success of the transition

governance. The activity types, depending on the aim they serve, are presented in the graphic below. Figure 8 presents the comprehensive approach by the Zukunftsagentur.

Figure 8. Methods of stakeholder engagement identified in the examples

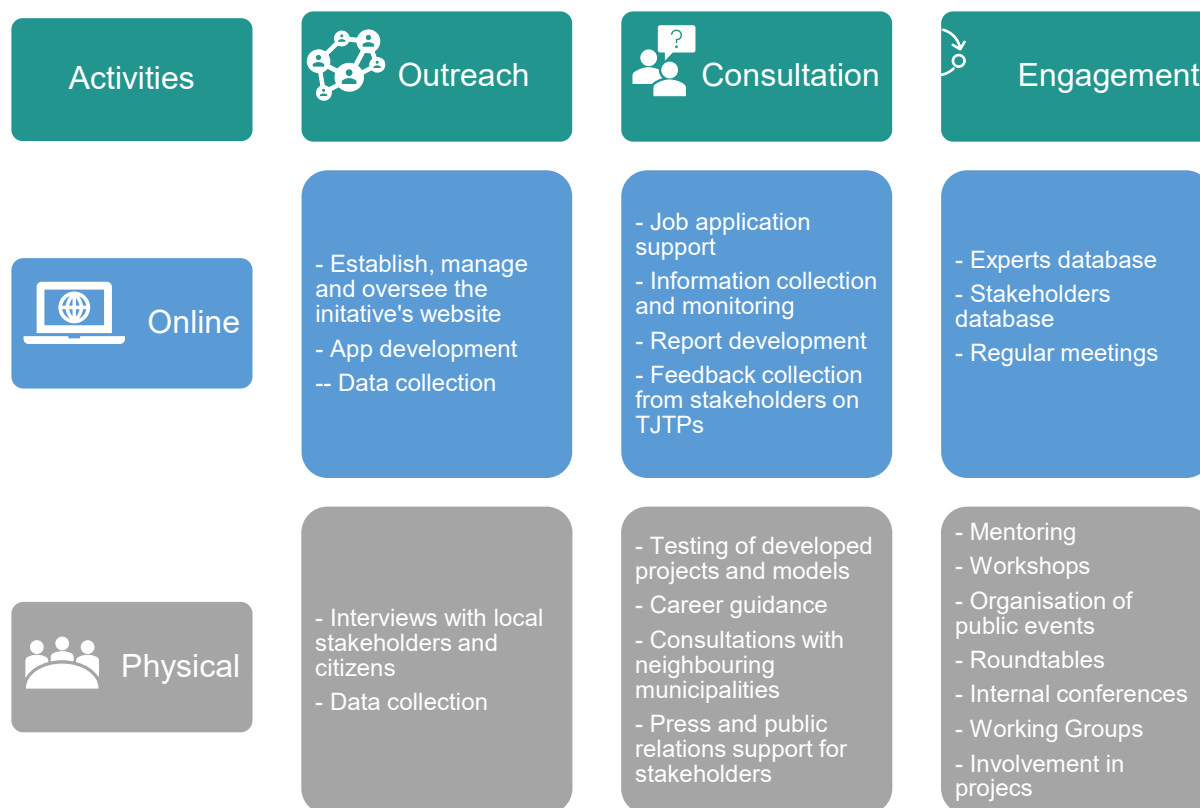


Table 26. Example - Stakeholder engagement approach

Example
<p>Some activities of the Zukunftsagentur in the region include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bürgerbeteiligung (Citizen participation):</b> The agency facilitates active participation of citizens in the structural change process through various formats such as dialogue sessions, workshops, and online platforms. This approach promotes transparency, builds trust in decision-making processes, and ensures that diverse perspectives are considered</li> <li>• <b>Revier-Akademie (Territorial Academy):</b> This initiative supports individuals who want to actively contribute to the transformation of the region. The tailor-made offers of Revier-Akademie are for structural change managers, climate protection and sustainability managers, economic development officers and projects managers, companies and entrepreneurs, and people from administration and politics. The activities usually take place in person. It offers practical knowledge, targeted training, workshops, excursions, counselling and a strong network to help shape the future of the region.</li> <li>• <b>Educational programmes:</b> The agency conducts educational programmes to raise awareness about the structural change process and its impacts. These programmes target different groups, including students, local communities, and industry professionals</li> <li>• <b>Public Participation Platform:</b> The agency has developed a public participation platform in the form of a council for members of the public community, such as women, the elderly and youth, to share their ideas, concerns, and suggestions. The agency also provides mentoring and training programmes for young people.<sup>20</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> Public Participation Platform of Zukunftsagentur is available at: <https://www.rheinisches-revier.de/mitgestalten/oeffentlichkeitsbeteiligung>

- *Trade unions consultation:* The agency includes representatives from trade unions in the Supervisory Board of the Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier. They are also included in consultations and structured dialogue to foster consultation and engagement practices.

#### Contributions to just transition planning and implementation

Finally, we demonstrate the success of each initiative by highlighting an example of its contribution to Just Transition planning and implementation.

- *Planning.* The Coal Commission implemented a variety of stakeholder engagement activities and was responsible for collecting the ideas, needs, and demands of the stakeholders during the preparation of the TJTP. It also conducted a mapping of the stakeholders who are concerned about the transition.
- *Planning.* The JTO Alentejo contributed by structuring a draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Just Transition Fund, discussing governance models for the Observatory, and reviewing strategic priorities and expectations of the Alentejo 2030 Regional Programme.
- *Planning, implementation, monitoring.* The ROTP, in its first phase, gathered data on project readiness and conveyed key guidelines and recommendations, which helped refine many projects already at the stage of TJTP development. In the eight reports prepared during the first edition of ROPT they also analysed statistical and numerical data, as well as qualitative opinions, observations, and concerns expressed by participants in the regional transformation process.
- *Planning, implementation, monitoring.* The Zukunftsagentur contributed by managing its own projects and guiding the development and implementation of the Economic and Structural Programme. One of its flagship initiatives, the Gigawattpakt, expanded renewable energy capacity by involving local municipalities, energy providers, and community groups.

## 6. Recommended structure for management of stakeholder engagement in the Turów Subregion

### 6.1 Context

As described earlier, one of the key actions proposed by the local stakeholders interviewed for the purposes of this project was the establishment of a 'roundtable' initiative. This initiative could support cooperation between different stakeholder groups and serve as a sounding board for the updates of key strategic planning documents affecting the territory (for example: Territorial Just Transition Plan). This section contains recommendations on the design of such a structure, based on the framework and best practices captured in Section 5.4.

It should be reiterated and recognised at this point that three relevant initiatives already exist in more or less active formats. The partnership structure and aims of those initiatives have been taken into account when developing the recommendations:

- In the years 2020-2021, the Marshal's Office orchestrated a Working group for interested stakeholders during the preparation of both TJTPs, which included stakeholders from both subregion wałbrzyski and zgorzelecki powiat - Working Group on the Just Transition Fund.<sup>21</sup> The Group was formally recognised by the Board. As the JTF support was granted only to the Wałbrzych subregion, the stakeholders from the zgorzelecki powiat have discontinued their engagement with the working group subsequently. The group structure and online presence still exist today, and the group continues meeting, though without active involvement from the stakeholders from zgorzelecki and lubański powiats.
- In parallel to the formally mandated group by the Board of the Voivodship, a bottom-up initiative has been set-up by local public authorities in 2019, known under the name '**Committee for the transformation of Turów Subregion**' (PL: Komitet Transformacji Subregionu Turów)<sup>22</sup> with the purpose of advocating for the transition support for the area at regional, national and EU levels. The group has slowed down its formal activity in the years 2021-2024 and has renewed its operations at the beginning of 2025, holding two formal meetings between January and July 2025. At the last meeting, the group was formally extended by the representatives of the lubański powiat.
- In 2025, at the initiative of the Association for the Development of Energy Innovation, a bottom-up coordination group was set up. This group exchanges information about the various ongoing projects and develops a joint position on the future of the transformation in the region. The structure has not yet been formalised.

The recommendations below describe aspects of a formalised collaboration structure with an official mandate to progress just transition planning and implementation in the subregion.

Given that the Turów Subregion's TJTP has not been approved by the European Commission (the TJTP has been approved by the Board of Dolnośląskie), as a result of which no funding dedicated to just transition implementation could be secured, it is recommended that the collaborative initiative should be introduced as a **limited-scope, coordination, consultation and information sharing platform, mandated by the Marshal of Dolnośląskie** named for the purposes of this document "**Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion**" (in Polish: "Platforma Transformacji Subregionu Turów").

### 6.2 Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion

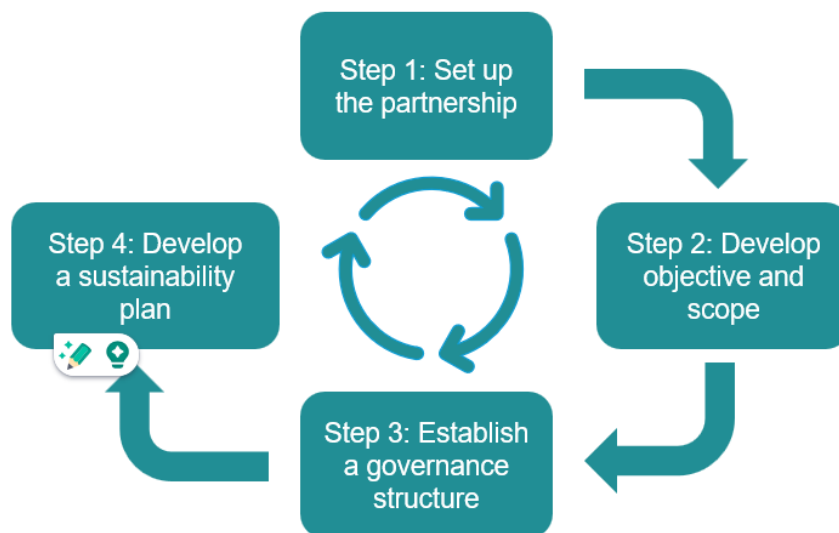
The recommended design is flexible, to accommodate an evolution of the platform over time as funding becomes available, enabling it to facilitate stakeholder engagement on a wider scale, develop own

<sup>21</sup> Working Group on the Just Transition Fund available at: <https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/gospodarka/fundusz-sprawiedliwej-transformacji/grupa-robocza-ds-fst/>

<sup>22</sup> [Komitet Transformacji Subregionu Turów – STORIE](#)

reports and analyses, and/or support project implementation. The proposed design has been aligned with the four-step approach to setting up just transition observatories presented in the Just Transition Platform Working Group Concept Paper, adopted to the context of Turów Subregion.<sup>4</sup> Figure 9 illustrates the approach.

Figure 9. Four-step approach to establishing an observatory



### 6.2.1. Step 1 - Setting up a partnership for the Platform

The selection of key partners to be involved in the initiative (before setting up the governance structure, see Step 3) should be underpinned by the following three core principles<sup>23</sup>:

#### 1. Complementarity principle

Each partner should bring distinct, non-overlapping resources - such as knowledge, networks, or technical expertise - to the platform. For example:

- Successful multi-level governance structure requires a coordinator with a clear mandate and dedicated capacity. The Marshal's Office of Dolnośląskie Voivodeship is well-positioned to provide administrative mandate, capacity, leadership, and steer regional coordination. The Marshal's mandate is also needed to secure the participation of key decision makers from central administration and the PGE Group.
- The Institute for Territorial Development of Dolnośląskie Voivodeship can contribute expertise on development policy and spatial planning tasks. It also brings insights from collaboration with neighbouring provinces: Saxony in Germany, and Czech regions. The Institute also provides substantive support to the Board of Dolnośląskie Voivodeship and the Marshal's Office through opinions, reports, and various analytical and planning tasks.
- The Ministry of State Assets and representatives of PGE Group contribute technical expertise and strategic insights on the energy transition of the Polish energy system, in particular the Turów mine and power plant complex.
- The Ministry of Climate and Environment, the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy contribute with expertise in just transition planning, experiences from other regions, securing funding and support in negotiations with the European Commission.
- Local authorities, NGOs, private sector representatives and trade unions offer grounded knowledge of community needs and social dynamics. It is important to ensure equal representation, while not including too many stakeholders, to enable efficient consultations.

<sup>23</sup> Following the recommendations in [Just Transition Platform Working Groups - Action 5: Setting up and Implementing a Territorial Socio-Economic Observatory on the Just Transition – Concept Paper](#)

A significant work to engage those actors has been done by the Committee for the transformation of Turów Subregion, and should be built upon.

The proposed governance structure (see Step 3 below) takes into account varying mandates, responsibilities and institutional capacity of involved stakeholders. The proposed structure consists of a consulting body open to all institutional partners listed above and supported by a subgroup (or subgroups in the future) consisting of the *Committee for the transformation of Turów Subregion*, focused on consolidating the voices of local stakeholders and implementing direct stakeholder engagement actions.

## 2. Commitment principle

Political and institutional commitment is essential to ensure continuity and credibility. This is secured through:

- Formal launch of the dedicated stakeholder platform by the authorities of Dolnośląskie voivodeship, following an invitation sent to all partners issued by the Marshall.<sup>24</sup>
- Buy-in and active, continued engagement of key partners in the meetings and activities of the collaboration platform.
- A shared agreement (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding) outlining roles, expectations, and engagement and collaboration rules.

Such commitment builds trust and signals seriousness to external funders and partners. The Zukunftsagentur serves as a good example of successful commitment of local, regional and national authorities. The agency is established by municipalities, business associations, and the IG BCE trade union<sup>25</sup> and works with the mandate it has received from the regional (state level) and national authorities. With its Supervisory Board, Shareholders' Assembly, and Neighbouring Conference, the agency has committed partners within the structure, while maintaining efficient structures for its operations.

## 3. Compatibility principle

Partners should share a common vision for the region's transition and demonstrate cultural alignment in how they collaborate. The cross-border aspects need to be taken into account when developing the vision and can benefit from the results of the BorderLabs project, according to the Institute for Territorial Development of Dolnośląskie Voivodeship.

The ROTP in Śląskie Voivodeship shows a successful example of a formalised structure to facilitate commitment among partners. In the interview on lessons learned, they highlighted that in the process of building cooperation, consistent, operationally stable and continuous, ongoing information exchange is important. Ensuring compatibility among partners includes:

- A shared understanding of the respective region's challenges and opportunities.
- Agreement on inclusive, transparent consultation processes.
- Respect for the roles, responsibilities and mandates of each actor.

Compatibility fosters a collaborative culture and reduces friction in joint planning and implementation of activities.

To translate these principles into practice, it is recommended that the *Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion*:

- develops a partnership charter, Memorandum of Understanding or code of conduct signed by all governing partners, which
  - lists the initiative's coordinator, the invited active stakeholders, and a wider group of stakeholders to be consulted and included in its structure
  - outlines the objective and initial scope of the initiative (see Step 2)
  - sketches the governance structure of the initiative

---

<sup>24</sup> This recognition has been provided for the Working Group on the Just Transition Fund set up by the Marshal's Office.

<sup>25</sup> IG Bergbau, Chemie, Energie (IG BCE) is a trade union in Germany. It is one of eight industrial affiliations of the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB).

- ensures balanced representation in its governance structure
- promotes periodic collaboration with Czech and German partners
- establishes feedback mechanisms with regional governance bodies, ensuring that stakeholder input is considered and acted upon.

### 6.2.2. Step 2 - Develop the objective and scope.

Alignment with the initiative's aims and how they will be delivered is key during the structure's set-up and needs to be elaborated before an official mandate can be secured. Below, draft objectives and scope are suggested, which the partners need to fine-tune.

**1. Objectives.** The *Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion* needs to follow clearly defined objectives. Some objectives have already been developed for the memorandum on the future of the Just Transition Fund (FST) in the Turów Subregion (proposed by the informal working group) and have been rephrased for the purpose of this document:

#### **O1. Advocate on the national and EU level to secure support for the Turów Subregion for just transition implementation**

The platform's primary aim is to advocate for the region's recognition as a Just Transition region and secure dedicated funding for just transition implementation. The platform should coordinate stakeholder engagement and the technical and political efforts to achieve this designation.

