

Involvement of citizens and stakeholders in just transition

Just Transition Platform Conference, 24 October 2022



Challenges for meaningful engagement



The importance of engagement



SEVEN GOLDEN RULES FOR JUST TRANSITION PLANNING

1. INVITE OPENLY

Publicise your intention to start planning early and in multiple, accessible locations

2. BE INCLUSIVE

Ensure all partners are included in teams implementing the just transition

3. GIVE EQUAL STATUS

Give all partners equal status and equal voting rights at all stages of the transition process

4. SHARE INFORMATION

Provide all partners with the same information, on time and at the same time

5. ALLOW FEEDBACK

Establish clear and transparent routes for feedback

6. GO PUBLIC

Ensure minutes of all meetings are made public within 2 weeks

7. ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Facilitate public engagement in the transition process and ensure the public are fully informed about the transition process



Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy Working Group

- ★ A forum for exchanging and tackling various challenges that are common to stakeholders involved in the transition process.
- ★ Diverse group of 20 stakeholders
- ★ Scoping paper finalised in Spring 2022

Lack of information and capacity

- ★ Do they know **why** are we transitioning?
- ★ Do they know **what are the impacts** of the transition?
- ★ **Who has greatest access** to the transition planning and decision-making processes?
- ★ Do they perceive corruption or transparency as a barrier?

Information on just transition is not always available, accessible, transparent or truthful.

The threat of negative, unmitigated impacts will be confirmed if stakeholder engagement in design, implementation and monitoring remains poor.

The big question

How can we increase the level of stakeholder involvement and its effectiveness in the process of TJTP implementation, monitoring and revision, everywhere?

Focus areas and their associated actions

1. Communicating and raising awareness around just transition
2. Stakeholder identification and stakeholder involvement (measuring, monitoring and impact)
3. Knowledge exchanges across the EU on just transition lessons learnt
4. Engaging the 'hard-to-reach' and 'vulnerable' groups
5. Supporting capacity building of stakeholders
6. Engaging social economy, research and private sector in planning and implementation process
7. Strengthening social dialogue

Communicating and raising awareness around just transition

Develop a toolkit/guidelines with just transition communication steps for public authorities (differentiated by target stakeholder groups)

1. Survey to find out what information is needed: process, frameworks, just transition objectives, local level strategy
2. Development of a short guide on what the EU just transition approach is and why
3. Exchanges with local / regional / national authorities, MEPs, CSOs and the EU Commission
4. Best Practices

Stakeholder involvement in preparing the TJTP for Ida-Virumaa, Estonia

Ivan Sergejev

Just Transition Platform process
26.10.2022
Coordinator

Estonian Ministry of Finance



Impact of the transition in EE

- Estonia's biggest pollutor – the **oil shale** sector – is highly concentrated in the eastern-most region of Estonia, **Ida-Virumaa** (or Ida-Viru).
- In 2019, oil shale related companies located in the region accounted for over **50% of Estonia's total GHG emissions**.
- This means that the transition to climate neutrality will have – and is already having – the **largest impact** specifically in the Ida-Viru region of Estonia.
- This transition has the potential to exacerbate the **challenges** already present in the region.