#### **O2. Mitigate the challenges caused by transition activities**

Tackle the challenges highlighted in the TJTP caused by the economic and social dominance of Turów Power Plant in the region, such as unemployment, job losses, and underrepresentation of the workforce. The initiative can help to collect stakeholders' input to inform the actions implemented in the region with the aim of minimising the negative effects of transition activities on society and stakeholders.

#### **O3. Advance the cross-border dimension of Just Transition**

Ensure that all transition activities in the Turów Subregion incorporate a cross-border perspective, particularly in the social and environmental domains. The governance structure should allow for periodic participation by representatives from the Czech and German border regions and coordinate joint initiatives on climate adaptation and zero-emission development.

It is recommended that the full list of objectives be developed by the Marshal's Office of Dolnośląskie, be aligned with the vision co-developed in key projects delivered in the region (e.g., the BroderLabs project) and submitted to stakeholders for their approval prior to the launch event.

- 2. Scope.** It is recommended that the initiative's initial mandate be limited to providing input to and revising strategic documents affecting the Turów Subregion in view of the upcoming financial perspective 2028-2034, as well as enhancing dialogue and information sharing across partners. In subsequent years, the scope can be expanded to further activities if sufficient capacities, mandate, and financial resources have been secured.

In its initial phase of operation, it is recommended that the platform focus on three core activities:

- **Coordination across governance levels, consultation, support for decision-making, and strategic planning.** Activities to ensure alignment and coordination among different governance levels, such as local, regional, and national authorities. Key focus in the initial year: consultation for the preparation of documents to support transformation regions within the post-2027 perspective and strengthening dialogue and information exchange.
- **Enhancing stakeholder engagement and cross-sectoral dialogue.** For instance, awareness-raising activities, stakeholder mapping, conferences, organising workshops

and consultation for local communities and stakeholders. The platform should fulfil a key informative function in enabling information flow about various engagements between stakeholders.

This limited scope allows the platform to build legitimacy and trust while preparing for future expansion. The degree of the mandate and the presence of the initiative in the just transition governance can be extended in time. In the further phase of operations, the initiative's task could be expanded to include:

- **Progress project implementation:** Serve as a coordination body and support team for developing project ideas, securing funding.
- **Building ecosystems** for implementing just transition and regional development. This can include strengthening industrial cooperations, cooperation with educational and research centres, cross-regional cooperation support, and establishing dedicated working groups consisting of local actors, R&D centres, and entrepreneurial agencies working on developing project ideas or attracting funding.

### 6.2.3. Step 3: *Establish a governance structure.*

Following the best practice examples, it is recommended to implement a multi-level governance with a medium level of institutionalisation. The multi-level approach enables alignment of different mandates, competencies and perspectives of the stakeholders engaged, which is particularly key if different levels of public administration, representatives of trade unions and the social side are to be included in the initiative. The medium level of institutionalisation refers to a formalised structure with a clear mandate and partial funding (through selected institutional partners).

Drawing from the best practices of the Just Transition Observatory in Alentejo, the Coal Commission in Hungary, and the Zukunftsagentur, it would be recommended to implement a two-tiered governance, consisting of a main consulting body, the Strategic Council<sup>26</sup>, and a broader group, the Stakeholder Assembly<sup>27</sup>. However, after consultations with the Marshal's Office, the Institute for Territorial Development, and local public authorities, the recommended governance structure has been adapted to consist of an open consultation body, carrying the platform's name, that is **Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion**, supported by the existing *Committee for the transformation of subregion Turów* in form of a dedicated working group. The structure can be expanded by additional dedicated thematic working groups over time. This structure recommendation reflects the feedback received from the Marshal's Office as well as from local stakeholders during the consultation workshop in Bogatynia, consisting of:

- i. High level of interconnectedness of local stakeholders in the Turów Subregion, combined with a high level of engagement and interest of local stakeholders in the Turów Subregion, including NGOs and educational and social partners.
- ii. The need to preserve consultation processes conducted thus far on transition planning and regional development, for which the voivodeship's institutions are held accountable, combined with the need for a coordinator with an institutional mandate.
- iii. The bottom-up initiative Committee for the Transformation of Turów Subregion implemented significant stakeholder engagement and advocacy efforts, which should be acknowledged and can serve as one of the key building elements of the new structure.
- iv. Positive experiences of the Marshal's Office with open groups for consultation in the territory. The area of the territory and number of municipalities to be included in the process do not justify the need for organising a multiple-two-tier governance structure.

Below are described both elements: the Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion and the working group structure, initially consisting of one working group, the Committee for the Transformation of Turów Subregion. Figure 10 illustrates the proposed structure.

---

<sup>26</sup> Inspired by the Just Transition Observatory Alentejo and the Coal Commission in Hungary.

<sup>27</sup> Inspired by the Just Transition Observatory Alentejo and the Zukunftsagentur.

Figure 10. Proposed governance structure of the Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion

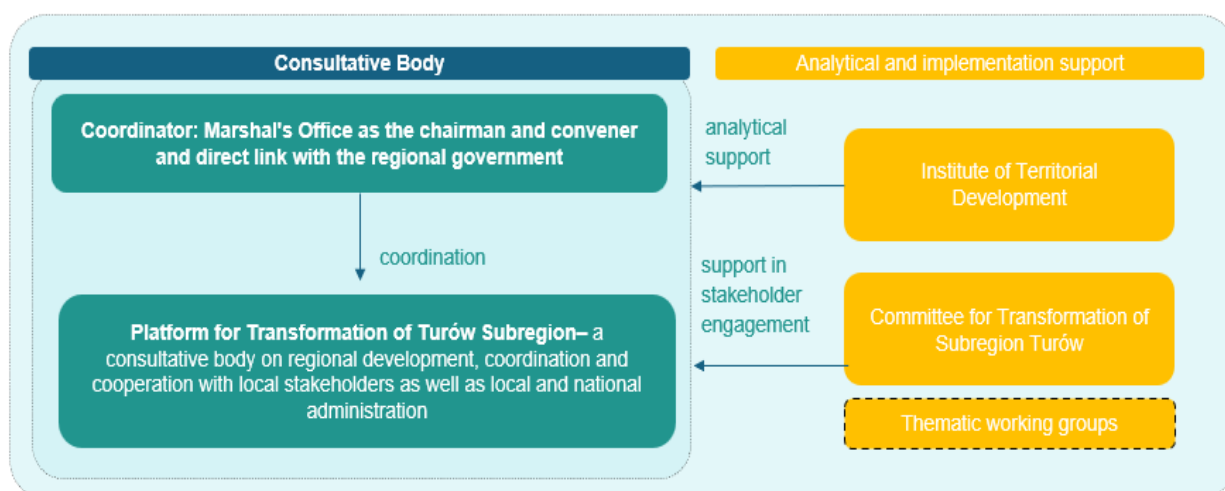


Table 27. Governance framework recommendations – Platform

Name	<b>Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion</b>
<b>Composition</b>	<p>The Platform should be chaired by the Marshal's Office and act as the body responsible for consultation on regional development, coordination, and engagement with local and national authorities. Its composition should reflect a balance of institutional authority and regional representation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Marshal's Office</b> – Chair and convener, supported by the <b>Institute for Territorial Development</b></li> <li>• <b>Ministry of State Assets</b> – owner of the PGE Group, steering decision making on transition of the power plant complex in Turów and providing insights into transition aspects of the Polish energy system (one representative)</li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Climate and Environment and Ministry of Energy</b> – Policy alignment and technical expertise on energy transition (one representative each)</li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy</b> – support in just transition planning, funding access, and negotiations with the European Commission (one representative)</li> <li>• <b>Dolnoslaskie Voivodship Office</b> – as the representative of central authorities in the region, it can be an important link in contacts with the central administration (1 representative)</li> <li>• <b>PGE Group and trade unions</b> – key regional employer and transition actor, owner of the Turów's mine and power plant (each actor having one representative)</li> <li>• <b>Local public authorities' representatives</b> – Poviats Offices (PL: Starostwa Powiatowe), City and Municipal Offices (PL: Urzędy Miasta I Gmin) from the zgorzelecki and lubański poviats (one representative each)</li> <li>• <b>Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Committee for Transformation of Turów Subregion.</b></li> </ul> <p>In addition, the participation of the following actors is essential and should be assured through formal invitations and agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of municipalities</li> <li>• NGOs, cultural- and civil society organisations</li> <li>• Youth organisations and educational institutions</li> <li>• Business associations and chambers of commerce</li> <li>• Environmental groups</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the Monitoring Committee of the European Funds for Dolny Slask.</li> </ul> <p>Limiting the participation of those stakeholders to one representative per institution and enabling them to lead actions of the working groups.</p>
<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define and uphold the platform's vision and mission, including the objectives and revisions of scope</li> <li>Ensure representation of local perspectives in regional and national policy-making</li> <li>Coordinate stakeholder input and ensure inclusive engagement</li> <li>Steer the initiative's workplan and operations</li> <li>Secure long-term sustainability of the initiative, optionally incl. funding</li> </ul>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>Responding to the challenge of the need for active consultation of the local stakeholders, the current lack of coordination, and underrepresentation in national processes, as well as the need to convene decision makers about the future of Turów's Complex at the table. By bringing together national ministries, regional and local authorities, and PGE Group's representatives, as well as opening up its meetings to social partners, the Platform forms a key consulting body equipped with technical and strategic expertise, as well as the required formal mandate to represent the voices of the affected local stakeholders.</p> <p>In other regions, such a body can be joined by invitation only and is composed of a strict selection of institutions. In the case of Turów Subregion, a strict pre-selection has been deemed as unnecessary given the number of stakeholders previously participating in open consultations and the current lack of dedicated funding. A form of strategic council has been implemented at the highest governance levels of the Zukunftsagentur, the Just Transition Observatory in Alentejo and the Coal Commission.</p>
<b>Operational aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings should be held in person at least quarterly, with a higher frequency if needed during consultation of key strategic documents.</li> <li>The agenda of meetings should be informed, among others, by the proposals of the Committee for Transformation of Turów Subregion and proposed topics of the working groups (if operational).</li> <li>The body should not serve as a decision-making body but hold a key consultation role to the Marshal's Office and regional government. The council should decide about the launch and thematic focus of the working groups and appoint a leader of each working group for a dedicated period. The Committee for Transition of Turów Subregion is already one of such working groups, which activities are not limited in time.</li> </ul>
<b>To be discussed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacities to be engaged in person of various Ministries Composition of participants from PGE Group (headquartered in Belchatów, vs. local representatives of the trade unions)</li> </ul>

Table 28. Governance framework recommendations – Working Groups support

<b>Name</b>	<b>Working Groups support in the Platform for Transition of Turów Subregion</b>
<b>Composition</b>	<p>The number and focus topics of working groups are to be decided by the Platform based on the needs and capacities of the local stakeholders.</p> <p>It is suggested to start with one working group composed of the Committee for Transition of Turów Subregion, coordinated by the Association for the Development of Energy Innovation (<a href="#">STORIE</a>).</p> <p>Each working group should have its own action coordinator, selected among the local stakeholders to ensure their active involvement in the group's actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representatives of municipalities and provinces</li> <li>Trade union representatives</li> <li>NGOs and civil society organisations</li> <li>Youth organisations and educational institutions</li> <li>Business associations and chambers of commerce</li> <li>Environmental groups</li> </ul>

	It is recommended to involve cross-border partners from Czechia and Germany in the working groups, where possible, to ensure a cross-regional perspective and strengthen cooperation along the border whenever feasible.
<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent the interests and perspectives of diverse stakeholder groups on a previously defined topic in the just transition process.</li> <li>• Provide structured input, suggest action or project proposals to the Platform on a dedicated topic.</li> <li>• Facilitate inclusive dialogue and collaboration across sectors and borders on the ground to collect stakeholder feedback on the dedicated topic.</li> <li>• Raise awareness and build a positive vision of the transition within the community.</li> <li>• Support the legitimacy of the platform by ensuring broad-based participation and social ownership.</li> </ul>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>The Working Groups are an agile, operational and more implementation-focused structure than the high-level Platform. They are being proposed as an acknowledgement of the fact that while the Platform can coordinate local actions and provide structured input for consultation of key documents, it does not have the capacity or structure to conduct stakeholder engagement, targeted outreach, or awareness-raising activities on its own. It is also not feasible for the Platform to be hosting weekly or bi-weekly meetings on a certain topic, and it convenes many stakeholders who cannot (or do not have the interest) provide input on all topics affecting the socio-economic development of the region. The Turów Subregion is home to a number of active social and environmental organisations and community leaders, who might welcome a more active way to contribute to consultations on their topic of focus than participation in regular meetings of the Platform. The participation in Working Groups enables them to define structured action plans acknowledged by the Platform, keeps the group accountable to the actions, gives them a more formal mandate and forum to share outcomes, and allows them to co-shape the agenda of the Platform's meetings. Through the actions of the Working Groups, it can be ensured that the voices of affected communities, workers, youth, businesses, and civil society are actively heard and integrated.</p> <p>This recommendation is inspired by the four working groups set up by the Coal Commission in Hungary: Vision of Just Transition, Economy Support Alternative, Recultivation and Residential Energy Usage, set-up in response to the needs of the local stakeholders and open to the Commission's members as well as additional stakeholders. The outcomes are usually in the form of proposals or key topics that the Coal Commission should discuss in their regular meetings.</p>
<b>Operational aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings frequency to be decided by working group leaders.</li> <li>• Outputs include recommendations, feedback summaries, and community position statements, as well as implemented stakeholder actions.</li> </ul>
<b>To be discussed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of working group topics based on the challenges in engaging selected stakeholder groups, e.g. youth engagement, cross-border development, environmental issues.</li> <li>• Activities to be implemented by the working group, e.g. outreach activities, awareness raising, consultations (to be defined at the launch meeting).</li> <li>• Language and accessibility arrangements for cross-border participation</li> <li>• Funding and logistical support for meetings and communications</li> </ul>

The recommended governance structure reflects a medium level of institutionalisation, as a formal structure with a mandate and partial funding from authorities. In this governance structure, the initiative operates based on defined roles and responsibilities but lacks dedicated staff. Inclusion of regional and national authorities in the initiative's governance ensures a more reliable and stable structure. Additionally, participation of different stakeholder groups such as local businesses, trade unions, and local development organisations in the governance safeguards that all perspectives of the region are being heard and are allowed to participate in the initiative's decision, which may have direct or indirect effects on them.

#### 6.2.4. Step 4. Develop a sustainability plan

Developing a sustainability plan is an essential step for the continuity of the initiative. This involves outlining strategies and actions to ensure long-term viability and enhanced engagement with stakeholders. The initiative's sustainability plan should be structured to secure and expand its presence in regional just transition governance. The actions to be taken into consideration for the development of a sustainability plan are listed below.

##### 1. Embedding in regional governance

The platform should be formally recognised by the Board of Dolnośląskie Voivodeship and integrated into the regional just transition governance architecture. This includes:

- Reporting to the Board and relevant departments, committees
- Providing feedback to the Monitoring Committee (once established)
- Aligning with regional development strategies and funding pipelines

This anchoring will enhance the platform's credibility and ensure its outputs are considered in formal decision-making.

Once initial consensus is built and funding is secured (e.g. via LIFE or JTF), the platform can expand its mandate to include:

- **Monitoring** transition implementation and labour market impacts
- **Consulting** on strategic decisions and contributing to shaping policy directions
- **Managing** selected pilot projects or stakeholder engagement processes.

The **Zukunftsagentur** model offers a roadmap for this evolution—from coordination and consultation to full implementation leadership.

**2. To ensure operational continuity and high transparency**, even in its early phase, the platform should:

- Hold regular in-person meetings
- Publish summaries, recommendations, and stakeholder feedback online
- Maintain a stakeholder database and communication channel (e.g. newsletter or online portal).

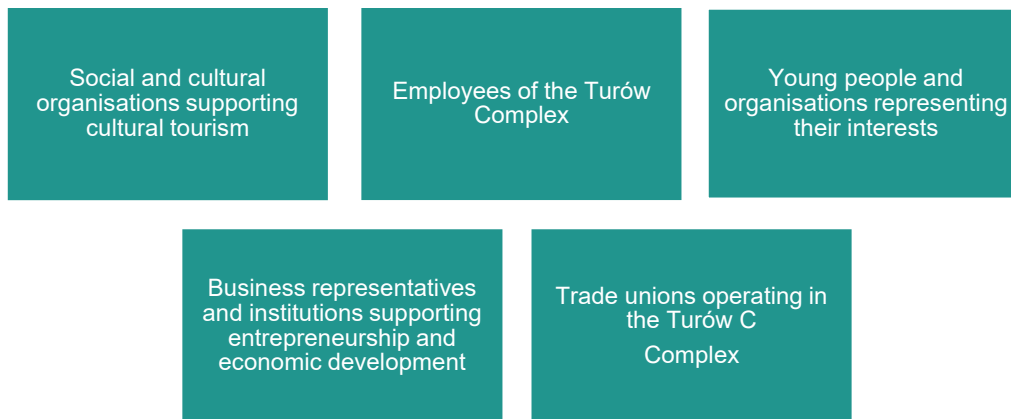
This governance framework is designed to be pragmatic, inclusive, and flexible. It enables the Turów Subregion to take ownership of its transition pathway, build consensus among diverse actors, and position itself for future funding and implementation success.

# 7. Stakeholder groups and good practices in engagement

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies stakeholder groups that are only partially involved in planning of the just transition process. Based on interviews, a review of secondary sources and an analysis using the Traffic Light Assessment, it was found that the available information on five stakeholder groups is significantly limited. Furthermore, the focus is on those groups that are strongly rooted in the local socio-economic context.

Figure 11. Selected stakeholder groups for which good practices have been developed



The analysis is based on the identified needs and challenges (Chapter 4 and Annex II) of underrepresented groups, focusing on structural barriers that limit their participation in the transformation process. The chapter also presents conclusions from previous experiences and examples of good practices from initiatives that have successfully included previously neglected stakeholder groups.

For each of the analysed groups, between five and fifteen examples of good practices were identified, but only two to four examples for each group are described in detail in the rest of the chapter. In order to make the selection, a set of criteria was developed to identify the most appropriate and transferable solutions, in line with the context of the Dolnoslaskie Voivodship. Priority was given to cases where the transformation process was carried out in areas with a still functioning mining industry or in regions where mines had been closed relatively recently, as well as those characterised by contextual similarity and feasibility of implementation

Figure 12. Process of identifying and selecting good practices for selected stakeholder groups



Below is a detailed description of the selection criteria:

- **C1: Similarity of needs and challenges** - Practices were selected based on the degree to which stakeholder groups operate in similar social, economic, cultural, and institutional contexts. This ensures the good practice's relevance, comparability, and transferability. By comparing how similar groups addressed comparable barriers, we can better identify success factors.

- **C2: Inclusive stakeholder engagement** – Selected initiatives demonstrate how a broad range of stakeholders, including underrepresented groups, were meaningfully included. This enhances legitimacy, accountability, and social acceptance. Conversely, excluding key groups can result in one-sided policies that are less sustainable or widely supported.
- **C3: Feasibility and contextual alignment** – Priority was given to practices implemented in comparable territorial, economic, and planning environments. For instance, post-mining strategies developed in mountainous regions may not be suitable for areas with different geography or settlement patterns. Contextual factors such as infrastructure, accessibility, and legal conditions influence the applicability of good practices.

## **7.2 Social organisations and organisations in the field of cultural tourism**

A key barrier for cultural and social organisations is the lack of targeted public funding to convert former mining sites into tourism assets. In addition, geographical and urban planning complexities often hinder their redevelopment.

In the case of the Turów Subregion, one of the primary challenges is **the limited recognition of culture and tourism as strategic sectors for economic diversification**. Despite the area’s valuable assets – such as the historical legacy of the Turów mine and proximity to the German city of Görlitz – the potential of industrial and cultural tourism remains underexploited. Greater emphasis should be placed on cross-border cooperation with Görlitz and Saxony, including opportunities for joint programming and investment.

Further challenges include **underinvestment in tourism infrastructure and limited institutional capacity** to develop and promote these sectors. Former mining and energy sites are not currently positioned as visitor destinations, and there is no integrated regional strategy for repurposing post-industrial landscapes to support long-term economic revitalisation.

Despite these barriers, the subregion holds considerable promise. It benefits from an active civil society, including women-led organisations such as the Association of Strong Women of Bogatynia and the Eurocentrum Women’s Association. These actors could play a stronger role in the transition. Women have been identified as a particularly resilient and adaptive group, often more willing to pursue cross-border employment or career shifts.

Another valuable, yet underutilised, cultural asset is the Upper Lusatian houses (PL: Domy przysłupowe) – a distinctive form of folk architecture found in the Polish-Czech-German borderlands. Bogatynia hosts the largest concentration of these houses in Poland, with nearly 200 buildings, 85 of which are listed as historic monuments. While the municipality is attempting to develop tourism related to these sites, funding for their renovation and upkeep remains limited.

### Types of engagement

Types of engagement can be categorised into 4 groups, based on the scope of activities. The engagement types for social and cultural organisations are: community co-creation, cultural events that create dialogue, partnerships with schools, NGOs and local authorities and trans local/regional culture networks.<sup>28</sup>

- **Community co-creation:** this type of engagement enables local voices, especially marginalised groups, to shape the transition narrative and build ownership.<sup>29</sup>
- **Cultural events that create dialogue:** these events are crucial in raising awareness about just transition and climate-related topics in general. For example, events could focus on memory and identity projects, such as oral history projects, exhibitions on local labour heritage or

<sup>28</sup> EITI International Secretariat. (2023). Engaging communities in a just energy transition. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. [https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/EITI\\_Report\\_Engaging%20communities%20in%20a%20just%20transition.pdf](https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/EITI_Report_Engaging%20communities%20in%20a%20just%20transition.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Business for Social Responsibility. (2024). Engaging stakeholders in a just transition: Webinar presentation. <https://www.bsr.org/files/event-resources/BSR-Engaging-Stakeholders-Just-TransitionWebinar-Presentation.pdf>

dialogue events. These projects would recognise and respect the past while fostering forward-looking perspectives.

- **Partnerships with Schools, NGOs & Local Authorities:** Social and cultural organisations could act as mediators between technical and policy processes and citizens. Such partnerships could help in aligning cultural work with broader territorial development goals and could take the form of joint programmes combining climate education or civic engagement. A very good example of partnership with local authorities is the modernisation of the MINOS production plant.<sup>30</sup>
- **Trans local/ regional culture networks:** this type of engagement would consist of sharing experiences and practices across transitioning regions in the form of twinning initiatives, cross-border residencies, or EU-funded culture projects focused on just transition themes.

#### Key qualifications of effective engagement with social and cultural organisations

Effective engagement of social and cultural organisations should adhere to several key qualifications that serve as guiding principles for creating inclusive and empowering strategies for their engagement.

- **Inclusivity and Representation:** Involve diverse voices, especially marginalised, vulnerable, and historically underrepresented groups (e.g. low-income communities, local populations, ethnic minorities).
- **Cultural Relevance and Local Context:** Engagement strategies need to reflect local history, values, language, and socio-political context and leverage local knowledge and storytelling to frame the transition process.
- **Co-designing and co-ownership:** organisations have to be engaged early in the process, including at the agenda-setting, planning, and implementation stages. Participatory methods like co-creation workshops, community forums can be useful.

#### Overview of best practices

This section presents key information on the three short-listed best practice examples on social and cultural organisations' engagement in the transition process. The selected initiatives are: The Lewarde mining history centre, Upgrading of MINOS factory site, and the C-mine reuse project: Turning a former coal mine into a creative hub.

Table 29. The Lewarde Mining History Centre, France

Name	The Lewarde Mining History Centre <sup>31</sup>
Funding	The Mining Centre was funded through national and private contributions. The Nord-Pas de Calais Coalfield Nationalised Mining Company financed the infrastructure of the museum. Today, 50% of the museum's costs are funded by the revenue generated by the centre (tickets, restaurant, gift shop, etc.). The other 50% comes from public contributions, with the main contributor being the Region Hauts-de-France.
Challenges	Historically, the Hauts-de-France region has high unemployment, and many people end up moving to other parts of the country to find work. The site has helped revive the tourism in the region and create job opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sector in particular.
Type of engagement	Retired miners are involved in the centre's activities, e.g. as guides, due to their knowledge of the local context. Some of the Mining Centre's social activities were developed jointly with miners during round table meetings. These include family activities and workshops on mining topics.
Scope and objective	The Lewarde Mining History Centre in France is an important example of how cultural heritage has been preserved and, at the same time, how new economic opportunities for the region have been opened up. The mission of the centre is to preserve mining culture and to make this heritage accessible to the public. To fulfil this

<sup>30</sup> European Commission. (2023). Modernization of the 'MINOS' factory site (Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park).

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-minos-factory-site.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-minos-factory-site.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> European Commission Directorate-General for Energy. (2025). The Lewarde Mining History Centre.

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ece9cfad-313c-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

	aim, the centre consists of three departments: i) the museum, ii) an archive, and iii) a science and cultural centre.
<b>Activities</b>	The Centre plays a crucial role in the preservation of cultural heritage since the site retains original architecture, such as headframes, machine halls, and galleries. Additionally, the Centre preserves the actual mining heritage of the region via guided tours, temporary exhibitions, interactive learning tools, audio guides and family activity booklets. The main activities of the Centre include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing knowledge on energy issues to the general public</li> <li>• Exhibitions, workshops, lectures, etc.</li> <li>• Offers for children, the general public and people with professional interests.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Lesson/ Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial sustainability was achieved through a long-term business model in which 50% of running costs are covered through generated revenue, and the remaining 5% through public funding.</li> <li>- Former miners employed as tour guides</li> <li>- The Centre draw synergy from other tourist attractions in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Centre historique minier Lewarde</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">The Lewarde Mining History Centre</a>

Table 30. Upgrading of MINOS factory site, Greece

<b>Name</b>	<b>Upgrading of MINOS factory site<sup>32</sup></b>
<b>Funding</b>	The upgrade of the MINOS factory site in Ierapetra was funded by the Cohesion Fund as part of the Operational Programme Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development 2014-2020. The project transformed the old factory site into the MINOS Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park. The total budget for the project was €438,119.00, with the EU contribution unspecified. The MINOS project was also partially funded by the Rouva Municipality, the Region of Crete, the Gergeri Agricultural Cooperative, and the Heraklion Prefecture.
<b>Challenges</b>	The MINOS factory played a vital role in processing olive mills, producing olive oil, soap, and carob flour. Although the factory was demolished in 1980, sparking debates among residents about its preservation as a living museum of culture, the historical significance of the site made it repurposing into the MINOS Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park.
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Local authorities were heavily involved in upgrading the factory site, especially in the design phase (i.e., an action plan was approved by the Technical Service of the Municipality of Ierapetra).
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The project transformed the old MINOS factory site into the MINOS Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park. The project aimed to upgrade the degraded area aesthetically and functionally, turning it into a hub for cultural activities.
<b>Activities</b>	The redevelopment included open exhibition spaces, a square, green areas, a monument representing the factory's funnel, a warehouse, a guardhouse, and a complex of houses. The park's design preserved the historical and architectural characteristics of the former industrial site, emphasising its cultural heritage.
<b>Key Lesson/ Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before the implementation of the project, a meticulous study was conducted. Indeed, the approved study by the Technical Service of the Municipality of Ierapetra was rooted in a deep understanding of the historical and architectural context.</li> <li>- Capitalising on regional cultural heritage to facilitate the transition away from the industrial past.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Upgrading of MINOS Factory Site</a>

<sup>32</sup> European Commission. (2023). Modernization of the 'MINOS' factory site (Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park). [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-minos-factory-site.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-minos-factory-site.pdf)

Table 31. C-mine reuse project: Turning a former coal mine into a creative hub, Belgium

Name	C-mine reuse project: Turning a former coal mine into a creative hub <sup>33</sup>
Funding	Financing of the site came from the European Regional Development Fund Limburg and the city of Genk. The site was bought by the city of Genk, and the project was financed under the Limburg Objective 2 Program from 2000-2006. From 2007-2013, the project was financed by the Flanders RCE Programme. In addition to the local municipality funding and the fees received through tickets, there was a 217 million euro grant pledged by the Flemish government for the redevelopment of Genk's former mining sites. Thus, the city developed an Integrated Territorial Instrument (ITI), which made it possible to also use multiple EU Funds (ESF, ERDF and the Cohesion Fund).
Challenges	The region still faces reemployment challenges, not only due to the coal phase-out, but also due to the closure of a Ford Motor Company plant that operated in the region up until 2014. While the C-mine offers a vibrant fabric of businesses in the creative industry, this sector cannot sustain the same type of employment (i.e. many employees with low-to-no qualifications).
Type of engagement	All interested parties were invited to participate in the development of the land use plan.
Scope and objective	The main objective is to create a vibrant, creative hotspot for artistic talent, developing a community that inspires both its own members and outside visitors. The project's approach is that of re-qualifying and developing an area according to a long-term vision that is shared by all stakeholders and formalised into a master plan.
Activities	The site is divided into several (i) Education – best exemplified by the LUCA School of Arts and cultural initiatives aimed at visitors. (ii) Creative economy – as part of the masterplan informing the development of the site, it was decided to focus on the creative industry. Today, the C-mine campus hosts 60+ start-ups and affirmed companies in design and media production, which account for over 330 jobs. Moreover, the campus offers appealing spaces for corporate events. (iii) Artistic creation and presentation – the campus offers a multidisciplinary programme of performing and visual arts; it also hosts resident artists who choose the site for their activities. (iv) Creative tourism – at the heart of the project lay the desire to build on the heritage of coal mining in the region.
Best practice	Financing from the government: After Ford closed in 2014, the Flemish government devised a 200 million euro investment plan, which included financing the redevelopment of old mining sites to orient them towards supporting a transition to innovative manufacturing and the knowledge economy.
Source 1	<a href="#">C-mine reuse project: turning a former coal mine into a creative hub</a>
Source 2	<a href="https://www.just-transition.info/coal-will-always-be-part-of-the-story/">https://www.just-transition.info/coal-will-always-be-part-of-the-story/</a>

### 7.3 Employees of the Turów Complex

Through findings from other projects and desk research, it appears that mine workers are often overlooked and insufficiently involved in processes surrounding mine closures. The lack of involvement is particularly evident in the planning and implementation of reskilling, upskilling, and other training measures designed to facilitate employees' reintegration into the labour market. In many cases, even when such measures are proposed, they are rarely consulted with mine employees beforehand, making them less tailored to their needs and challenges. Similarly, in the case of Turów mine workers, there is a significant lack of reliable information regarding their potential reskilling, upskilling, or occupational transition needs. According to representatives of PGE and trade union members, no structured assessments or research activities have been undertaken to identify the scale and scope of reskilling requirements among the workforce.

Moreover, local authorities from Bogatynia explained that, despite certain upskilling/reskilling opportunities being available and funded by EU funds (up to 80%), miners do not participate in such initiatives because they are currently employed, and most will be retired by the time the mine closes.

<sup>33</sup> European Commission. (2025). C-mine Reuse Project: Transforming a former coal mine into a creative hub. [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-c-mine-reuse-project.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-c-mine-reuse-project.pdf)

The lack of a clear closure date, subject to frequent changes and conflicting announcements, also contributes to miners taking the closure lightly.

Due to the lack of proper and effective reskilling, upskilling, and training initiatives, the vast majority of mine employees may be forced to leave the region and/or transition to other sectors of employment. While many employees possess a broad set of technical skills, these are often highly specific to the mining and energy sectors and may be difficult to transfer directly to other industries without targeted support.

However, some initiatives outlined below have taken workers' needs into account and integrated them into the participatory process through financial support, identifying alternative employment opportunities, and providing necessary training and upskilling to match individuals with new jobs in growing sectors, such as renewable energy, construction, IT, and sustainable tourism.

### Types of engagement

Types of engagement can be categorised into three groups, based on the scope of activities. The engagement employees of mine complexes are: early and transparent communication, tailored reskilling and reemployment and meaningful participation.

- **Early and Transparent Communication:** Employees should be engaged as soon as a transition is being considered. They need to receive clear and honest information about the process.<sup>34</sup>
- **Tailored Reskilling and Reemployment:** Employees must have at their disposal accessible and relevant training programs tailored to their backgrounds and local labour market needs. Partnership with local and regional vocational institutions is welcome.<sup>35</sup>
- **Meaningful participation:** This means actively involving mine workers in designing solutions, such as retraining programs tailored to their skills, fair severance arrangements, and investments that benefit their communities. Engagement should be structured through trusted channels like worker councils, unions, or elected employee representatives.