4,9 mln

0,6 mln

0,4 mln

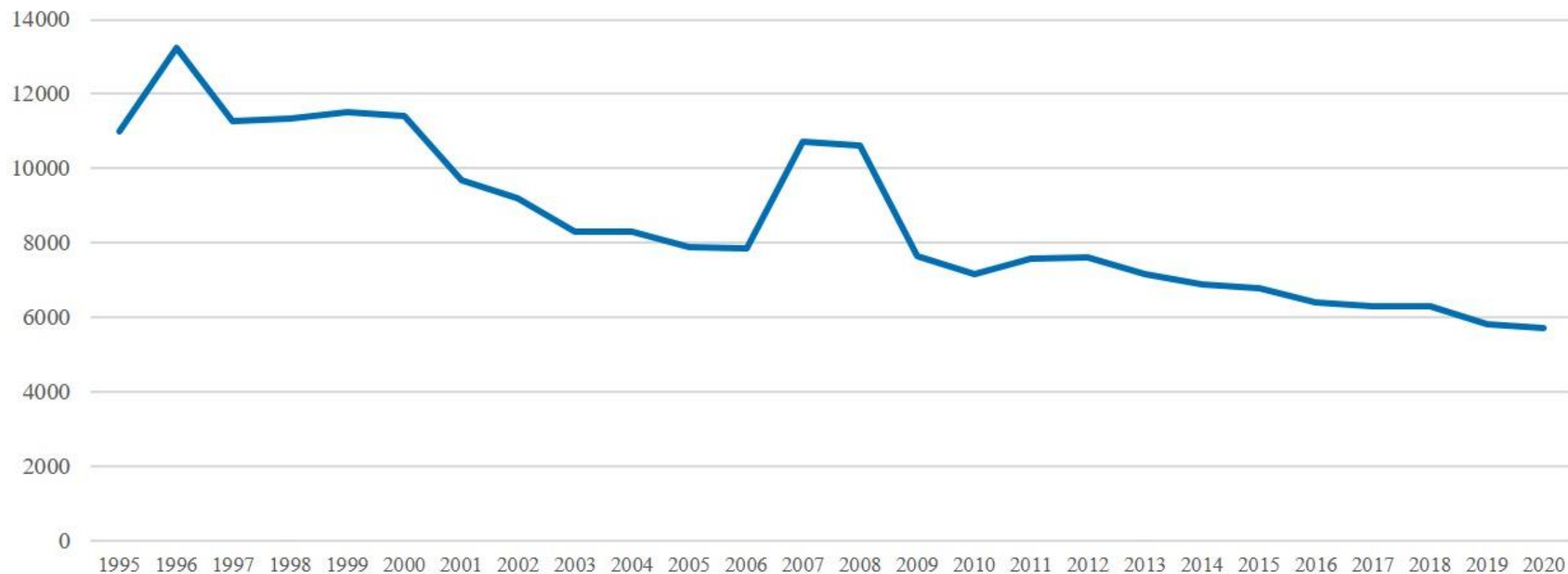
Estonia

Latvia

Map of the region with distances to major population centers

- Easternmost region of Estonia;
- A gateway to the European Union

Image: Google Maps



The transition is ongoing

Number of people, employed in the oil shale sector in Ida-Virumaa (1995 – 2020).

Ida-Viru challenges

- **Population** as of 01.01.2021 – 133 888 people, rapidly ageing and decreasing. If current trends continue, by 2045 the population of Ida-Viru will decrease by ~50,000 people.
- **Incomes** in Ida-Virumaa are among the lowest nationally and amount to an average of 1161 €/mo (compared to the Estonian average. Pre-COVID 2019, the unemployment rate in Ida-Virumaa was 10,2%, being twice as high as in Estonia as a whole (5,3%). Unemployment rate as of 01.01.2021 is 13,9%.
- **Relative poverty** is a daily reality for 35% of the county's population (vs the

Impact of the transition

According to the results of public outreach and the results of the study “Adaptation of Ida-Virumaa county’s economy and labor market to the reduction of oil shale industry” carried out by Praxis Centre for Policy Studies, impacts of the transition are numerous:

- a **cascading economic effect** on the entire economy of the region;
- impact on **employment**, jobs in the region, career and **training** opportunities;
- impact on the feeling of **social security**, satisfaction with the environment and one’s prospects, integration and social inclusion;
- impact on **migration** decisions;
- impact on the state of the **environment** and the **health** of the population in the area;
- impact on the **electricity and heat prices** and security of supply;
- the impact on **municipal budgets** in the region and thus on public services and regional development;
- impact on the **reputation** of the region among both the local population, the Estonian population.



Photo: Archival Imagery, courtesy of the Narva Museum

We have to get this right

The local community has not yet fully recovered from the identity crisis and emotional trauma, following the collapse of the Soviet industry 30 years ago.

Preparing Estonia's TJTP (1):