### Key qualifications of effective engagement with mine employees

Effective engagement of mine employees should adhere to several key qualifications that serve as guiding principles for creating inclusive and meaningful strategies for their engagement.

- **Fair social protection mechanisms:** Workers affected by mine closures or downsizing must receive adequate severance packages, access to fair and secure pensions, and be covered by robust social safety nets to protect them from sudden income loss. Not all employees will be able or willing to retrain for new roles, due to age, health, or personal circumstances.<sup>36</sup>
- **Long-term commitment and monitoring:** Transition support should not end with initial compensation or training. In fact, governments, employers, and stakeholders must commit to sustained investment and follow-up over several years. This includes tracking employment outcomes, retraining success, and community resilience, and using that data to refine support programs as needs evolve.
- **Inclusion of employees has to be place-based:** A place-based and inclusive approach acknowledges that every mining region has its own unique social, economic, and cultural context, which must be considered when planning a just transition. Thus, it is essential to actively include diverse employee voices across gender, age, skill levels, and employment types (e.g., contract, seasonal, or informal workers), to ensure that no group is overlooked.

### Overview of best practices

---

<sup>34</sup> Tasini, J. (2022). A trade union guide of practice for a Just Transition. IndustriALL Global Union. [https://www.industriall-union.org/sites/default/files/uploads/images/FutureOfWork/JustTransition/guide\\_of\\_practice\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://www.industriall-union.org/sites/default/files/uploads/images/FutureOfWork/JustTransition/guide_of_practice_en_web.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Rambharos, M., & Ilhardt, J. (2024). *Just transition and safeguards framework*. Environmental Defense Fund. <https://library.edf.org/AssetLink/l8kw3kd8k7vjmygy4ek16m827xs0j2qw.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> ENGAGER COST Action. (2021). Toolkit for a just transition from the people's perspective. <https://www.engager-energy.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Engager-Toolkit--draft-2.pdf>

This section presents key information on the two short-listed best practice examples on employees' involvement in the transition process. The selected initiatives are: the Fund covering loss of wages in Ida-Virumaa and the Future Employment and Skills in the Irish Midlands initiative.

Table 32. Fund covering loss of wages in Ida-Virumaa, Estonia

<b>Name</b>	<b>Fund Covering Loss Of Wages In Ida-Virumaa<sup>37</sup></b>
<b>Funding</b>	The project is funded by the Just Transition Fund and national authorities (Unemployment Insurance Fund).
<b>Challenges</b>	The fund addresses unemployment due to job losses in the oil shale sector in Ida-Virumaa. The fund is meant to provide an incentive for workers to take-up new employment in a different, less carbon-intensive industry after their job ends in the oil shale industry. It was observed that there is often a lack of motivation for workers to take on a new job since the wage level is expected to be lower than in their previous employment.
<b>Type of engagement</b>	The fund will be operational from 2024 onwards. It is one of 11 measures in Ida-Virumaa that are coupled with reskilling and upskilling measures. They are part of the JTP, which has not been approved yet. The Ministry of Social Affairs is the responsible actor for the fund.
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The fund will provide financial support to workers from the oil shale sector in Ida-Virumaa who are switching into new employment in different, less carbon-intensive industries.
<b>Activities</b>	The fund provides a wage supplement on top of the new salary earned in a different sector, aiming to ease the transition to new jobs.
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The fund provides a wage supplement on top of the new salary earned in a different sector, aiming to ease the transition to new jobs.</li> <li>- The length of the support is tied to the duration of the worker's previous employment in the oil shale sector. Those with less than 5 years of experience receive support for up to 6 months, 5-10 years for 9 months, and over 10 years for up to a year.</li> <li>- The fund comes in addition to regular unemployment benefits and is only available to workers who have been employed in the shale oil industry for at least two years within the previous three years.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">FUND COVERING LOSS OF WAGES IN IDA-VIRUMAA</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="https://www.just-transition.info/bestpractices/estonia-fund-covering-loss-of-wages/">https://www.just-transition.info/bestpractices/estonia-fund-covering-loss-of-wages/</a>

Table 33. Future employment and skills in the Irish Midlands, Ireland

<b>Name</b>	<b>Future employment and skills in the Irish Midlands<sup>38</sup></b>
<b>Funding</b>	Co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the EU. Up to €169 million will be available over the duration of the fund.
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>One of the biggest issues is the loss of jobs at Bord na Móna and related power plants, which have been central to the region's economy for decades. Many workers have spent their entire careers in the peat industry and now face an uncertain future, often without formal qualifications or experience in other sectors.</p> <p>The second challenge is the rural nature of the Midlands, which creates problems with transport, broadband access, and connectivity.</p> <p>The region also struggles to attract outside investment, especially in areas that are less economically developed. The project tries to attract new business by promoting sectors like renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and high-quality food production.</p>
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Involvement of all relevant and interested parties with specific short and medium-term measures, such as skills audits and online learning.
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The project's main objective is to support these workers and their communities by identifying alternative employment opportunities and providing the necessary training and upskilling to match people with new jobs in growing sectors, such as renewable energy, construction, IT, and sustainable tourism.

<sup>37</sup> European Commission. (2025). Fund covering loss of wages in Ida-Virumaa. [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-fund-ida-virumaa.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-fund-ida-virumaa.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Broughton, A., & Dowling, P. (2020). *Przyszłe zatrudnienie i umiejętności w irlandzkim Midlands*. Komisja Europejska. [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-08/future\\_employment\\_and\\_skills\\_in\\_the\\_irish\\_midlands\\_0.pdf](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-08/future_employment_and_skills_in_the_irish_midlands_0.pdf)

<b>Activities</b>	The project works closely with workers who are losing their jobs, helping them understand their options and supporting them with retraining, job-seeking skills, and emotional wellbeing. Education and training providers offer courses in areas like renewable energy, construction, IT, and manufacturing, so that people can learn the skills needed in growing sectors. At the same time, efforts are made to match people's existing skills to current job vacancies, even if they lack formal qualifications. The project also helps the wider region by supporting local businesses and encouraging people to start their own enterprises. It creates opportunities for remote working through co-working spaces and digital hubs.
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project strongly focuses on listening to workers themselves. The project carried out skills audits to understand what workers can already do, even if they don't have formal qualifications, and used this information to design training programmes that build on existing skills.</li> <li>- Another example of best practice is the support for entrepreneurship. Former workers are encouraged and helped to start their own businesses, with advice, training, and access to local enterprise supports.</li> <li>- Multitude of employment possibilities (e.g., sustainable tourism, food and drink, information technology and digital technology).</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Future employment and skills in the Irish Midlands</a>

## 7.4 Trade unions

Regarding the involvement of trade unions in the transition process, it is described as limited. So far, trade unions have had little systematic cooperation with regional and local authorities and other stakeholders. Moreover, they are characterised by a reactive rather than a strategic approach. Indeed, trade unions primarily focus on short-term issues such as job security, wages, and working conditions, and often lack strategic engagement in long-term planning for skills development, retraining, or economic growth in the context of the transition. Additionally, the recent and gradual withdrawal of PGE from local social initiatives, coupled with a reduction in support for the community, has exacerbated the challenges faced by trade unions, further weakening existing channels of social dialogue with other stakeholders.

Regarding unionisation rates in mining and among Turów mine employees, they are relatively high compared to the Polish national average. In 2014, the average unionisation rate in the mining and quarrying sector was 72%, whereas the national average across all sectors fluctuates around 12%. Currently, unionisation levels in mining have decreased, but it can still be assumed that they range between 50% and 60%, which remains considerably higher than the national average. These high numbers within the mining sector suggest that employees are active and participate in the "social dialogue" about the transition, ensuring that their interests and rights are considered.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, trade unions are closely aligned with PGE and tend to resist discussions about retraining or job transitions, fearing that such discussions may imply acceptance of the mine and power plant closures. PGE itself has withdrawn from local social engagement and no longer provides community or social support, thereby exacerbating the region's challenges.

### Types of engagement

Types of engagement can be categorised into three groups, based on the scope of activities. The engagement types for trade unions are: social dialogue and tripartite negotiations, co-design of reskilling and reemployment programs and campaigning and public policy influence.<sup>40</sup>

- **Social dialogue and tripartite negotiations:** They are fundamental to ensuring that workers' voices are not only heard but also actively shape decision-making. Trade unions must be treated as equal partners alongside government and employers in structured forums where

<sup>39</sup> Christiaensen, L., Ferré, C., Gajderowicz, T., & Wrona, S. (2022). *Towards a just coal transition: Labor market challenges and people's perspectives from Lower Silesia* (World Bank Jobs Working Paper No. 69). World Bank.

<sup>40</sup> Europejska Konfederacja Związków Zawodowych. (2018). *Zaangażowanie związków zawodowych w działania na rzecz klimatu w celu budowy sprawiedliwej transformacji*. [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/file/2018-09/Final%20FUPA%20Guide\\_EN.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/file/2018-09/Final%20FUPA%20Guide_EN.pdf)

policies are developed and negotiated. Through these platforms, unions can contribute to the design of national or regional just transition strategies, advocating for fair labour policies, adequate social protections, and sustainable job creation. In addition, collective bargaining becomes a powerful tool in this process, i.e., it enables unions to secure binding agreements that protect wages, benefits, working conditions, and retraining opportunities for affected workers.

- **Co-design of reskilling and reemployment programs:** It allows trade unions to play a proactive role in shaping the future employment pathways for workers affected by the transition. By partnering with employers, vocational institutions, and government agencies, unions can help ensure that training programs are aligned with actual labour market needs and reflect the skills, experience, and aspirations of the workforce.
- **Campaigning and public policy influence:** Unions can lead or actively support public campaigns that call for strong and fair transition policies, such as guaranteed income support, investment in quality green jobs, and climate justice measures that protect vulnerable workers and communities.

### Key qualifications of effective engagement with trade unions

Effective engagement of trade unions should adhere to several key qualifications that serve as guiding principles for creating inclusive and meaningful strategies for their engagement.

- **Equal and formal participation:** Trade unions are not just consulted as stakeholders but are fully recognised as decision-making partners in the just transition process. Their involvement should be embedded in official structures, such as tripartite dialogue forums (involving government, employers, and unions), steering committees, or transition task forces tasked with planning and implementing transition measures.
- **Early and continuous involvement:** This is essential to ensure that the process is truly inclusive and responsive to workers' needs. Unions must be brought in at the very beginning of planning so they can help shape priorities, anticipate risks, and propose worker-centred solutions. Their engagement should not be a one-time event, but part of a sustained dialogue, with regular consultations, updates, and opportunities to contribute to evolving policies and implementation strategies.
- **Access to information and transparency:** Trade unions must be provided with complete, timely, and accurate information about transition plans, anticipated economic impacts, and workforce projections. This enables them to analyse risks and opportunities, prepare for upcoming changes, and advocate for fair solutions. Transparent decision-making processes foster mutual trust between unions, governments, and employers, and prevent misunderstandings that can lead to resistance or conflict.

### Overview of best practices

This section presents key information on the four short-listed best practice examples on trade unions' involvement in the transition process. The selected initiatives are: the Ruhr Region and the Rhineland Lignite Mining District, both in Germany, the Silesian Voivodeship in Poland and the Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant in Taranto, Italy.

Table 34. Ruhr Region in Germany (North-Rhine Westphalia)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Ruhr Region in Germany<sup>41</sup></b>
<b>Funding</b>	The project was mostly financed from public funds. North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) made efforts to diversify the economic base of the region and set aside 17 billion Deutsche Mark (equal to €32 billion real) as part of a structural programme, "Development Program Ruhr".
<b>Challenges</b>	The transition of the Ruhr region in Germany from a hard coal belt into a knowledge-based economy with a dynamic service sector and state-of-the-art universities over

<sup>41</sup> Arora, A., & Schroeder, H. (2022). Jak unikać niesprawiedliwych transformacji energetycznych: wnioski z regionu Ruhry. *Energy, Sustainability and Society*, 12, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13705-022-00345-5>

	the past 60–80 years has been widely touted as a successful example of how just and fair low-carbon energy transitions can unfold.
<b>Type of engagement</b>	The transition process was largely negotiated through strong social partnership structures, including trade unions (e.g., IG BCE), employer associations, and public authorities. These actors were involved in planning coal phase-out timelines, designing compensation mechanisms, and ensuring labour protections. However, grassroots organisations, environmental groups, and marginalised communities had a limited say, especially in the early decades of the process.
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The focus is primarily on necessary adjustments resulting from the loss of jobs and training places in the field of fossil energy production. The programme will support measures such as vocational training for sustainable development and qualification, education, training, retraining and advisory measures.
<b>Activities</b>	Definition of four key policy areas: (1) wage subsidies for the reintegration of the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment, (2) labour market policy support for enterprise development, (3) combined promotion of employment and infrastructure, (4) integrated development of problematic urban areas.
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of an industrial policy focused on environmental technology by the State of North-Rhine Westphalia.</li> <li>- Social partners, including trade unions, also signed an agreement guaranteeing a socially responsible approach to restructuring in the mining sector. This agreement allowed the design of a workers’ relocation program, an early retirement scheme, and a proactive plan to accompany workers into new jobs (vocational training centres in the Ruhr reached a placement rate of 80%).</li> <li>- Establishment of a “coal-roundtable”: the Roundtable established a mechanism through which “a company had to retain employees for alternative employment or relocate them to other sectors. The agreement allowed miners who had been employed for a minimum of 25 years to retire by the age of 49.</li> <li>- The German Coal Association and IG Bergbau, Chemie, Energie (IG BCE) also offered the rest of the hard-coal mine workers (those who worked less than 25 years) a regular sum and decent working conditions if they remained flexible.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="https://energysustainsoc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13705-022-00345-5">https://energysustainsoc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13705-022-00345-5</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="https://justtransitionforall.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Galgoczi-Vancouver-Nov2016.pdf">https://justtransitionforall.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Galgoczi-Vancouver-Nov2016.pdf</a>

Table 35. Rhineland Lignite Mining District, Germany

<b>Name</b>	<b>Rhineland Lignite Mining District<sup>42</sup></b>
<b>Funding</b>	The transition is financed by the European EFRE fund and the state government of North-Rhine Westphalia. Since the introduction of the transition master plan 313 projects with a funding volume of 2.2 billion euros have been approved. In total, more than EUR 14.8 billion from national and state funds will be available for the sustainable transformation of the Rhenish mining area by 2038.
<b>Challenges</b>	Weak mandate and inadequate funding at the beginning of the process.
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Clear organisational structures include federal, state, regional authorities, and civil society levels, as well as stakeholders' meetings, a supervisory board coordination circle, and regional knots from the Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier GmbH (ZRR) side. Trade unions played a pivotal role in the transformation process. Notably, trade unionists were formally represented in the national “Growth, Structural Change and Employment” (WSB) Commission, which developed recommendations for Germany’s coal phase-out. At the state level, unions – particularly the German Trade Union Confederation NRW (DGB NRW) – advocated for their full implementation and demanded representation in all relevant working groups on structural change. Thus, DGB NRW acted as the umbrella organisation, coordinating trade union positions and advocating for union involvement in political decision-making. In addition, trade unions such as IG BCE or represented opencast mine workers, while ver.di represented

<sup>42</sup> Kolde, L., & Wagner, O. (2022). *Polityki ładu instytucjonalnego dla sprawiedliwej transformacji: studium przypadku w rejonie węgla brunatnego Nadrenii* [Governance policies for a “just transition” – A case study in the Rhineland lignite mining district]. *Journal of Sustainable Development of Energy, Water and Environment Systems*, 10(1), 1080383. <https://doi.org/10.13044/j.sdewes.d8.0383>

	power plant employees. These unions focused on company-level issues such as collective bargaining, employment protection, and early retirement schemes.
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The main objective is the implementation of an intermediary agency as the main mechanism for managing structural change in the Rhenish lignite mining region – the agency would enhance the transition process.
<b>Activities</b>	The Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier GmbH is developing a shared vision and a development strategy for the region; conducting studies on the prospects of specific industry branches to deepen its understanding of the region and organising idea contests and networking events, bringing together different stakeholders at the Coal Region Conference. Trade union representatives participated alongside other stakeholders in the work of the WSB commission, helping to develop a national plan for phasing out lignite. Trade unions collaborated with universities and research institutions (e.g. RWTH Aachen, Forschungszentrum Jülich) to develop job creation strategies and ensure that research findings were taken into account in transition planning.
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of a Transition Agreement between the authorities of North-Rhine Westphalia and stakeholders and the supervisory board of ZRR. The Agreement includes clauses on: (1) Fundamentals of structural transition in the Rhineland mining area, (2) Factors for successful structural transition, (3) Funding basics and funding system, and (4) Citizen participation.</li> <li>- ZRR agreed to set up an advisory board with 20 representatives of the neighbouring municipalities of the Rhenish coal region.</li> <li>- Strong and comprehensive organisational structure of coordinating bodies at national, regional and civil society levels.</li> <li>- IG BCE in Alsdorf became involved early on in preparing collective agreements that reflected the upcoming changes in the coal sector. A key initiative was to anticipate and promote an ‘adjustment fund for the lignite sector’ – a state supported early retirement scheme enabling older workers to retire up to five years early, modelled on arrangements in the hard coal sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="https://www.sdewes.org/jsdewes/pid8.0383">https://www.sdewes.org/jsdewes/pid8.0383</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="https://www.wirtschaft.nrw/sites/default/files/documents/englische_version_reviervert_rag.pdf">https://www.wirtschaft.nrw/sites/default/files/documents/englische_version_reviervert_rag.pdf</a>

Table 36. Transformation in the Silesian Voivodeship, Poland

<b>Name</b>	<b>Transformation in the Silesian Voivodeship<sup>43</sup></b>
<b>Funding</b>	The project is primarily funded through several European Union and national-level financial instruments, with the Just Transition Fund being the largest and most targeted source. Complementary EU funds (European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund Plus) are available under the Regional Operational Program for Śląskie 2021-2027. The initiative is also funded by national and regional authorities, as well as by private and public investments.
<b>Challenges</b>	The region is heavily dependent on coal since it has long been the heart of Poland’s coal industry, with tens of thousands employed directly or indirectly in mining. The region is also facing strong social resistance and political sensitivity since coal mining is seen as both an economic pillar and a cultural identity. Additionally, the region struggles with slow administrative procedures due to several delays in the transition plans and unclear governance structures of the mentioned transition.
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Multi-level governance and coordination with regional authorities (e.g., the Marshal’s Office of the Silesian Voivodeship), national ministries (e.g., Ministry of Climate and Environment) and the European Commission. Another type of engagement is consultative and participatory mechanisms, such as public consultations, which were conducted as part of the development of the Territorial Just Transition Plan for Silesia.

<sup>43</sup> Wiktorowska, D. (oprac.). (2023). *Rola liderów związków zawodowych w procesie zmian związanych z transformacją przemysłu węglowego*. Związek Zawodowy Górników w Polsce.  
[https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/images/ROPT/1703664472\\_zzq\\_brochure\\_3\\_eng\\_th.pdf](https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/images/ROPT/1703664472_zzq_brochure_3_eng_th.pdf)

	Trade unions were also part of general consultations regarding the transition: between September 2020 and May 2021, the Marshal's Office held 33 workshops with around 1,850 participants, including trade union representatives. The latter took part in <b>expert workshops</b> , which identified key socio-economic transformation challenges; <b>geographical workshops</b> , which addressed transformation issues specific to sub-regions; and <b>consultation workshops</b> , where experts from municipalities, the Regional Energy Council, trade unions, NGOs and business groups reviewed the initial TPST draft and provided input. Trade unions participation helped shape the final version of the Territorial Just Transition Plan for Silesia 2030, adopted in June 2021 and later submitted to the European Commission.
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The main objective is to ensure that the transition from coal and carbon-intensive industries in the Silesian Voivodeship is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially just, leaving no one behind, especially workers, their families, and coal-dependent communities.
<b>Activities</b>	Main activities under the transformation in the Voivodeship are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Smart City Projects:</b> The region has also focused on transforming its cities into "smart cities," using digital technologies and data to improve urban management, reduce energy consumption, and enhance residents' quality of life.</li> <li>• <b>Transportation Hub:</b> The region became a central transportation hub in Poland, benefiting from its strategic location between major Polish cities and the EU.</li> <li>• <b>Development of Services:</b> Following the decline of heavy industry, there was a major push to diversify the region's economy. Sectors like services, trade, logistics, finance, and technology began to grow, with significant investments in infrastructure, particularly transportation networks.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Silesian Museum in Katowice has transformed from an industrial complex into a cultural space, attracting tourists and educating the public on the region's industrial history.</li> <li>- The <b>Social Integration Program</b> in Silesia aims to reduce poverty, improve access to social services, and provide support for marginalised communities.</li> <li>- The <b>Katowice Special Economic Zone</b> is a successful example of PPPs driving economic development, offering tax incentives to attract foreign investments and create jobs in high-tech industries.</li> <li>- The <b>University of Silesia</b> and <b>Silesian University of Technology</b> have strong collaboration programs with companies in industries such as IT, engineering, and energy.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/images/ROPT/1703664472_zzg_brochure_3_eng_t_h.pdf">https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/images/ROPT/1703664472_zzg_brochure_3_eng_t_h.pdf</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Regional observatory of the transition process in Silesia</a>

Table 37. A case study of the Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant in Taranto, Italy

<b>Name</b>	<b>A case study of the Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant in Taranto, Italy<sup>44</sup></b>
<b>Funding</b>	The EC approved Italy's Territorial Just Transition Plan. Italy was allocated €1 billion from the Just Transition Fund, and of this amount, around €800 million was specifically allocated to Taranto, primarily due to the environmental and social impacts of the Acciaierie d'Italia (formerly ILVA) steel plant. In June 2025, the Italian government allocated an additional €200 million in national funding as state aid to ensure the continued operations of Acciaierie d'Italia while negotiations over the company's future continue.
<b>Challenges</b>	The Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant in Taranto presents a complex case study of the environmental and social impacts of industrial activity. Since 1997, Taranto has been classified as an 'area at high risk of environmental crisis'. ILVA is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in Europe and a major source of air, soil and water pollution. In 2010 alone, the plant emitted thousands of tonnes of dust, nitrogen and sulphur dioxide, hydrochloric acid, benzene and dioxins. Severe pollution has been documented in the Tamburi district and surrounding areas. In addition, epidemiological studies show increased mortality in Taranto: a 10-15% excess of

<sup>44</sup> Komisja Europejska. (2023). *Rola związków zawodowych w kształtowaniu przyszłości przemysłu wysokoemisyjnego: studium przypadku huty Acciaierie d'Italia w Taranto, Włochy*. [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/case-study-trade-unions-role-future-of-carbon-intensive-industry.pdf/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/case-study-trade-unions-role-future-of-carbon-intensive-industry.pdf/)

	overall mortality, a 30% excess of lung cancer mortality, and high rates of respiratory and digestive diseases. Between 1998 and 2010, 386 people living near the plant died as a result of exposure to toxic emissions. Hospitalisation rates for respiratory diseases are particularly high among children.
Type of engagement	The trade unions have played a major role in defending workers' health and employment. They initiated the decarbonisation measures for workers' health. This entails transitioning the energy sources of furnaces from coal to electricity, as well as installing filters which capture emissions from toxic chemicals. Trade unions also played an important role in holding the authorities accountable (e.g., trade unions in Taranto raise concerns about how the Italian public institutions might misuse the €800 million assigned by the just transition Fund for the region of Taranto). Finally, trade unions also show themselves to be diplomatic and ready to collaborate. Trade unions are either present or push to be included in all decision-making events. In April 2023, trade unions met Taranto's mayor to find common ways to ensure a just transition in the region.
Scope and objective	The Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant in Taranto, Italy, aims to transform into a leader in sustainable steel production while increasing output and competitiveness. The plant's core objective is to modernise its integrated steelmaking process, transitioning towards environmentally friendly technologies like Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) and potentially using green hydrogen.
Activities	Main activities that the fund will support consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-skilling of 4,300 workers for re-employment in green jobs</li> <li>• Environmental restoration of the area through greening</li> <li>• Support for research projects and development of green hydrogen supply chain</li> <li>• Support for an ecological transition and the protection of natural resources</li> <li>• Support for research projects focusing on transition and diversification; and</li> <li>• Development of services for social welfare</li> </ul>
Best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The involvement of multiple actors helps to illuminate different perspectives on the future of the carbon-intensive sector. In addition to public and private actors, trade unions and other civil society actors are essential to diversify perspectives and reach just agreements that leave no one behind.</li> <li>- Trade unions can serve an important watchdog function by holding the private and public sectors accountable for previous agreements and fund spending, particularly the Just Transition Fund.</li> <li>- Beyond trade unions, direct workers' representatives should be invited to the discussion table to ensure an equal representation of different workers' groups.</li> </ul>
Source 1	<a href="#">Environmental crime and corporate mis-compliance: case study on the ILVA steel</a>
Source 2	<a href="#">Trade unions' role in shaping the future of the carbon-intensive industry</a>

#### Key resources and further recommendations

For a comprehensive understanding and further information, it is recommended to explore a International Labor Organisation guide on [Trade unions actions towards climate change and a just transition](#), as well as IndustryAll guide on good practices in just transition processes: [A trade union guide of practice for a Just Transition](#).

### **7.5 Young people and the organisations representing them**

Young people are one of the least frequently and effectively engaged in the just transition and local and development context in the Turów Subregion. Meaningful engagement of youth is a strategic cornerstone for regional resilience. Young people in the region encounter challenges mainly due to limited attractive engagement, development and work opportunities, prompting them to migrate to larger cities or abroad in search of better prospects. This outmigration leads to a loss of human and social capital. This section includes information on what high-quality youth engagement can look like and is being performed in just transition regions, to create a deeper understanding of successful youth engagement. The following sections will categorise youth engagement types, outline key qualifications for effective youth engagement, and present best-practice examples to address challenges faced by young people as highlighted in Section 6.5 and Annexe 2.

## Types of engagement

Types of engagement can be categorised into four main types based on complexity and scope of activities. These engagement types, in order of increasing level of involvement, responsibility and broader scope, are: Informing, consulting, training, enabling and implementing.

- **Informing** purposes are the foundational level of engagement. Activities with an informative purpose raise awareness and understanding among young people on just transition and green innovation. The typical informing activities of youth engagement initiatives are awareness campaigns and public events, educational materials and toolkits, podcasts, videos, social media content, guest lectures, and school visits.
- **Consulting** activities involve youth in public discussions and invite them to share their views, contribute ideas, and participate in decision-making processes. Younger generations are consulted to include their inputs in shaping policies and strategies. Consulting activities can take the form of youth assemblies and forums, surveys and focus groups, roundtable discussions, and participatory workshops.
- **Training and enabling** is the type of engagement that focuses on building skills and capacity among young people. Vocational training and upskilling programmes, mentorship and coaching, hackathons and innovation labs and providing access to tools, resources and networks are the typical activities of training and enabling.
- **Implementing** is the most advanced form of engagement, where younger generations take ownership of projects and lead projects in their region. Example activities are youth-led start-ups and social enterprises, community-based sustainability projects, and grand-funded initiatives.

## Key qualifications of effective youth engagement

Effective youth engagement should adhere to several key qualifications that serve as guiding principles for creating inclusive and empowering strategies for engaging young people.<sup>45</sup>

- **Local relevance:** Youth engagement activities should be tailored to the region's social, economic, and environmental context to better address youth needs.
- **Youth-centred design:** Programs that specifically set youth as the target group or co-create with young people ensure accessible and highly engaging activities, aligned with youth interests and needs.
- **Capacity building:** Youth are equipped with relevant and practical skills that enable them to contribute actively to a just transition.
- **Inclusive participation:** Diverse youth voices should be included in the public dialogue, and equal opportunities should be provided to all minorities.
- **Institutional support:** Strong local and regional institutions should be in a supporting and facilitating position to provide infrastructure, continuity, and reliability.
- **Political support:** National and local governments actively support youth engagement through policy, funding, and formal consultation mechanisms.
- **Sustainability and continuity:** The engagement strategies should be future-oriented, equipping youth with future-ready skills and mindsets, fostering innovation and adaptability, and having structures in place to ensure ongoing participation and impact.

Considering the key qualifications and types of youth engagement, a total of 9 relevant best practice examples have been identified.<sup>46</sup> Additional desk research on details of these engagement examples

---

<sup>45</sup> European Youth Portal's "[Toolkit for Youth Participation in the Just Transition Fund](#)"

<sup>46</sup> [Panda Labs for a Just Transition](#), [Coal Commission in Hungary](#), [EUTeens4Green](#), [The National Youth Assembly of Ireland](#), [Regional Development Agency in Konin](#), [Association of Active Youths of Florida \(OENEF\)](#), [PISMO Incubator](#), [Techport Innovation Centre](#), [Robotics Valley](#).

has been conducted to identify the examples where the most extensive information is available. Special attention was given during the research to address the challenges outlined in Annexe 2.

Four key examples have been identified, each representing one of the types of engagement presented above. These short-listed best practice examples are: Techport Green Incubator in the Netherlands, activities of the Regional Development Agency in Konin in Poland, PISMO Incubator in Croatia, and the EU's EUTEens4Green Project.

#### Overview of best practices

This section presents key information on the four short-listed best practice examples of youth engagement. The selected initiatives are: Techport Green Incubator in the Netherlands, The Board of Eastern Wielkopolska Region in Poland, PISMO Incubator in Croatia, and EUTEens4Green Project.

Table 38. Techport Innovation Centre, the Netherlands

<b>Name</b>	<b>Techport Innovation Centre in IJmond region, the Netherlands</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Partially funded by the Just Transition Fund
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Mismatch between existing education paths and local labour market needs
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Informing, training and enabling
<b>Scope and objective</b>	Techport Innovation Centre supports sustainable manufacturing start-ups and SMEs in their innovative early-stage business activities. The innovation centre aims to engage students to get them excited about working and learning in technology and raise awareness among youth on the just transition and technological developments in the region. Techport informs students on different business models, start-ups, and entrepreneurial activities, educates students about technology, and provides networking opportunities, conferences, alumni programmes, and collaboration opportunities.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Techport Technology Week:</b> Brings together more than 5000 primary and secondary school students through workshops, guest lessons and company visits. Workshops within the Techport Technology Week educate specific age groups on technology.</li> <li>• <b>Girls Day:</b> Brings together girls between the ages of 10-15 to discover and experience the world of STEM and IT up close.</li> <li>• <b>Parent-children's events:</b> Show families possible career pathways in engineering and technology.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Techport Green Incubator facilitates early and inclusive exposure via information activities. Through events, the incubator sparks early interest among children and youth.</li> <li>- The targeted inclusion initiatives, like Girls Day, help to close gender gaps in STEM and IT.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of Techport Innovation Centre</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform case study on business incubators</a>

Table 39. Regional Development Agency in Konin, Poland

<b>Name</b>	<b>Regional Development Agency in Konin, Eastern Wielkopolska, Poland</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Funded by the Just Transition Fund and regional and national government programs
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Low civic and public engagement among youth
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Consulting
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The Regional Development Agency in Konin prepares initiatives regarding energy transformation, participates in the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition, works on fundraising and job creation activities, and aims to prevent the outflow of young people from the region and the ageing of the population.

<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation of <b>film competitions</b> for secondary school students in Eastern Wielkopolska on green transition topics.</li> <li>• Organisation of '<b>Youth Gala of the Future</b>' event as the grand finale of the film competition to bring youth together. The event includes young artists, teachers, representatives of the local government and project partners.</li> <li>• Inclusion of perspectives of youth in the public discussions and decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Working in close collaboration with the Academy of Applied Sciences in Konin (ANS) to respond to the just transition challenges and needs of youth in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High level of participatory strength and breadth of mobilisation.</li> <li>- Inclusion of the youth's ideas in the public dialogue in the region. Due to these inclusive efforts, Eastern Wielkopolska benefits from an active, competent, and effective civil society and regional governmental entities that are supportive of administering a just transition.</li> <li>- The agency has collaborated with ANS to revitalise an old school building and has equipped the rooms with research equipment. The rooms are open to the students of the academy to develop projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition in 7 central and eastern European countries report</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Official website of the Regional Development Agency in Konin</a>
<b>Source 3</b>	Study visit to the region.