2020

2021



SPRING - SUMMER 2020

FALL - WINTER
2020

DURING 2021

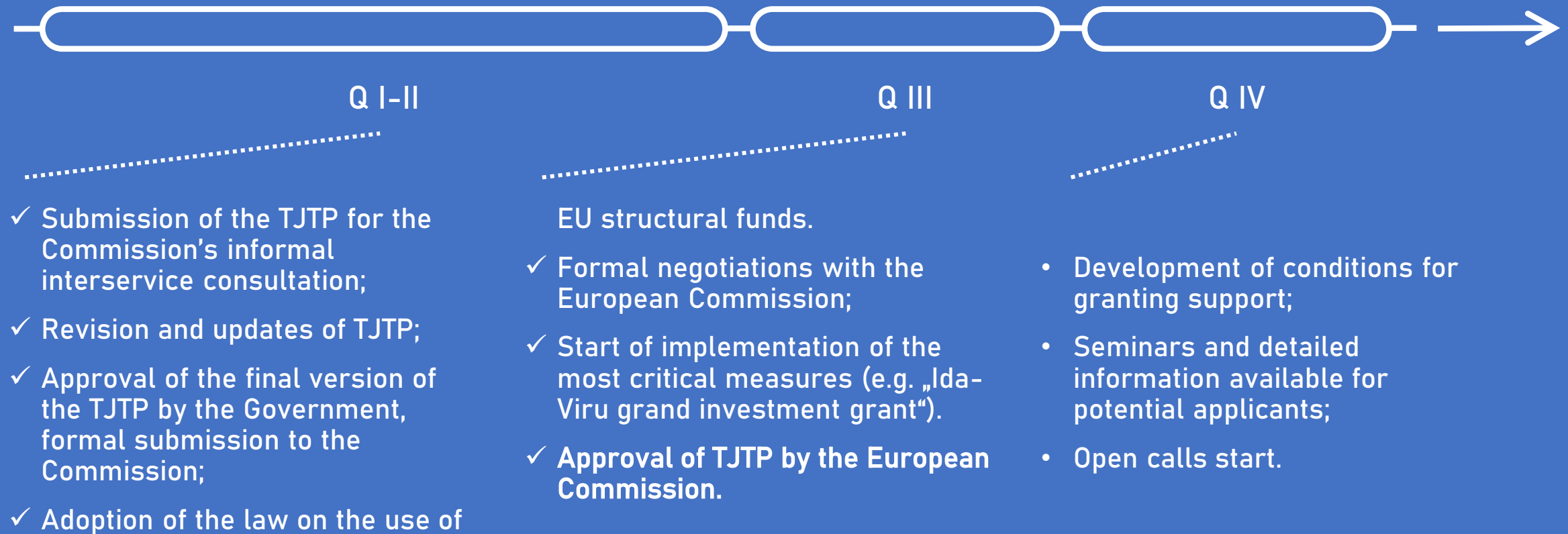
- Updates of relevant strategic documents are initiated;
- Ministries submit proposals;
- Steering committee & JT platform are set up;
- Public consultation;
- A study on the transition effects is launched.

- Received proposals are reviewed with the ministries and the steering committee;
- Initial JTF distribution proposal is prepared and submitted to the Cabinet;
- First informal meeting with the Commission takes place.
- Drafting the TJTP;

- Informal consultations with the European Commission;
- Outreach activities;
- Submission of the draft TJTP for review by the Commission;
- Elaboration of interventions.

Preparing Estonia's TJTP (2):

2022



Involvement of partners

In preparing its TJTP Estonia has organised and implemented a comprehensive partnership taking into account the specificities of the JTF:

- On the national level, a **steering committee** was set up by the Ministry of Finance to both prepare and monitor the implementation of the just transition plan.
- On the regional level, a **regional Just Transition Platform** was created by the Ida-Viru County Association of Local Governments (IVOL), gathering 50+ organisations.
- **"Soft" networking structures**, such as the regional scientific council as well as tourism, creative economy and educational clusters also provide input into the TJTP and relevant interventions.
- **Public consultation activities:** public seminars, formal written consultations, focus groups, discussions with individual stakeholder groups, public communication and information dissemination etc.
- Preparations of the TJTP also triggered the process of revising the **regional development plan**, which led to deepened discussions on the future of the region and energy policy.

Steering committee

- **Ministries** (Finance, Economic Affairs and Communications, Environment, Social Affairs, Rural Affairs, Culture, Education and Research);
- **Parliament** representatives;
- **Unions** (Chamber of Commerce, Estonian SME Association, Trade Unions, Union of Employers, Chemical Industry Union, Council of Rectors);
- **Local partners** (Association of Local Municipalities, Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre, Ida-Viru Investment Agency);
- **Chamber of Environmental Associations;**
- **Unemployment Insurance Fund;**
- **Youth representatives** (NTO PWP Union).