Table 40. PISMO Incubator, Croatia

<b>Name</b>	<b>PISMO Incubator in Sisak-Moslavina, Croatia</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Co-funded by the EU's European Regional Development Fund "Competitiveness and Cohesion Croatia" Operational Programme for the 2014-2020 programming period
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Youth outmigration to larger urban centres and abroad Mismatch between existing education paths and local labour market needs
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Training and enabling
<b>Scope and objective</b>	PISMO Incubator aims to improve the economic situation in Sisak-Moslavina County, Croatia, by transforming the area into a start-up hub for the gaming industry.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rental of offices and conference space on favourable terms</li> <li>- Rental of equipment specialised in the video game industry and the metallurgical industry</li> <li>- Advisory and mentoring services</li> <li>- Six-month training programs that incorporate modern technical tools.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The incubator offers targeted training programmes for emerging industries and equips youth with market-relevant digital skills. The incubator is a good example of how to prevent outflow of youth to other regions and prevent brain drain.</li> <li>- With its entrepreneurial infrastructure, the incubator provides affordable office and conference space, specialised equipment, and mentorship, creating a supportive environment for youth-led start-ups in the gaming industry.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of PISMO Incubator</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform case study on business incubators</a>
<b>Source 3</b>	<a href="#">European Commission's web article on PISMO Incubator</a>

Table 41. EUTeens4Green Project, European Union

<b>Name</b>	<b>EUTeens4Green Project</b>
<b>Funding</b>	EU-funded project, formed of a partnership led by SERN, and the associations CEE Bankwatch and Youth Environment Europe (YEE).
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Low civic and public engagement among youth
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Informing, consulting, and implementing

<b>Scope and objective</b>	The EUTeens4Green Project offers teens an opportunity to take ownership and become actors of change. The project allocates grants to teens to contribute to advancing the green transition in their regions, launches calls to fund youth-led actions, and aims to increase young people's participation.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding youth-led projects and ideas via the published calls</li> <li>• Development of a '<b>Policy Recommendations</b>' report to support young people in initiating and implementing their creative ideas on how to tackle challenges connected to the transformation process in their regions.</li> <li>• Providing recommendations on how to strengthen youth involvement in policy-making processes and increase their capacity to shape and lead the green transition.</li> <li>• Publication of the '<b>EUTeens4Green Booklet</b>', which gathers information about each project that participated in the EUTeens4Green initiative.</li> <li>• '<b>EUTeens4Green podcast</b>' where locals and experts from Just Transition regions in Europe talk about their experiences, how their own and their communities' lives are affected by the transition and the importance of involving youth in the Just Transition process.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows youth-led actions to grow locally and contributes to unleashing the potential of the young generation when it comes to their engagement, mobilisation in society and supporting the implementation of their project ideas.</li> <li>- The EUTeens4Green podcast is a good engagement tool for youth, helping them learn about the just transition in Europe and collecting and distributing inspiring information.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of EUTeens4Green</a>

Full overview of the comparative analysis of these initiatives has been prepared in an Excel workbook and is available upon request.

#### Key resources and further recommendations

For a comprehensive understanding and further information, it is recommended to explore the Just Transition Platform's case study on "[Integrating youth into the just transition process](#)", and the European Youth Portal's "[Toolkit for Youth Participation in the Just Transition Fund](#)", which provides in-depth information about youth engagement examples. Additionally, the [online ecological footprint calculator](#) for children on the Coal Commission in Hungary's website serves as a good example of online awareness-raising activities among youth.

### 7.6 Business actors and institutions supporting entrepreneurship and economic development

Business actors and institutions supporting entrepreneurship are one of the most critical yet under-leveraged stakeholders of the Turów Subregion. The territory is highly dependent on large employers, which causes a fragile economic structure. This high dependence challenges the economic transition and development of the territory. Additionally, smaller businesses in Turów Subregion are dependent on the mining activities and large entities of the region, constraining the activities of the SMEs and start-ups of the territory and inhibiting economic development. The presence of future-proof, diverse and dynamic businesses facilitates resilient economic growth and is urgently required in the Turów Subregion for successful and sustainable just transition implementation. This section sheds light on the categorisation of business actors' engagement types, provides information on key qualifications of business actors' engagement, and gives best practice examples from just transition regions that tackle the challenges mentioned in Annexe 2.

#### Types of engagement

Based on the scope of activities, engagement types can be categorised into three groups. The engagement types of business actors are Initiate, support, and collaborate.

- **Initiation** activities support businesses at the ideation phase. This type of engagement nurtures entrepreneurs and early-stage start-ups to foster innovation and provide them a roadmap on

how to successfully establish their entity and bring into fruition. This type of engagement is usually embodied in incubators. The activities for initiation are in the form of ideation workshops, pre-incubation/incubation programmes, mentorship, pitch trainings and bootcamps.

- **Supporting** business actors aims to strengthen the operations of entrepreneurs and start-ups. These activities accelerate growth, promote and advertise smaller entities, and provide tools, resources, and guidance. Example activities are Networking opportunities, knowledge transfer through conferences, training, and workshops, advisory support on legal and regulatory topics, access to working spaces and equipment, workshops with sectoral experts, and press and public relations support.
- **Collaboration** activities help businesses create connections with other businesses, public and private institutions, governments and academia. These activities aim to drive innovation and anchor new partnerships in the economic structure. Collaboration opportunities create shared value and long-standing partnerships among different institutions. Business engagement initiatives that facilitate collaboration should have a wide network of regional and national actors. They foster collaboration via bringing together companies and other institutions to create sector-specific networks, platforms where academia and business can co-create projects and solutions, and facilitating connections and agreements between governments and businesses.

In light of the categorisation presented above, the engagement activities within an initiative can be designed and implemented in several ways. They can be isolated efforts focusing on a particular category, multiple activities working synergistically towards a common goal, or entirely independent activities addressing diverse objectives. This flexibility allows for tailored approaches that can better meet the specific needs and contexts of the target groups and regions.

Key qualifications of effective engagement with business actors and institutions supporting entrepreneurship and economic development

Business engagement practices should consider the following key qualifications to ensure successful and sustainable engagement among all relevant stakeholders:

- **Tailored programmes:** Supporting businesses and ideas that align with socio-economic needs leverages regional potential most effectively.
- **Integrated ecosystems:** Collaboration across different institution levels and sectors creates broader opportunities and accelerates business growth.
- **Accessible infrastructure:** Providing free or affordable working spaces and required equipment to alleviate the burden of additional expenses and planning, especially in the initiation stages.
- **Strategic funding and investment readiness:** Supporting businesses by providing funds, grants, or advisory support on obtaining financial capital equips businesses with the required tools.
- **Workforce development and inclusion:** Predicting the workforce needs, advising businesses and providing reskilling and upskilling activities for target groups supports sustained just transition implementation.
- **Long-term vision and policy alignment:** Forecasting suitable business models and facilitating future-proof organisational structures that well-align with regional policies ensures sustainable economic development.

The key qualifications and types of business engagement have been taken into consideration to identify five relevant best practice examples.<sup>47</sup> With further desk research on these examples, four key best practices have been selected to address the challenges outlined in Section 6.6 and explain the business

---

<sup>47</sup> SAŠA Incubator, [Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region](#), [Techport Green Incubator](#), [Business Upper Austria](#) and [Chemelot Circular Hub](#)

engagement practices in more detail. These examples are SAŠA Incubator, Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region, Business Upper Austria and Chemelot Circular Hub.

#### Overview of best practices

This section presents key information on the four short-listed best practice examples on business engagement. The selected initiatives are: SAŠA Incubator from Slovenia, Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region from Czechia, Business Upper Austria from Austria and Chemelot Circular Hub from the Netherlands.

Table 42. SAŠA Incubator, Slovenia

<b>Name</b>	<b>SAŠA Incubator in Savinjsko-Šaleška, Slovenia</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Established by the Velenje Coal Mine investment company in 2007. In 2014, the City Municipality of Velenje became the majority owner of the incubator. The data on total costs and funding are not published.
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Skills mismatch and dependency on mining Insufficient entrepreneurial support and infrastructure
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Initiate and support
<b>Scope and objective</b>	SAŠA Incubator was established to gradually phase out the coal mine and thermal power plant by enabling green and circular activities to take root. It supports early-stage start-ups from all industries and Industry 4.0 companies in their expansion phase to diversify the region's economic activities.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The yearly “<b>Startup Weekend</b>” offers free brainstorming sessions open to the whole community, in which participants create teams to develop new entrepreneurial ideas.</li> <li>• The “<b>Entrepreneurial Trampoline</b>” program offers intensive mentorship, financial support, and opportunities to pitch to investors, focusing on developing viable business models and market strategies.</li> <li>• The “<b>Startup Generator</b>” program is for startups in the market who need a push to accelerate their business. The program helps startups with mentorship in marketing, and finance, be ready for investments, and choose the right investor.</li> <li>• The “<b>Investment Academy</b>” connects investors with startups, giving knowledge regarding how to be ready for receiving investments, but also how to choose the right investor.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The incubator offers subsidised rental spaces, free workshops, consulting, and networking to lower entrepreneurs' challenges and support them on infrastructure and accessibility during the initiation phase.</li> <li>- The incubator has been established with the initiative of the Velenje Coal Mine investment company and later supported by the City Municipality of Velenje, which shows how legacy industries can invest in future-oriented economic models.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of SAŠA Incubator</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform fiche on the designing a business incubator</a>
<b>Source 3</b>	<a href="#">Interreg Europe's online article on SAŠA Business Incubator</a>
<b>Source 4</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform's report on portfolio of good practices in Structural Change</a>

Table 43. Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region (ICUK), Czechia

<b>Name</b>	<b>Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region in Ústí, Czechia</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Founded by the Ústí Region Office, the Regional Chamber of Commerce and Jan Evangelista Purkyně University. The funding source and funding amount have not been published.
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Skills mismatch and dependency on mining Insufficient entrepreneurial support and infrastructure
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Initiate and support
<b>Scope and objective</b>	Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region has been established to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help local companies to launch their entrepreneurial plans</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support entrepreneurs to start and develop their businesses into successful start-ups and help SMEs to innovate.</li> <li>- Connecting partners from the business world with academia to strengthen the region's attractiveness.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STARTUP GO!</b>: A nine-month incubator programme for young start-ups and for people with a business idea who live or study in the Ústí region, and offers workshops, mentoring, and consultation for reasonable prices.</li> <li>• <b>ÚSTÍ REGION #COWORKS</b>: A platform for the support of the coworking centre network in the Ústí Region.</li> <li>• <b>ICUK Platinn</b>: A programme aimed at growing the business and innovation potential of small and medium-sized enterprises.</li> <li>• <b>Digital Innovation Hub</b>: A centre for support, popularisation and implementation of digitalisation, automation and robotisation in companies.</li> <li>• <b>Business Help And Experts</b>: feedback support from experienced entrepreneurs on the ideation phase.</li> <li>• <b>RE-SEARCH</b>: A database of research organisations in the region to help find a partner for their innovation.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The integrated regional innovation and entrepreneurship support system, tailored to address structural economic challenges like mining dependency and skills mismatch.</li> <li>- The comprehensive incubation program fosters entrepreneurs and creates an inclusive environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of Innovation Centre of the Ústí Region</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">European Commission's web article on ICUK</a>

Table 44. Business Upper Austria, Austria

<b>Name</b>	<b>Business Upper Austria in Austria</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Business Upper Austria's shareholders are OÖ Landesholding GmbH (65%), Upper Austrian Chamber of Labour (15%), Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce (15%), and the Confederation of Upper Austrian Industry (5%).
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Insufficient entrepreneurial support and infrastructure
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Support
<b>Scope and objective</b>	<p>Business Upper Austria is the competence centre for cross-company cooperation in Upper Austria and is the official business agency of the region. Objectives of Business Upper Austria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support national and international companies in investing in the location.</li> <li>- Support companies in finding, qualifying and retaining skilled workers.</li> <li>- Promote innovative strength and innovation strategies with tailor-made solutions.</li> <li>- Create networks between companies, researchers, founders and location partners and develop projects for cross-company cooperation.</li> <li>- Play an active role in shaping economic and research policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting and processing industry-relevant information</li> <li>• Press and Public Relations</li> <li>• Knowledge transfer through events, training courses and workshops</li> <li>• Needs-based qualification and further education through specific training courses and courses</li> <li>• Exchange of experience</li> <li>• Cooperation agreements</li> <li>• Sales and internationalisation activities</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	With a wide range of clusters within the agency (automotive, building innovation, cleantech, human capital, IT, plastic, food, mechatronics, medical technology). The agency categorises a broad range of businesses and actively supports the stakeholders within each cluster. It promotes and coordinates the successful cooperation among companies.
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of Business Upper Austria</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">IndustriAll's report on transformation strategies for industrial regions in Upper Austria</a>

Table 45. Chemelot Circular Hub, the Netherlands

<b>Name</b>	<b>Chemelot Circular Hub in Zuid-Limburg, the Netherlands</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Funded by the Just Transition Fund
<b>Addressed challenge</b>	Insufficient entrepreneurial support and infrastructure Skills mismatch and dependency on mining Lack of collaboration among stakeholders
<b>Type of engagement</b>	Collaborate
<b>Scope and objective</b>	The Chemelot Circular Hub is a large-scale initiative in the Netherlands, aimed at transforming one of Europe’s largest chemical clusters, the Chemelot Industrial Park, into a circular and climate-neutral hub by 2050. The main objectives of the project are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accelerate transition to a circular and climate-neutral economy.</li> <li>- Bringing connections between companies, governments and knowledge institutes.</li> <li>- Strengthen the regional economy through new circular business models</li> <li>- Enhance social outcomes by creating jobs, improving quality of life, and promoting regional pride.</li> <li>- Expand the talent pool by reskilling workers and attracting young talent.</li> <li>- Strengthen the knowledge position of Zuid-Limburg as a centre of excellence.</li> <li>- Promote cross-border European cooperation through the Euregion.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chemelot Innovation &amp; Learning Labs (CHILL):</b> Brings together knowledge institutions and companies to collaborate, where students work on innovation questions from start-ups and companies.</li> <li>• Development of a <b>Joint Investment Agenda 2020-2030</b> with the collaboration of a broad alliance.</li> <li>• Partnership with <b>Brightlands Chemelot Campus</b> for cooperation between industry and science.</li> </ul>
<b>Best practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chemelot Circular Hub has been established with a targeted plan to transform the chemical cluster and serves as a good example of future-thinking and targeted business development planning.</li> <li>- The Hub hosts a variety of stakeholders from business, academia, and government representatives. This fosters deeper communication and facilitates long-standing collaborations.</li> </ul>
<b>Source 1</b>	<a href="#">Official website of Chemelot Circular Hub</a>
<b>Source 2</b>	<a href="#">Just Transition Platform’s case study on Chemelot Circular Hub</a>

Full overview of the comparative analysis of these initiatives has been prepared in an Excel workbook and is available upon request.

#### Key resources and further recommendations

For further information on business engagement and supporting entrepreneurship and economic development in Just Transition regions, the Just Transition Platform’s case study on “[The role of business incubators in a just transition](#)” and the Just Transition Platform’s fiche on “[Designing a business incubator](#)” are useful sources.

## 8. Annex I: Literature

Association for the Development of Energy and Innovation. (n.d.). Committee for the Transformation of the Turow Subregion. STORIE. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://storie.pl/komitet-transformacji-regionu-turoszowskiego/>

Arora, A., & Schroeder, H. (2022). How to avoid unfair energy transitions: lessons from the Ruhr region. *Energy, Sustainability and Society*, 12, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13705-022-00345-5>

Broughton, A., & Dowling, P. (2020). *Future employment and skills in the Irish Midlands*. European Commission. [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-08/future\\_employment\\_and\\_skills\\_in\\_the\\_irish\\_midlands\\_0.pdf](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-08/future_employment_and_skills_in_the_irish_midlands_0.pdf)

Business for Social Responsibility. (2024). *Stakeholder engagement in the just transition: Webinar presentation*. <https://www.bsr.org/files/event-resources/BSR-Engaging-Stakeholders-Just-TransitionWebinar-Presentation.pdf>

Business Upper Austria – OÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH. (n.d.). *Business Upper Austria – OÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH*. <https://www.biz-up.at>

Christiaensen, L., Ferré, C., Gajderowicz, T., & Wrona, S. (2022). Towards a just coal transition: Labor market challenges and people's perspectives from Lower Silesia (World Bank Jobs Working Paper No. 69). World Bank.

Commission for Coordination and Regional Development of Alentejo, I.P. (FTJ – Alentejo Litoral). (n.d.). *Fundo para uma Transição Justa – Alentejo Litoral*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://www.ftjalentejolitoral.pt/>

EITI International Secretariat. (2023). Community engagement in a just energy transition. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. [https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/EITI\\_Report\\_Engaging%20communities%20in%20a%20just%20transition.pdf](https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/EITI_Report_Engaging%20communities%20in%20a%20just%20transition.pdf)

Encyklopedia PWN. (n.d.). Turoszowskie Zagłębie Węgla Brunatnego. In Encyklopedia PWN. Retrieved July 24, 2025, from <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Turoszowskie-Zaglebie-Wegla-Brunatnego;3990168.html>

ENGAGER COST Action. (2021). *Toolkit for a just transition from the perspective of people*. <https://www.engager-energy.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Engager-Toolkit--draft-2.pdf>

European Commission Directorate-General for Energy. (2025). *Centre for the History of Mining in Lewarde*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ece9cfad-313c-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. (2023). Chemelot Circular Hub: Project fiche. Just Transition Platform. Retrieved 28 July 2025 from [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-chemelot-circular-hub.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-chemelot-circular-hub.pdf)

European Commission. (2023). *The role of trade unions in shaping the future of carbon-intensive industry: Case study of the Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant in Taranto, Italy*. [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/case-study-trade-unions-role-future-of-carbon-intensive-industry.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/case-study-trade-unions-role-future-of-carbon-intensive-industry.pdf)

European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. (2023). *Approaches to measuring just transition: A toolkit for just transition regions*. Just Transition Platform. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/toolkit-just-transition-measurement-approaches.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/toolkit-just-transition-measurement-approaches.pdf)

European Commission. (2023). *Modernisation of the “MINOS” factory site (Exhibition and Cultural Activity Park)*. [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-minos-factory-site.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-minos-factory-site.pdf)

European Commission. (2023). *Compensation fund for loss of earnings in Ida-Virumaa*. [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-fund-ida-virumaa.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-fund-ida-virumaa.pdf)

European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. (2023). *Regional observatory of the transition process in Silesia: Case study*. Just Transition Platform. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/case-study-regional-observatory-transition-process-silesia.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/case-study-regional-observatory-transition-process-silesia.pdf)

European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. (November 2023). *Action 5 – Establishment and implementation of a territorial socio-economic observatory for just transition (TOJT): Concept paper*. Just Transition Platform. Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/concept-paper-territorial-observatory-just-transition-en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/concept-paper-territorial-observatory-just-transition-en.pdf), retrieved July 28, 2025.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. (2024). *Supporting employability in the Upper Nitra region: Project fiche*. Just Transition Platform. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-employability-upper-nitra.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-employability-upper-nitra.pdf)

European Commission. (2025). *C-mine reuse project: Transforming a former mine into a creativity hub*. [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-c-mine-reuse-project.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/funding/just-transition-fund/project-fiches/project-fiche-c-mine-reuse-project.pdf)

European Commission. (2025). *Robotics Valley: Driving technological innovation and youth engagement in the Jiu Valley, Romania*. <https://op.europa.eu/o/opportal-service/download-handler?identifier=9f4c896d-41b3-11f0-b9f2-01aa75ed71a1&format=PDF&language=en&productionSystem=cellar>

European Climate Initiative (EUKI). (2025). *Panda Labs for a Just Transition*. [https://www.euki.de/en/euki-projects/panda-labs/\(\)](https://www.euki.de/en/euki-projects/panda-labs/)

European Climate Initiative (EUKI). (2023). *EUTeens4Green – a new generation of young ambassadors for a just transition*. [https://euteens4green.org/about-the-project/\(\)](https://euteens4green.org/about-the-project/)

European Region of Rheinisches Revier. (n.d.). *Rheinisches Revier: An industrial region in transition*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://www.rheinisches-revier.com/>

European Region of Rheinisches Revier. (n.d.). *Public participation in Rheinisches Revier. In: Mitgestalten – Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://www.rheinisches-revier.de/mitgestalten/oeffentlichkeitsbeteiligung>

European Trade Union Confederation. (2018). *Trade union involvement in climate action for a just transition*. [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/file/2018-09/Final%20FUPA%20Guide\\_EN.pdf\(\)](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/file/2018-09/Final%20FUPA%20Guide_EN.pdf)

IndustriAll Europe (Ed.). (June 2024). *Transformation strategies of industrial regions in Upper Austria: Trade unions and employers as stakeholders of the Territorial Just Transition Fund*. Available at: [news.industriall-europe.eu](https://news.industriall-europe.eu)

Just Transition Initiative. (2021). *Coal Commission*. <https://igazsagosatmenet.eu/en/coal-commission/>

Just Transition Institute (LIFE IP North HU Trans). (n.d.). *Coal Commission*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://igazsagosatmenet.eu/en/coal-commission/>

Kolde, L., & Wagner, O. (2022). *Governance policies for a “just transition” – A case study in the Rhineland lignite mining district*. *Journal of Sustainable Development of Energy, Water and Environment Systems*, 10(1), 1080383. <https://doi.org/10.13044/j.sdewes.d8.0383>

Marshal's Office of the Dolnoslaskie Voivodship. (n.d.). *Lower Silesia Development Strategy 2030*. Retrieved from [https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Rozwoj\\_regionalny/SRWD\\_2030.pdf](https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/Rozwoj_regionalny/SRWD_2030.pdf)

Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. (n.d.). *Working Group on the Just Transition Fund*. In: *Just Transition Fund – Lower Silesia*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://umwd.dolnyslask.pl/gospodarka/fundusz-sprawiedliwej-transformacji/grupa-robocza-ds-fst/>

Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. (n.d.). *EU funds for Lower Silesia 2021–2027*. In: *European Funds for Lower Silesia: Guides*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://funduszeudolnoslaskie.pl/poradnik/4659-fundusze-europejskie-dla-dolnego-slaska-2021-2027>

Ministry of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth & Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Communications (Ireland). (2023). *National Youth Assembly on Climate 2023 Report*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/campaigns/national-youth-assembly-on-climate-2023/>

Money.pl. (August 29, 2023). *Polish energy giant to stop using coal earlier than planned, sets date*. Retrieved from <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/polski-kolos-konczy-z-weglem-szybciej-niz-planowal-podal-date-6935772701182912a.html>

Organisation for New Forms of Energy. (n.d.). *Organisation for New Forms of Energy*. <https://www.oenef.eu>

Pietrukiewicz, M. (February 21, 2022). *Analysis of functional linkages in the Lower Silesian Coal Basin*. In: Institute of Territorial Development. Retrieved July 10, 2025, from <https://irt.wroc.pl/strona-470-analiza-powiazan-funkcjonalnych-w.html>

Rambharos, M., & Ilhardt, J. (2024). *Just transition and safeguards framework*. Environmental Defense Fund. <https://library.edf.org/AssetLink/l8kw3kd8k7vjmygy4ek16m827xs0j2gw.pdf>

SAŠA Incubator. (n.d.). *SAŠA Incubator – We support startups*. <https://sasainkubator.si>

Techport. (n.d.). *Techport Technology Week*. <https://techport.nl/en/wat-doet-techport/kiezen-voor-technologie/technologieweek/>

Wiktorowska, D. (Ed.). (2023). *The role of trade union leaders in the transformation of the coal industry*. Miners' Trade Union in Poland. [https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/images/ROPT/1703664472\\_zzg\\_brochure\\_3\\_eng\\_th.pdf](https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/images/ROPT/1703664472_zzg_brochure_3_eng_th.pdf)

## 9. Annex II: Selected stakeholder group and brief summary of main challenges

Table 46. Selected stakeholder group and a brief summary of the main challenges

Group of stakeholders	Key institutional, economic and social challenges and recommended responses
<p><b>Local public administration and its entities</b></p>	<p>One of the main challenges facing the authorities of the Turów Subregion is the lack of human resources, which significantly limits their ability to apply for European funds and other external resources, as well as to use them effectively. The lack of administrative capacity slows down development efforts and limits access to the necessary financial support. In addition, this problem is long-term and complex, as the transformation process will take several years and will take place in a context of economic and regulatory uncertainty.<sup>48</sup></p> <p>Another significant challenge is the lack of strong political representatives and leaders from the sub-region at the central level.<sup>49</sup> The region lacks meaningful representation of interests, which makes it difficult to obtain the necessary support or funding for projects related to just transition. Furthermore, the results of other interviews indicate that although some politicians have shown interest in the region, their involvement has often been superficial or short-lived, making it difficult to maintain long-term cooperation.<sup>50</sup></p> <p>The lack of systematic mapping of local needs and limited participation of residents in the transformation process is another challenge. Without adequate involvement and understanding of community priorities, planning and implementation processes risk failing to match actual local conditions and residents' needs.<sup>51</sup> The region also faces demographic challenges, particularly low population growth and an ageing society. These trends reduce the available labour force and put additional pressure on public services and long-term planning.</p> <p>Another factor exacerbating the situation is the migration of young people to Germany and the Czech Republic, which contributes to the phenomenon of 'brain drain', particularly among the younger population. According to City Population data, the number of inhabitants in the Zgorzelec district fell from 87,371 in 2021 to 85,139 in 2023.<sup>52</sup></p> <p>Finally, the Zgorzelec district has encountered difficulties in obtaining funding from the EU Just Transition Fund due to the overly distant projected closure date of the mine. As a result, the European Commission indicated that the region was not eligible for JTF support, mainly due to the lack of a</p>

<sup>48</sup> Smoleń, M., Kubiczek, P., & Rączka, J. (2024). *The twilight of coal in Turów. The region needs a just transition plan* (Instrat Policy Paper 05/2024). Instrat Foundation.

<sup>49</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8)

<sup>50</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

<sup>51</sup> Thielemann, N., & Berrocal, M. (2024). *Shaping the energy transition: the case of the Polish lignite mine in Turów*. International Journal of Strategic Communication, 18(1), 56–74.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2023.2234881> and Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 5, 7, 8,9)

<sup>52</sup> Christiaensen, L., Ferré, C., Gajderowicz, T. and Wrona, S. (2022). *Towards a just coal transition: Labour market challenges and prospects for residents of Lower Silesia* (World Bank Working Paper No. 69). World Bank; Stakeholder interviews (IDI 1, 2, 4, 6, 9)

commitment to transition to a carbon-neutral economy by 2030.<sup>53</sup> This exclusion deprived the subregion of the financial resources necessary to support a just and equitable transition away from coal, hampering efforts to diversify the local economy and support the affected communities.<sup>54</sup>

**Key problems:**

**1. Limited administrative capacity**

One of the main problems facing the local authorities is a shortage of qualified personnel and weak administrative capacity. This limits their ability to apply for and effectively manage European, national or external funds, and undermines long-term planning efforts. Given the prolonged and complex nature of the transition process, this challenge is expected to intensify unless directly addressed.

**2. Lack of strong political leadership and advocacy**

At the local, regional, and national levels, the region lacks visible political leaders capable of consistently representing its interests. The engagement of political actors has so far been intermittent or superficial, weakening the continuity of efforts and hindering the mobilisation of support for just transition-related projects.

**3. Insufficient citizens and community engagement**

There has been no systematic mapping of local needs, and the participation of residents in the transition process remains limited. Without inclusive mechanisms for dialogue and co-creation, there is a risk that planned measures will be misaligned with the real needs and expectations of local communities.

**4. Demographic challenges and youth outmigration**

Turów Subregion is affected by low population growth, an ageing society, and outward migration, particularly among young people. It is estimated that between 2021 and 2023, the population decreased from 87,371 to 85,139. Cross-border labour migration to Germany and the Czech Republic further weakens the local labour market and contributes to the “brain drain” phenomenon, reducing the region’s human capital base and long-term development prospects.

In order to address some of the above challenges, the authorities of the Zgorzelec County must revise the currently proposed Territorial Just Transition Plan. It is essential to appoint a dedicated transformation leader who will be responsible for the effective coordination of all related activities. In addition, the authorities must ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the transformation process, as certain groups, such as young people, women and cultural institutions, have been overlooked or remain underrepresented.

**Regional development agencies, employers and business organisations**

The economy of the Turów Subregion still depends heavily on a limited number of large employers, in particular the Turów mining and power plant complex and public institutions such as local authorities and healthcare facilities. Many local companies are directly or indirectly linked to the mining supply chain, acting as subcontractors or service providers.<sup>55</sup> This concentration of economic activity creates systemic vulnerability to change: any

<sup>53</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 5, 6, 9)

<sup>54</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1,2,5,9) and Smoleń, M., Kubiczek, P., & Rączka, J. (2024). *The decline of coal in Turów: the region needs a just transition plan* (Instrat Policy Paper 05/2024). Instrat. Source: [https://instrat.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Instrat-Policy-Paper-05\\_2024.pdf](https://instrat.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Instrat-Policy-Paper-05_2024.pdf) and

A missed opportunity for a just transition: the case of the lignite mine in Turów – <https://www.crossbordertalks.eu/2023/09/21/turow-introduction/> and EkoUnia

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9)

reduction in mining activity can have a cascading effect on the entire local economy, threatening employment, business continuity and financial stability.<sup>56</sup>

**Key challenges:**

**1. High economic dependency on the mining sector**

The local economy is heavily reliant on the continued operation of the Turów Complex. Its closure, scheduled for 2044, could result in a significant contraction in economic activity, particularly if alternative industries and job opportunities are not developed in parallel. SMEs operating in the mining supply chain are especially at risk.

**2. Mismatch between workforce skills and future economic needs**

Many workers in the region have technical skills specific to the mining industry, but lack the basic or transferable skills required in other industries. This limits their ability to find employment in growing sectors such as green technologies and services.<sup>57</sup> According to a World Bank report, basic skills among workers in the subregion are among the lowest in Poland.<sup>58</sup> Workers in the affected municipalities often have technical skills specific to mining, but may lack the basic skills required in other industries. This discrepancy hinders the process of retraining and integrating these workers into different sectors, especially if they are less well paid than mining.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, some residents may decide to work abroad, particularly in Germany and the Czech Republic, which will affect the local labour market.