Public outreach

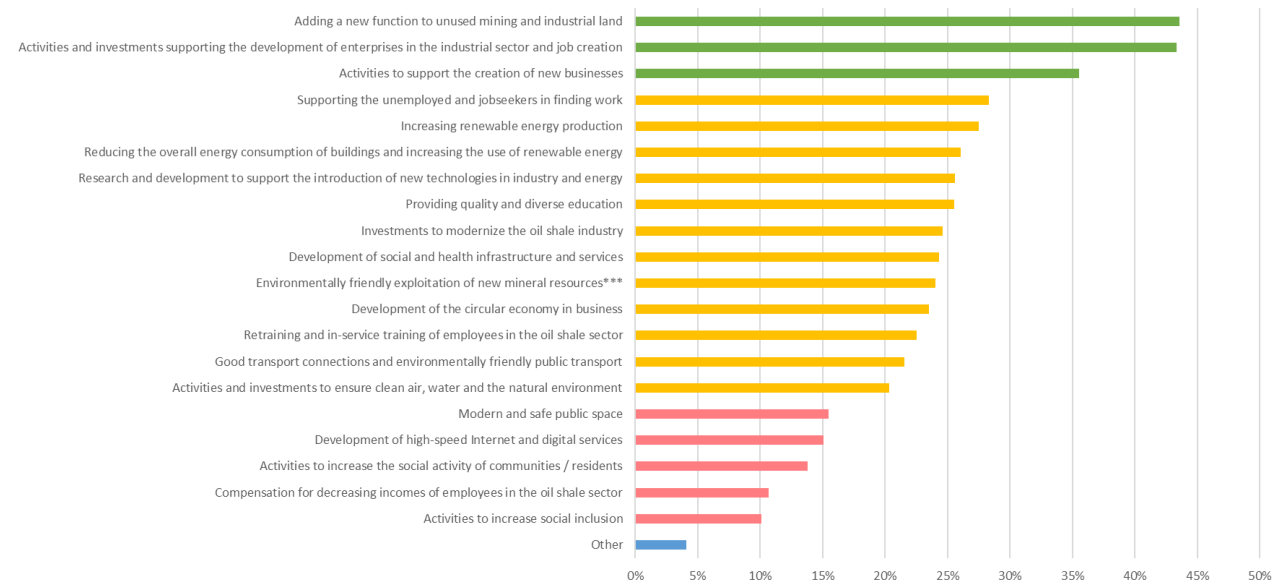
In the summer of 2020, a **public opinion poll** was carried out, yielding over 1,500 responses. Major findings:

- **Respondents were mostly satisfied with:** natural environment, attractions, region's cultural diversity, public spaces, educated and hard-working people, transport connections.
- **Most frequently mentioned development needs:** job creation, development of the business environment and competitive wages.
- **Areas of focus, when transitioning to a new economy:** finding new functions for unused mining and industrial sites, developing the industrial sector, creating new companies.

What is negative or positive in Ida-Viru at present



What should be the most important part of the transition to the new economy?



The youth

Diverge in their responses from the mainstream population:

- **Not satisfied** with the region's attractions, cultural diversity, built environment and public spaces; **satisfied** with an active and frugal local community, local public services;
- **Do not** consider industrial development, exploitation of mineral resources or creation of new companies as important; instead, **prioritize** investments into renewable energy.
- **Value** friendliness and kindness – qualities they struggle to see in the current older generation – and see their future in jobs that require interacting with people or are creative (incl. the IT sector).



Youth climate assembly

- Took place in November – December 2021.
- **Organized** by the Estonian Nature Foundation and NGO Rohetiiger.
- **Participants:** 40 Ida-Viru youth, selected via an algorithm based on national register's data to ensure accurate representation.
- **Format:** meeting stakeholders, learning about climate policy, developing a climate-friendly vision for Ida-Virumaa.
- **Results:** 1) 26 suggestions for inclusion into the TJTP; 2) a new youth NGO founded and included into the JTF steering committee; 3) served as a pilot for other assemblies.



Lessons learned

Involving the stakeholders might seem difficult and time-consuming, but it is invaluable for securing the local community's ownership of the transition.

- „Selling“ the transition to climate neutrality in a region reliant on fossil fuels is tough. Often you need to start from the very **basics**. This is a great opportunity;
- Not everything needs to be done by yourself, if you have **good partners**;
- Stakeholders' presence in the steering committee does not guarantee **participation**;
- Need to make sure you have – and genuinely work with – **critics** in the JTF governing bodies (e.g. trade unions or the oil shale sector's representatives in the steering committee, etc.);
- Transition is about **people** (humans). You can't outsource this aspect, need to put in the hours;
- **Capacity building and support** to stakeholders is important to make sure their involvement is sustainable (TA, interventions);
- Meet them where they are and speak their **language**. Literally;
- You probably think everyone's heard of – and understand – the transition. You are wrong.

aitäh! questions?



Kaasrahanud
Euroopa Liit

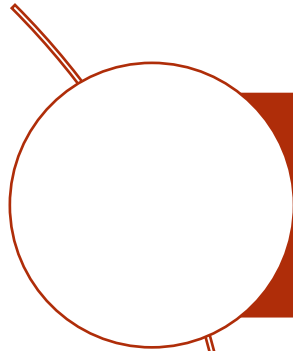


Eesti
tuleviku heaks

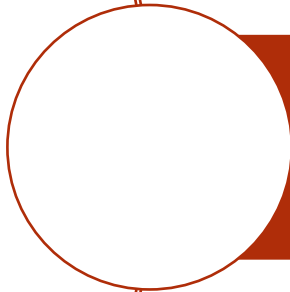
Involvement of citizens and stakeholders in just transition

Michael Schmitz
Deputy Head of Office, German County Association
Brussels, 24 October 2022

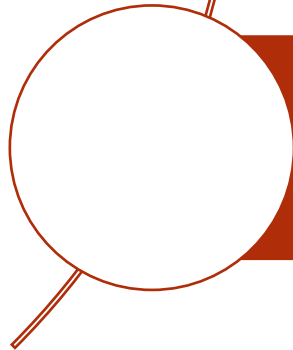
Why is the involvement of citizens and stakeholders so crucial?



It enables stakeholders to be informed and influence decisions and processes that may interest or affect them.



Particularly for relevant groups (underrepresented/vulnerable) in regions undergoing structural change that often feel left behind/not heard.



Engaging with citizens often leads to a constructive dialogue on what the future should look like.

Can it be done?

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Alexander Orth



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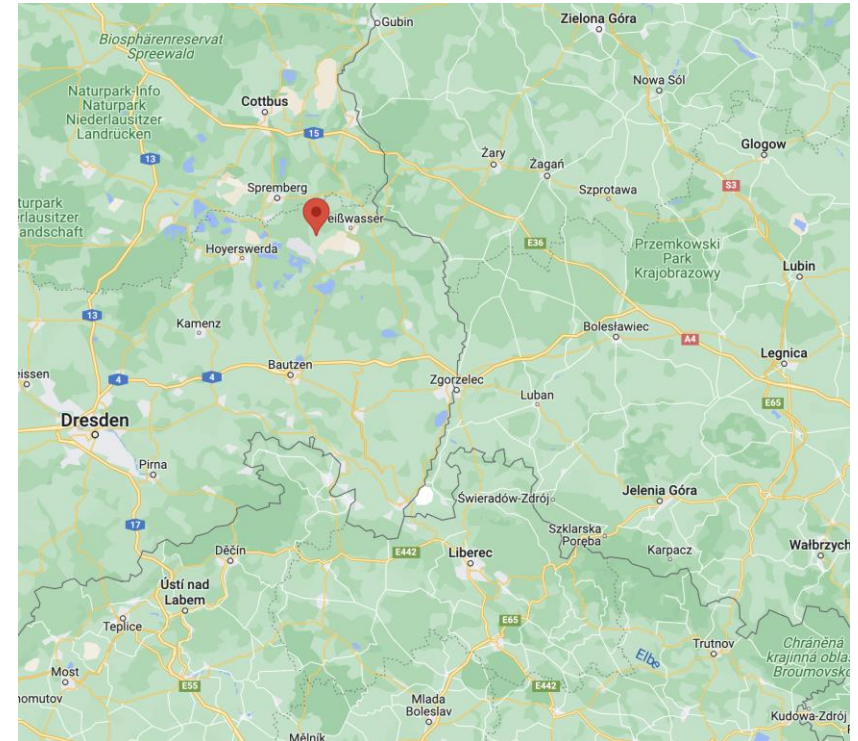
How an entire town decides on its future: an example from Saxony

Mühlrose:

- A town of 188 inhabitants / 10 inhabitants per km²
- Founded in the 12th century
- Sorbian minority
- Coal mining prevalent in the region since the 1960s
- Town has to be moved due to extension of mining activities in opencast-mine Nochten



„Mühlrose“, Gunther Tschuch; [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

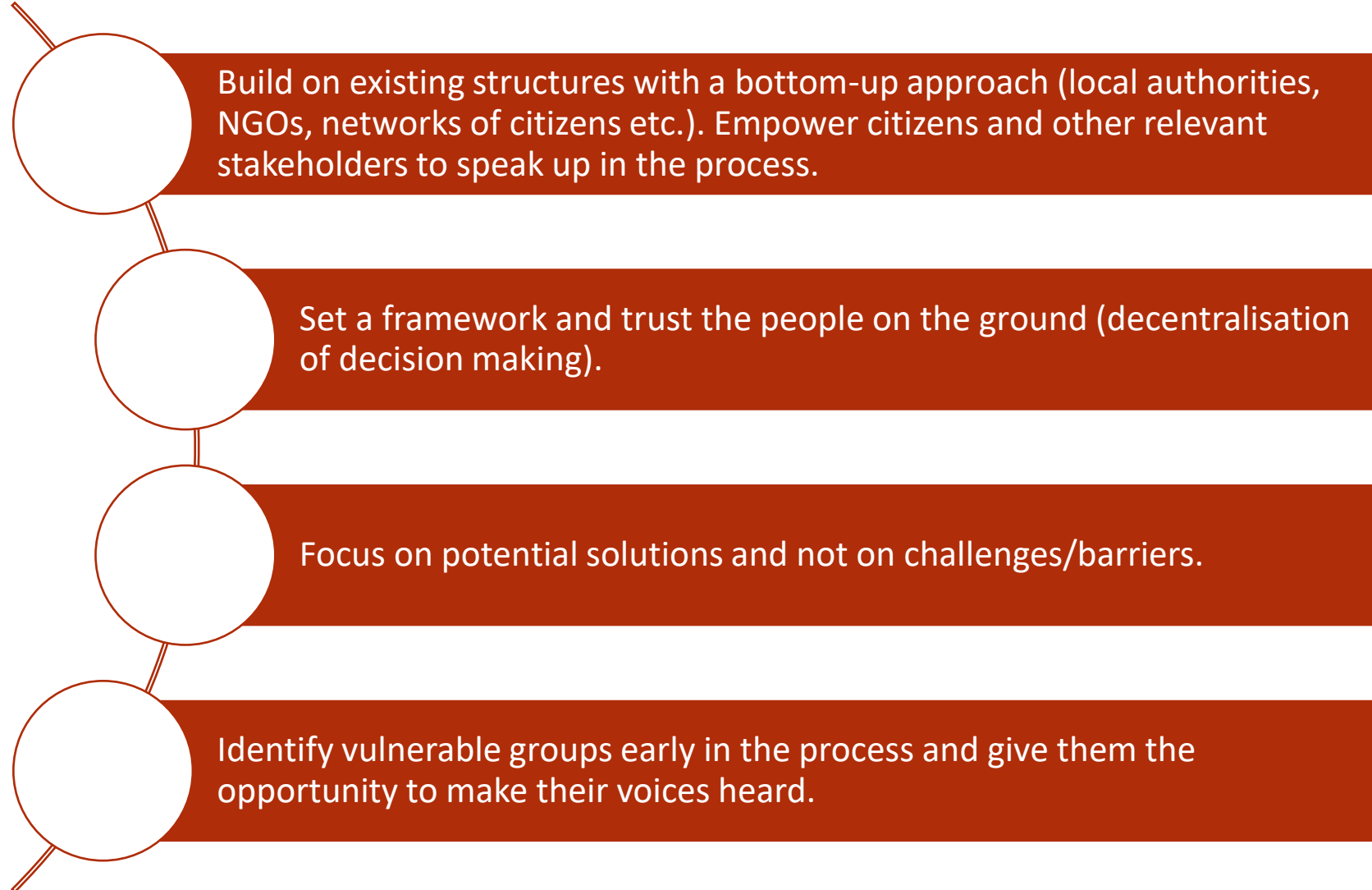


How an entire town decides on its future: an example from Saxony



- 2004: First discussion in municipal council
- Foundation of a citizens association in the same year
- 2006: citizen consultation, 87 % in favor of relocation
- Letter to PM: request for early relocation
- 2007 – 2018: numerous discussions between local authorities, citizens and NGOs
- 2018/2019 Resolution of the municipal councils on the agreement with the mining operator LEAG
- Compensation agreements for citizens
- October 2022: roofing ceremony for community house
- Relocation to be finalized in 2024

What is the key to a meaningful involvement of partners?



Thank you for your attention

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Thank you