**3. Underdeveloped entrepreneurship ecosystem and investor support**

Despite its potential to attract investment in green energy, particularly in renewable energy sources, the region lacks a coherent entrepreneurship development strategy and institutional structures to support business innovation.<sup>60</sup> There is no dedicated agency to stimulate entrepreneurship, coordinate services for investors and support SMEs. Publicly available data on the local SME sector is limited and strategic planning in this area is fragmented. On the other hand, some respondents pointed to the potential for attracting investors through green energy initiatives, especially offering access to renewable electricity. However, the lack of local infrastructure and political will to establish an effective investor support office hinders the achievement of this goal.<sup>61</sup>

**4. Lack of a coherent strategy for entrepreneurship development.**

The lack of a comprehensive entrepreneurship development strategy and an agency or ecosystem supporting SMEs is a significant gap in the region's readiness for a just transition. Supporting and stimulating entrepreneurship must become a priority if the region is to generate sustainable jobs and economic resilience, moving beyond its coal industry heritage.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Saha, D., Walls, G., Waskow, D., & Lazer, L. (1 April 2021). *Wałbrzych, Poland: Delayed transition after coal mine closures*. World Resources Institute. <https://www.wri.org/update/walbrzych-poland-delayed-transition-after-coal-mine-closures>

<sup>57</sup> Saha, D., Walls, G., Waskow, D., & Lazer, L. (1 April 2021). *Wałbrzych, Poland: Delayed transition after coal mine closures*. World Resources Institute. <https://www.wri.org/update/walbrzych-poland-delayed-transition-after-coal-mine-closures>

<sup>58</sup> Christiaensen, L., Ferré, C., Gajderowicz, T., & Wrona, S. (2022). *Towards a just coal transition: Labor market challenges and people's perspectives from Lower Silesia* (World Bank Jobs Working Paper No. 69). World Bank

<sup>59</sup> Christiaensen, L., Ferré, C., Gajderowicz, T., & Wrona, S. (2022). *Towards a just coal transition: Labor market challenges and people's perspectives from Lower Silesia* (World Bank Jobs Working Paper No. 69). World Bank

<sup>60</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9)

<sup>61</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

<sup>62</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4)

	<p>The region's high dependence on the coal industry, combined with the insufficient development of alternative economic sectors, poses a serious threat to the success of a just transition. The lack of interventions aimed at building new pillars of the economy, retraining the workforce and supporting entrepreneurship may lead to deeper social exclusion and economic stagnation. Without effective measures to diversify the economy, the energy transition may only exacerbate the region's social and economic problems associated with mine closures and declining employment in the coal sector.</p>
<p><b>Youth</b></p> <p>Vulnerable and underrepresented social groups</p>	<p>Young people in the Turów Subregion face a combination of structural and socio-economic challenges that affect both their long-term prospects and their level of engagement in public life. Interlocutors generally assess the overall civic participation of young people in the region as low. Young people are perceived as largely uninterested in local issues and public decision-making processes, which also translates into limited involvement in the just transition process.<sup>63</sup></p> <p>The lack of involvement is exacerbated by the absence of higher education institutions in the subregion. Due to the lack of local universities or training centres, young people are forced to leave the region to continue their education.</p> <p>The most common destinations are Wrocław, the largest academic centre in the region with the highest number of higher education institutions, as well as cities and institutions abroad, in Germany and the Czech Republic. This educational migration often becomes permanent, as many young people do not return after completing their studies.<sup>64</sup></p> <p>Conditions on the labour market further motivate young people to migrate. Employment opportunities abroad, especially in Germany, are more attractive due to higher wages paid in euros, more stable working conditions and easier access to housing. In addition, differences in education and vocational training systems mean that young people educated abroad are often better prepared to enter foreign labour markets than to reintegrate locally.<sup>65</sup></p> <p>Although formal youth structures exist, such as the <i>Youth Council in Bogatynia</i>, their visibility and influence remain limited. Stakeholders point to a general lack of awareness and interest among young people in the context of the region's energy transition. For many, a just transition is perceived as a distant or technical issue, not directly related to their current priorities and personal aspirations. As one respondent stated, the main problem for young people is their low awareness and lack of involvement in the Zgorzelec region in the energy transition.</p> <p>Despite the existence of certain youth structures, such as the aforementioned Youth Advisory Council in Bogatynia, there is a lack of understanding among students and young people about the transition process and its implications.<sup>66</sup> This situation poses a serious challenge to the transition process. If the region continues to lose young people – both physically, through migration, and politically, through lack of engagement – this risks undermining the sustainability and legitimacy of its transition efforts.</p> <p>At the same time, the creativity, flexibility and cross-border experiences of the younger generation can become valuable assets in shaping a new economic and social model for the post-coal era.</p> <p>To meet these challenges, the region should consider a range of measures to re-engage young people and give them a meaningful role in the future of their communities. These measures could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing accessible education and training pathways, particularly in sectors related to the green and digital economy, preferably through cross-border or hybrid forms;</li> </ul>

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

<sup>64</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3)

<sup>65</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

<sup>66</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

- Creating local employment opportunities that offer decent working conditions and development potential to reduce the incentive to leave;
- Strengthening youth participation mechanisms, including youth councils and informal groups, and ensuring their representation in local planning processes. They should be part of or involved in projects implemented by public authorities or non-governmental organisations;
- Investing in youth-led initiatives, including cultural, social and entrepreneurial projects that combine identity, innovation and sustainable development;
- Raising awareness of just transition through tailored information and education campaigns in schools, vocational schools, youth centres and spaces in cultural and community centres.

Empowering young people and making them co-creators of the region's future is not only a matter of justice, but also a strategic necessity. Without their involvement, the just transition in Zgorzelec will remain incomplete and unsustainable.

**Key problems:**

**1. Low civic and public engagement**

Youth participation in public life and decision-making remains limited. Formal structures, such as youth councils, often lack visibility, influence, and broad engagement. As a result, young people are rarely involved in local development discussions or the planning of transition-related activities.

**2. Limited awareness and perceived relevance of the transition**

The energy transition is frequently viewed by young people as distant or overly technical. Without tailored communication and education, it fails to resonate with their daily realities or aspirations.

**3. Lack of higher education institutions**

The absence of universities or advanced training centres within the Turów Subregion contributes to educational outmigration. Most young people leave for larger academic centres such as Wrocław or for opportunities abroad — particularly in neighbouring Germany and the Czech Republic.

**4. Youth outmigration and brain drain**

Many young residents do not return after completing their studies. This long-standing trend is driven not only by education, but also by the availability of more attractive labour markets across the border. Better wages, working conditions, and access to housing abroad contribute to a significant loss of human capital.

**5. More attractive labour markets abroad.**

Higher wages (in euros), better working conditions and easier access to housing in Germany and the Czech Republic are contributing to the brain drain.

**6. Mismatch between education and local labour market needs**

Vocational and educational pathways often fail to align with future-oriented sectors such as green technologies or digital innovation. This mismatch reduces both the employability of graduates and the region's attractiveness for skilled youth.

**7. Limited visibility and impact of youth structures**

While formal youth bodies exist, such as the Youth Council in Bogatynia, their impact is minimal. Informal youth groups and initiatives often lack institutional support, space, and capacity to influence decision-making.

## Trade unions in the Turow mine and power plant in Bogatynia

Trade unions in the Turów lignite Complex are one of the most established and organised stakeholder groups in the Turów Subregion. The energy and mining sector in Poland has historically been characterised by a high level of unionisation, and Turów is no exception. This institutional presence gives trade unions significant potential to influence the course of a just transition, both in terms of defending workers' rights and actively co-designing future career paths. Nevertheless, the role of trade unions in the subregion remains complex and sometimes ambivalent.<sup>67</sup>

The level of unionisation in mining, including among Turów mine workers, is relatively high compared to the national average. In 2014, the average unionisation rate in the mining and extraction sector was 72%, while the national average in Poland in other sectors was around 12%. Currently, unionisation in mining has declined but still hovers around 50-60%, which remains significantly higher than the national average. Such high figures indicate the activity of workers and their participation in the 'social dialogue' on transformation, which ensures that their interests and rights are taken into account. However, despite this presence, trade unions in the region still have a limited role in planning the transition process. Although they formally act as employee representatives, their involvement in the just transition process has so far been rather reactive, and their participation in discussions on retraining, job changes or future employment paths is limited. In addition, due to tensions related to the cross-border dispute with the Czech Republic, debates over mining licences and general uncertainty about the future of the sector, trade unions have adopted a defensive stance, focusing on protecting existing jobs. This position is understandable in the context of past experiences and the lack of clear commitments from the central government, but it significantly limits the region's ability to prepare for employment changes related to decarbonisation.<sup>68</sup>

The division of trade unions in the Turów Complex is also a problem. There are several unions, which fragment their influence despite overall cooperation. Currently, at least nine trade unions operate in the Turów Complex (five in the mine and four in the power plant). Although they cooperate constructively in most cases, they strive to develop uniform positions on key transformation issues.<sup>69</sup>

The lack of strong links with public authorities and civil society is also a significant problem. Trade unions have had limited interaction with regional and local public institutions and non-governmental organisations. This weak engagement hinders their ability to contribute meaningfully to the design and coordination of just transition policies. Without stronger networks and alliances, trade unions risk marginalisation in processes where worker representation is crucial to ensuring socially responsible outcomes.<sup>70</sup>

It should be emphasised that as a result of PGE's withdrawal from local community initiatives, trade unionists face a serious challenge. Reduced support from PGE for social activities further exacerbates the challenges facing trade unions and weakens existing channels of social dialogue with other stakeholders.

As a result, trade unionists fear that any discussions about retraining or job changes could be interpreted as acceptance of the decision to close the mine and power plant.

### Key problems:

#### 1. Fragmented representation

Multiple unions exist within the Turów Complex, which can dilute strategic influence despite overall cooperative relations. At the moment, there are 9 trade unions operating at the Turów mine (5 trade unions) and power plant (4 trade unions).<sup>71</sup> While their collaboration is generally constructive, the

<sup>67</sup> Christiaensen, L., Ferré, C., Gajderowicz, T., and Wrona, S. (2022). *Towards a Just Carbon Transition: Labour Market Challenges and Prospects for Lower Silesia* (World Bank Working Paper No. 69). World Bank.

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 2, 4, 5)

<sup>69</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 2, 4, 5)

<sup>70</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3)

<sup>71</sup> The list of trade unions in Turów, <https://kwbturow.pgegiel.pl/O-oddziale/Organizacje>

existence of several distinct entities can weaken their collective bargaining power and complicate the formulation of unified positions on key transition issues. This fragmentation may lead to delays in decision-making and dilute the strategic impact of union voices in regional and national forums.

**2. Weak ties with public authorities and civil society**

Trade unions have had limited interaction with regional and local public institutions, as well as with non-governmental stakeholders. This weak engagement hampers their ability to contribute meaningfully to the design and coordination of just transition policies. Without stronger networks and alliances, unions risk being sidelined in processes where worker representation is critical for ensuring socially responsible outcomes.

**3. Reluctance to engage in workforce transition planning.**

Trade unions show limited willingness to participate in discussions on the future of employment, particularly on retraining and career changes, for fear that such actions could be perceived as acceptance of the closure of mines and power plants.

Understanding these challenges and overcoming the current barriers to communication and cooperation is crucial for the effective implementation of a just transition in the Turów Subregion.

Employees of the Turów lignite mine and power plant are one of the most strategically important groups and are among the most directly affected groups in the just transition process.<sup>72</sup> Their future is closely tied to the phasing out of coal, yet the region still lacks the data, tools, and strategies needed to prepare this workforce for change.<sup>73</sup> While many of these workers possess valuable technical experience, their skills are sector-specific and not easily transferable to other industries. At the same time, persistent uncertainty about the timing and form of the mine's closure has created an atmosphere of fear and resistance to discussions on reskilling or occupational change. Without a structured approach to understanding and supporting this group, the region risks being caught unprepared for the social and economic consequences of energy transition.

In practice, this means that the region has no baseline understanding of how to manage labour market shifts triggered by decarbonisation. Many workers are technically skilled, but their competencies are highly specific to the mining and energy sector, and not easily transferable without targeted support. Without a systematic approach to assessing and addressing their transition needs, the region risks being caught unprepared both socially and economically for the consequences of eventual downsizing or closure.<sup>74</sup>

**Key problems:**

**1. Lack of reliable data on workers' reskilling and transition needs.**

No structured assessment has been carried out to identify what types of upskilling or occupational support Turów workers may require. This information gap prevents evidence-based planning and delays the design of targeted interventions. So a key obstacle is the absence of reliable data and structured analysis regarding workers' reskilling or upskilling needs. There was no initiative to initiated assessments that would identify how many employees may require support, what types of qualifications they already possess, or in which sectors they could realistically find employment.

**2. Widespread avoidance of future-oriented dialogue.**

Both company representatives and trade unions have avoided initiating conversations about workforce transition due to concerns that such discussions could be interpreted as acceptance of the mine's eventual closure. Discussions about the potential closure of the mine have created considerable anxiety among workers, which has in turn led to avoidance of future-oriented planning — both by worker representatives and company management.

**Employees of the mining and power plant in Turów**

<sup>72</sup> International Labour Organisation, [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/254\\_481\\_worker-guide\\_02.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/254_481_worker-guide_02.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> NFS, trade unions, climate and just transition <https://nfs.net/en/news/trade-unions-climate-and-just-transition/>

<sup>74</sup> Interviews with stakeholders (IDI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9)

	<p><b>3. Absence of transition strategies or retraining programmes</b></p> <p>There are currently no concrete plans in place to address the long-term employability of Turów workers, despite their critical importance to the region’s social stability and economic future.</p> <p><b>4. No baseline for planning support measures.</b></p> <p>Authorities and stakeholders do not have access to basic data on how many workers could be affected, when support will be needed, or which sectors offer realistic employment alternatives. This limits the effectiveness of any future policy or investment effort.</p> <p><b>5. Growing risk of social and economic dislocation.</b></p> <p>Without timely intervention, the region risks facing large-scale unemployment, loss of income, and community-level disruption once coal operations begin to downscale or close.</p> <p><b>6. Highly specialised and non-transferable skill profiles.</b></p> <p>While many workers are technically proficient, their skills are deeply rooted in the mining and energy sectors. Without targeted upskilling pathways, these competences may not align with new labour market opportunities.</p> <p><b>7. Utilising existing competencies and developing new career pathways</b></p> <p>In addition to reskilling initiatives, it is essential to effectively leverage the existing skills possessed by employees of the Turów lignite mine and power plant. This includes experience in extractive industries, such as hard-rock mining (e.g., basalt extraction and processing at the Sulików Basalt Mine), as well as expertise in energy production, electrical engineering, production process management, and local industrial sectors, including chemical, metallurgical, glass, and food manufacturing (for example, the Glassworks in Pieńsk, the metal foundry in Leśna, the production of hygiene and disinfectant products in Lubań, and Citronex). The utilisation of these competencies should be linked to the development of sectors with high growth potential, including renewable energy, energy efficiency, prosumer energy solutions, and local energy initiatives. Investments in qualifications within these areas – such as energy management, operation of renewable energy systems, and energy technologies – will enable employees to participate actively in the transition process, enhance their employability, and apply their technical expertise in emerging economic sectors.</p> <p>This approach not only consolidates the local professional potential but also strengthens the social and economic resilience of the subregion within the framework of a just transition, facilitating the creation of sustainable and long-term employment opportunities in the context of phasing out lignite.</p>
<p><b>Social and cultural organisations, especially in cultural tourism area</b></p> <p>Vulnerable and underrepresented social groups</p>	<p>The Turów Subregion faces many challenges related to the integration of culture and tourism in the planned post-coal transition strategy.<sup>[1]</sup> Despite valuable resources such as the industrial heritage of the Turów Complex and its proximity to the German city of Görlitz, the potential for cultural and industrial tourism remains largely untapped. Existing difficulties related to the insufficient recognition of culture and tourism as strategic sectors supporting a just transition limit their integration into key regional development frameworks. The region also lacks adequate tools and institutions to support the development of these industries.</p> <p><b>Key problems:</b></p> <p><b>1. Culture and tourism undervalued in transition planning</b></p> <p>Culture and tourism are still perceived as peripheral, rather than central, to the region’s economic future. This limits strategic investment and hinders their integration into key regional development frameworks.</p> <p><b>2. Untapped cultural and industrial heritage</b></p>

Although the Turów Complex and its legacy offer strong potential for industrial tourism, there are no major initiatives to repurpose these assets or create structured visitor experiences. Former mining and energy sites remain underutilised.

### **3. Underinvestment in tourism-related infrastructure**

Local infrastructure such as accommodation, transport, and information services is not sufficiently developed to support increased tourist activity or attract external investment.

### **4. Lack of regional strategy for post-industrial sites**

There is no coordinated vision for transforming post-industrial areas into cultural or recreational assets. This limits the scope for sustainable redevelopment and economic revitalisation.

### **5. Skills mismatch in tourism and creative sectors**

While the local workforce is technically skilled, these skills are rarely transferable to cultural or service-based roles. There are few opportunities to retrain or upskill in fields like cultural management, hospitality, or event coordination.

### **6. Limited expertise in creative industries**

The region lacks structured support for creative professionals and entrepreneurs. Cultural actors often operate informally and have limited access to training, funding, or networks.

### **7. Low engagement of youth and artists**

Young people, artists, and cultural workers are rarely involved in strategic planning or community development. Their potential as changemakers in the post-coal transformation remains underused.

In order to fully exploit the potential of culture and tourism in the Turów Subregion, it is necessary to introduce a number of measures to enable the development of these sectors. These should include:

- **Investing in education and skills**, particularly in areas such as cultural management, heritage interpretation, guiding, event organisation and hospitality, to prepare the local workforce for future job opportunities in these industries.
- **Involving young people and local creators** in shaping the region's identity and future through art, multimedia and participatory cultural initiatives.
- **Transforming post-industrial areas in a sustainable manner**, creating cultural, educational or recreational centres that reflect both the region's heritage and its aspirations for the future.
- **Strengthening cross-border cooperation**, especially with institutions in Görlitz and Saxony, to benefit from the exchange of experience, knowledge and access to EU financial mechanisms such as Interreg.

Investing in the development of culture and tourism in the subregion can contribute to achieving many goals: preserving and celebrating the past, stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship, strengthening local pride and identity, and building a more diverse and inclusive economy in the post-coal era. By addressing the identified challenges and adopting the set development directions, the region can become an example of sustainable transformation that combines heritage with innovation and international cooperation.



**Funded by  
the European Union**

Visit our website:



Find out more  
about the Technical  
Support Instrument:

