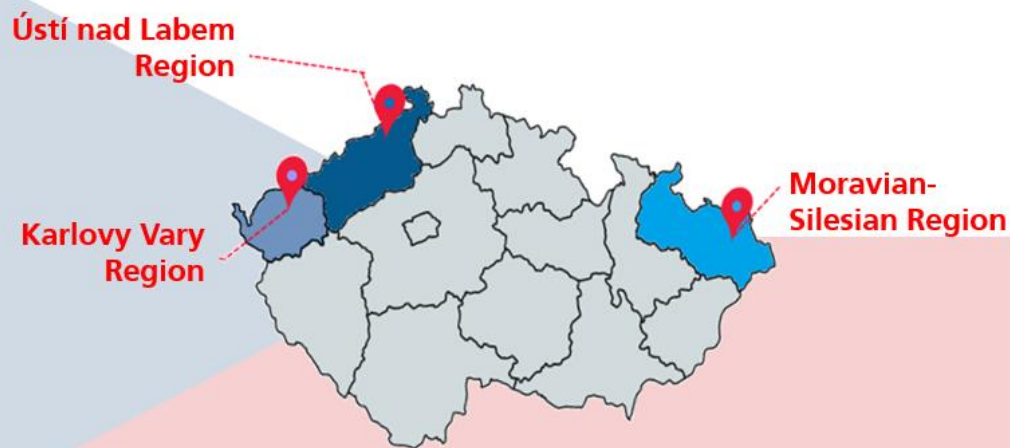


Framework Contract Procedure: REFORM/2021/OP/0006 Lot 1

SPECIFIC CONTRACT: REFORM/SC2022/116

# Support to the Implementation of the Just Transition in the Czech Republic



## D7. FINAL REPORT (FINAL)

## FOR PUBLICATION

13.08.2024



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This Project is implemented by Frankfurt School of Finance & Management (as part of the AARC Consortium) in cooperation with Prague University of Economics and Business, Czech Technical University and BeePartner

## ABBREVIATIONS

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| D       | Deliverable  |
| DG      | Directorate General  |
| DNSH    | Do No Significant Harm                                       |
| ECUR    | Energy Centre of the Ústí Region                             |
| ESIF    | European Structural and Investment Funds                     |
| EU      | European Union   |
| EUR     | Euro   |
| FDÚR    | Future Development of the Ústí Region                        |
| JTF     | Just Transition Fund   |
| JTM     | Just Transition Mechanism                                    |
| KIC     | Karlovy Vary Innovation Centre                               |
| KVBDA   | Karlovy Vary Business Development Agency                     |
| KVR     | Karlovy Vary Region  |
| LAG     | Local Action Group   |
| MA      | Managing Authority   |
| MEC     | Moravian-Silesian Energy Centre                              |
| MoE     | Ministry of Environment                                      |
| MoRD    | Ministry of Regional Development                             |
| MSR     | Moravian-Silesian Region                                     |
| NDB     | National Development Bank                                    |
| NGO     | Non-governmental organisation                                |
| PJT     | Programme Just Transition                                    |
| PwC     | PricewaterhouseCoopers                                       |
| R&D     | Research and Development                                     |
| RDA     | Regional Development Agency                                  |
| REMAKVR | Regional Energy Management Agency of the Karlovy Vary Region |
| RSC     | Regional Standing Conference                                 |
| SC      | Steering Committee   |
| SME     | Small and medium-sized enterprises                           |
| TA      | Technical Assistance   |
| TCÚR    | Transition Centre of the Ústí Region                         |
| TJTP    | Territorial Just Transition Plan                             |
| ToR     | Terms of Reference   |
| TSI     | Technical Support Instrument                                 |
| T-T     | Train the Trainer  |
| ÚR      | Ústí Region  |
| WS      | Workshop   |

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This report provides a comprehensive overview** of the main results and activities carried out during project implementation; presents the lessons learnt, recommendations, and suggestions for possible follow-on work; and, proposes indicators to monitor the outcome and impact of the project after its conclusion.

**The first chapter** outlines the project overview and context.

**The second chapter** summarizes the work to prepare **Deliverables (D) 1 to 6 of the project**. This includes an overview of the main activities carried out (such as interviews, workshops, trainings, desk research, etc.) and their outcomes, as well as the process followed to execute and finalise all deliverables. The key milestones for each deliverable include:

- The Inception Report (D1) was officially accepted and approved on 16 March 2023. Subsequently, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link](#).
- The Deliverable 2 Report (D2) was officially accepted and approved on 25 September 2023. Subsequently, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#).
- The Deliverable 3 Report (D3) was officially accepted and approved on 6 June 2024. Subsequently, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#).
- The Deliverable 4 Report (D4) was officially accepted and approved on 27 February 2024. Subsequently, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#). All training materials are available [through this link](#).
- The Deliverable 5 Report (D5) was officially accepted and approved on 6 June 2024. Subsequently, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#). To access the handbook, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and to this [link for the English version](#).
- The final Deliverable 6 Report (D6) was submitted for approval on 15 July 2024 and approved on 18 July 2024. It was subsequently submitted for English proofreading and edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage in both Czech and English languages during October 2024.

In addition, the second chapter includes a summary of the communication and visibility activities carried out during the project's implementation. It also includes an overview of the project's closing event, including insights gathered through participant feedback.

**The third chapter** contains the lessons learnt, recommendations, as well as suggestions for possible follow-on work.

The **lessons learnt** are organised in several thematic areas, as follows:

- **Programme Just Transition (PJT) implementation phase and TSI project activities:** There was a significant difference in the intensity of PJT operation and awareness of actors during the various project phases: initiation phase (i.e., November 2022), during the implementation of various input data analyses and empirical research (spring 2023), during the peak information phase of PJT promotion in May and June 2023, and during the start-up period of the main calls for project submissions. The intensity of awareness-raising, trainings and information activities was fundamentally different at the beginning of 2023 compared to the end of the first half of 2023. The PJT Managing Authority (MA), in coordination with the Project Team, started to focus more on the coal regions, as the calls for projects were already underway or in the preparation stage. In this sense, outreach activities are improving significantly. This development also corresponds to the implementation phase of the PJT, which was approved much later than the other Operational Programmes. As this is a specific Operational Programme with new support instruments, it will be

necessary to continue to pay considerable attention to the methods and intensity of communication with potential applicants and potential beneficiaries.

- **Implementation of training activities:** The organisation of 20 training events over a six-month period (including two months of summer) across two regions was deemed excessive when also considering that other technical assistance (TA) projects were conducted simultaneously. In response to the specific needs expressed by regional stakeholders, some of the trainings were conducted in an online format and/or integrated with other TA events. The high level of engagement in online events and the focus on requested topics demonstrated the benefits of doing a thorough needs analysis with participant input. However, while the online format allows for broader participation, it should not completely replace in-person trainings. For similar projects in the future, it is recommended to organise one-third or one-quarter of the trainings in-person, with the remaining two-thirds or three-quarters conducted online; however, the optimal mix of in-person and online events should be determined based on the specific purpose of each training activity/TA project. Moreover, it is advisable to opt for half-day trainings whenever feasible. The delayed implementation of the PJT affected the execution of trainings and resulted in the need to adjust part of the agenda. Some of the disseminated information was misunderstood by specific target groups and many participants of the training sessions often criticised the lack of information related to PJT during the first part of the training period. These remarks were discussed during internal meetings with the ministries and regional authorities. Topics that were requested for future trainings organised within the framework of additional TA projects are also reflected (e.g., re-skilling in just transition regions, craft incubators, financial instruments). Finally, although feedback from the events was predominantly positive, there was a relatively low response rate of 10%. Good practice suggests that there should be a follow-up on the evaluation and an active promotion of the goal of the evaluation at the end of the workshop or training session to help ensure a higher response rate for feedback forms.
- **Dissemination of good practices:** Dissemination of the handbook outputs has proven to be more effective as a sub-section within a workshop of a broader program. To disseminate the handbook, consultations with the stakeholders (regions) indicated that the handbook alone was insufficient for the workshop's agenda. As a rather broad document, it would have been challenging to engage the intended audience. Therefore, the workshops in each region centred around a specific topic, aligning with the priority areas in the handbook and addressing the immediate needs of the regions (e.g., "small" actors' involvement, energy poverty, or renewable energy sources). This helped to increase the attractiveness of the dissemination workshops. In addition, conducting the workshops with the support of the regions also proved particularly helpful.
- **Transfer of experience and good practice in just transition management between regions:** To identify key elements of good practice in the institutional functioning of the Moravian-Silesian Region (MSR) in the just transition process as compared to Ústi Region (ÚR) and Karlovy Vary Region (KVR), several factors should be considered: the lack of a comprehensive institution focused on regional development, which either does not exist (KVR) or its activities are insufficient or there are unclear overlaps of competences with other agencies (ÚR); differing potential in the area of research and university (ÚR has potential in R&D, but it is not sufficiently integrated into long-term development, while there is no adequate university background in KVR); the long-term historical context in ÚR and KVR is completely different. Despite some differences in the specific starting conditions of both regions, it is necessary to maintain a participatory approach, a strong level of communication and transparency throughout the transformation process, which is the basis for trust between regional actors. Moreover, each region has its own specific challenges and opportunities, economic and settlement structures, and geographical features. MSR has considerable potential for successful transition given its existing capacities and long-term investments in innovation and education. ÚR and KVR are regions in the north-west of the Czech Republic that have long been dependent brown coal mining and heavy industry (as well as the chemical industry in ÚR). Thus, these regions may face greater challenges in the transition process, especially in terms of job losses and economic restructuring.

#### **Recommendations for actions or measures contributing to the Just Transition Agenda:**

- Section 3.2.1 provides a comprehensive overview of the recommendations for each deliverable (D2-D6), including the corresponding indicators and possible actions and measures that could enhance the implementation for each individual recommendation. During the TSI project, the Project Team issued several recommendations for individual deliverables. For this report, the various recommendations have been summarised with an additional two parameters as defined in

the Terms of Reference (ToR): i) proposed indicators to monitor the outcome and impact of the project after its conclusion; ii) recommendations for actions or measures that could facilitate and complement the implementation of the project results and increase the impact of the project.

**Several suggestions for (preliminary) follow-on work have been identified in Section 3.3:**

- **Discussion on the continuation of PJT 2028+, i.e., information on the expected possibilities and, in particular, the level and scope of EU involvement in terms of funding in the next period.** Within this context, discussions should be initiated on the 2028+ transformation steps with representatives of smaller stakeholders (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, businesses).
- As part of the discussions with regional and national representatives of the just transition process, **the possibility of a one-day study visit to MSR by KVR and ÚR representatives** was also raised, **focusing on various aspects of the institutional functioning in MSR** (e.g., in terms of public relations support and the overall image of the region). This activity would be supported at the conclusion of this TA project, while the Project Team is able to provide logistical support to the organisation as needed (indicative period September 2024).



# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Project overview

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Specific Contract no.</b>     | <b>REFORM/SC2022/116 (hereinafter called as “the Project”)</b>  |
| <b>Overall objective</b>         | Support the Implementation of the just transition in the Czech Republic for the Ústí, the Karlovy Vary and the Moravian-Silesian regions  |
| <b>Specific objective</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support national authorities to improve their capacity to design, develop and implement reforms in line with Article 4 of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) Regulation</li> <li>• Support national authorities to improve their capacity to prepare, amend, implement and revise recovery and resilience plans pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2021/241</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Requested services</b>        | <p><b>Deliverable 1: Inception Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise a kick-off meeting between the key stakeholders (DG REFORM, Ministry of Regional Development (MoRD), Ministry of Environment (MoE), the contractor)</li> <li>• Prepare an Inception Report (the present document)</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverable 2: Report on lessons learned and recommendations for the implementation of the Just Transition Fund (JTF)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing reports and data, and carry out a brief desk analysis</li> <li>• Conduct stakeholder interviews and surveys</li> <li>• Prepare Draft Report and present it to the Steering Committee</li> <li>• Revise Draft Report based on comments from the Steering Committee</li> <li>• Implement workshops for stakeholders</li> <li>• Finalisation of the report and Inception Report</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverable 3: Documentation for application to the JTF under the “groups of projects” schemes for small projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare draft materials and submit to the Steering Committee</li> <li>• Revise draft materials based on comments from the Steering Committee</li> <li>• Organise stakeholder meeting to present the materials</li> <li>• Revise the materials based on feedback from the stakeholders</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverable 4: Trainings to support the implementation of the JTF for Karlovy Vary and Ústí regions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse the needs and design of the curriculum for direct trainings</li> <li>• Design the “train the trainer” sessions</li> <li>• Deliver the trainings (including those directed at small project developers and train the trainer sessions)</li> <li>• Report on trainings, including recommendations/suggestions for future training events</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverable 5: Dissemination of good practices in priority areas for the implementation of the Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise and hold three online workshops (one for each region) to transfer good practices</li> <li>• Prepare a handbook for dissemination</li> <li>• Organise and hold three workshops (one for each region) to promote the handbook</li> <li>• Report on workshops</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverable 6: Recommendations for the transfer of good practices on regional development and innovation from Moravia-Silesia to the Karlovy Vary and Ústí regions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct desk research and interviews of relevant stakeholders from the three regions</li> <li>• Prepare Draft Report and present it to the Steering Committee</li> <li>• Revise drat report based on comments from the Steering Committee</li> <li>• Organise and hold workshop(s) to present the reports and obtain feedback from stakeholders</li> <li>• Present the Final Report to the Steering Committee, including all comments</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverable 7: Final Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the Final Report, including annexes of all documents produced for Deliverables 1–6 documenting Project activities, monitoring indicators and lessons learnt</li> <li>• Prepare and hold a final workshop</li> </ul> |
| <b>Project starting date</b>     | 22.11.2022  |
| <b>Project duration</b>          | 20 months   |
| <b>Implemented by contractor</b> | Frankfurt School of Finance & Management (as part of the AARC Consortium) in cooperation with Prague University of Economics and Business, Czech Technical University and BeePartner  |

## 1.2 Purpose of the Final Report

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The objective of the Final Report is to provide a summary of the main achievements and activities undertaken during the project implementation, analyse the project monitoring indicators and present lessons learnt, recommendations and suggestions for possible follow-on work that could facilitate and complement the implementation of the project results and increase the project's impact.

## 1.3 Project context and the status of the Just Transition Fund implementation

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The implementation of the Just Transition Fund (JTF) in the Czech Republic is a crucial effort to balance environmental sustainability with economic and social stability. Through strategic planning, targeted investments, and continuous monitoring, the Czech Republic aims to achieve a just transition that benefits all affected regions and communities, particularly Moravia-Silesia, Ústí and Karlovy Vary regions. From a funding perspective, the Czech Republic has been allocated EUR 1.64 billion from the JTF for the period 2021-2027, which is being directed towards the regions most affected by the transition from coal and carbon-intensive industries. Absorption of these funds is underway, with the government ensuring compliance with EU regulations and efforts are being made for a timely implementation of projects.

## 2. SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED

This section presents a summary of the activities carried out during the project implementation (for an overview, see Section 1.1). It also highlights the outcomes of the various activities such as stakeholder meetings, interviews, workshops and training sessions organised by the Project Team in each phase of the project.

### 2.1 Deliverable 1: Inception Report

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The project kick-off meeting was prepared and organised on 2 December 2022 through video conference via MS Teams, in coordination with the European Commission (DG REFORM). The following materials were circulated amongst participants for feedback: agenda, an MS PowerPoint presentation and the meeting minutes summarising the main points discussed.

Desk research and several follow-up meetings with the European Commission and Czech ministry representatives were conducted throughout December 2022 and January 2023 to gain an in-depth understanding of the project context and to prepare the Inception Report.

Based on the data and information collected, a draft version of the report was prepared and submitted to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE on 10 January 2023.

Subsequently, based on feedback from the European Commission, MoRD and MoE, several activities were undertaken to finalise the Inception Report. The final version of the report was submitted for approval on 7 March 2023.

Stakeholder meetings that contributed to the preparation and submission of the final version of the Inception Report included:

- Online meeting with MoRD representatives on 6 December 2022 (kick-off meeting follow-up)
- Online meeting with European Commission representatives on 12 December 2022, covering Just Transition updates in Czechia
- Online meeting with MoRD and MoE representatives on 20 December 2022, covering project implementation
- Online meeting with PwC and National Development Bank (NDB) representatives on 9 January 2023, covering coordination and synergies with other TSI developed in parallel
- Online meeting with MoRD and MoE representatives on 12 January 2023, covering project implementation
- First tripartite call with European Commission, MoRD and MoE representatives on 30 January 2023, covering the draft of the Inception Report and project progress follow-up
- Introductory call with Ústí and Karlovy Vary regional representatives on 14 February 2023, covering project implementation

- Introductory call with Moravian-Silesian regional representatives on 14 February 2023, covering project implementation.

The desk work conducted during the inception phase and close collaboration with key project stakeholders established a solid foundation for the project implementation and subsequent tasks.

An events calendar was established to facilitate the tracking of key events and meetings throughout the project. It included the workshops, training sessions, and Steering Committee meetings organised under the different deliverables. The calendar was regularly updated and incorporated into the monthly progress reports.

The final Inception Report was officially accepted and approved on 16 March 2023. Subsequently, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link](#).

## **2.2 Deliverable 2: Report on lessons learned and recommendations for the implementation of the Just Transition Fund**

Activities related to the preparation of Deliverable 2 started in parallel to the preparation of the Inception Report. The list of activities that contributed to the preparation of the D2 Report included the following:

- Desk research and analysis of data from the monitoring system and existing studies, analyses and evaluations
- 62 semi-structured interviews at the national and regional levels, with a focus on potential small project beneficiaries such as small municipalities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and LAGs (28 on-site interviews, 34 online interviews)
- Organisation and implementation of three regional workshops (one for each region) to verify and discuss the findings of the D2 Draft Report

The interview plan for Task 2 was refined after follow-up meetings with MoRD and MoE representatives in January 2023. The updates involved identifying specific questions and selecting potential respondents according to the groups defined in the Inception Report. Additionally, the basis for the statistical analysis of ESIF spending was discussed.

During the review of existing reports and data, MoRD offered valuable information to the Project Team. This included facilitating a discussion and clarification of the data request from the monitoring system with the MoRD expert on 20 January 2023. In early February 2023, the Project Team received data from the monitoring system covering the period from 2014 to 2020. In early March, the Project Team finalised the first draft of the data analysis (MS2014+), namely the ESIF spending in coal regions for the 2014-2020 programming period. The preliminary version of the data analysis was shared with MoRD representatives on 8 March 2023. This version featured maps and graphs that could be further utilised in MoRD meetings, with acknowledgment of the Project Team.

Several Project Team meetings were organised to establish the interview scenarios and to align the requirements of the other project deliverables. A pilot scenario for interviews with representatives of SMEs was developed internally and subsequently shared with MoRD and MoE for their feedback on 16 January 2023. The implementation of the stakeholder interviews started on 6 February 2023 and was finalised on 22 March 2023.

The first draft of the D2 Report was submitted to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE for feedback on 28 March 2023. The draft report was discussed during the first Steering Committee organised on 20 April 2023 in Prague, Czech Republic. Adjustments following the discussions, comments and suggestions by the Steering Committee were reflected in the revised report.

A series of meetings took place at the end of April and throughout May 2023 with representatives from MoRD, MoE, as well as with regional representatives from Moravian-Silesian, Karlovy Vary, and Ústí regions. The meetings outlined the next phase of Task 2 as set out in the ToR, namely the regional workshops to discuss the findings, results and recommendations of the D2 Draft Report. Considering the numerous events taking place within the regions during May and June 2023, it was discussed and further agreed with the European Commission and MoRD that the workshops would be coordinated and synergised with other parallel workshops in the project instead of being conducted individually. As such, the following workshops with representatives of the public and private sectors were implemented in coordination with other project deliverables:

- On-site workshop in the MSR on 6 June 2023 (in coordination with topics related to D5)
- Online workshop in the ÚR on 8 June 2023 (in coordination with topics related to D4 and D5)
- On-site workshop in the KVR on 21 June 2023 (in coordination with topics related to D3, D4 and D5)

The updated version of the D2 Report was compiled based on the feedback received from stakeholders during the three regional workshops and submitted on 12 July 2023. After an additional round of feedback from the European Commission, MoRD and MoE, the final version of the Report on lessons learnt and recommendations for the JTF implementation was submitted for approval on 22 September 2023.

The final D2 Report was officially accepted and approved on 25 September 2023, in both Czech and English languages. Subsequently, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#).

### **2.3 Deliverable 3: Documentation for application to the Just Transition Fund under the “groups of projects” schemes for small projects**

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Activities to prepare Deliverable 3 were initiated in parallel to D1 and D2 activities.

The list of activities that contributed to the preparation of the D3 Report on documentation for application to the JTF under the “groups of projects” schemes for small projects included the following:

- Preparatory survey on demand for vouchers, in coordination with the Task 2 survey, and building on the findings of the D2 interviews with regional stakeholders, especially municipalities and SMEs in KVR and ÚR
- Review of available documents related to the calls for “groups of projects” for entrepreneurs and the public sector for KVR and ÚR
- A total of 15 meetings with regional representatives to discuss the implementation of the “groups of projects” schemes at the regional level and the preparation of regional calls for final beneficiaries
- On-site workshop in the ÚR on 6 December 2023, in coordination with topics related to D4, including training for evaluators and a presentation of illustrative examples of completed templates
- Consultations with representatives of the Innovation Centre at the end of March 2024

The implementation and subsequent development of Task 3 followed a logical progression that aligned with the actual implementation progress of preparing the “groups of projects” schemes at the level of the MoE and the coal regions. The Project Team maintained regular communication with MoE and the coal regions regarding the schedule of calls for the “groups of projects” schemes.

Based on the circulated information regarding the progress of the calls and available documentation, a slightly different approach was proposed compared to the initial Technical Proposal. Specifically, the D3 Report was delivered in two phases:

- I. Interim Report with a focus on “groups of projects” for entrepreneurs
- II. Final Report with a focus on “groups of projects” for the public sector and an update of the recommendations for the “groups of projects” for entrepreneurs

As agreed with the regional representatives, Task 3 did not include other “groups of projects” for the individual regions. These referred to the recruitment grants for teachers in the Karlovy Vary Region and film vouchers in the Ústí Region. Additionally, the planned timing of the “groups of projects” for creative, digital, and pre-incubation vouchers for the public sector in KVR, as well as the creative vouchers for the public sector in ÚR, fell outside the project timeframe and could not be incorporated.

In Phase I, a draft version of the D3 Interim Report on the “groups of projects” for entrepreneurs was prepared in the Czech language and submitted to MoRD and MoE for a first round of consultations in November 2023. MoRD provided support to disseminate the report to coal regions representatives. The deadline for feedback on this version of the report was 28 November 2023. This allowed for a first revision of the document before the workshop for evaluators on 6 December 2023.

The formal draft of the D3 Interim Report was submitted to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE for feedback on 12 December 2023. The draft of the Interim Report was discussed during the

second Steering Committee on 19 December 2023 (online via MS Teams). The report included six illustrative examples for “groups of projects” for entrepreneurs corresponding to the structure of the eligibility criteria that would subsequently be evaluated during the assessment process. No further revisions to the Interim Report were necessary after the Steering Committee meeting.

In Phase II, further online coordination meetings with regional representatives from KVR and ÚR were held in January 2024 to determine the structure and focus of the illustrative examples for “groups of projects” for the public sector. Similar to Phase I, a draft version of the D3 Final Report (including the “groups of projects” for the public sector) was prepared in the Czech language and submitted to MoRD, MoE and regional representatives for a first round of consultation in March 2024. The deadline for feedback on this version of the report was 27 March 2024. This allowed for a first revision of the document before the next Steering Committee scheduled in April 2024. In addition to the six illustrative examples for “groups of projects” for entrepreneurs, the final report included eight illustrative examples for “groups of projects” for the public sector corresponding to the project fiches for each thematic area.

The formal draft of the D3 Final Report was submitted to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE for feedback on 12 April 2024. The final draft of the D3 Final Report was discussed during the third Steering Committee on 18 April 2024 in Prague, Czech Republic and online via MS Teams. No further revisions to the D3 Final Report were necessary after the Steering Committee meeting.

The D3 Final Report on documentation for application to the Just Transition Fund under the “groups of projects” schemes for small projects was submitted for approval on 5 June 2024. The D3 Final Report was officially accepted and approved on 6 June 2024, in both Czech and English languages. Subsequent to its approval, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#).

## 2.4 Deliverable 4: Trainings to support the implementation of the Just Transition Fund

Activities to prepare Deliverable 4 were initiated in parallel with activities for the previously presented Deliverables.

The activities that helped to determine the training needs and further develop the methodology and structure (design) of each training event under Task 4 included the following:

- Collecting feedback from Task 2 interviews regarding the training needs of respondents in relation to the PJT
- Continuous coordination, discussions and feedback from key stakeholders, e.g., MoRD, MoE and regional representatives from KVR and ÚR
- Presentation of the draft curricula during the project monthly coordination calls to collect feedback and further recommendations from the European Commission

In addition to these steps, participants in the first workshops and “train the trainer” sessions held from April to June 2023 were another important source of feedback on the training needs and expectations.

A total of 20 trainings to stimulate project preparation and develop a pipeline of quality projects to be funded (primarily) by the JTF were conducted as part of Task 4. This involved 10 direct trainings and 10 “train the trainer” sessions.

The 10 direct trainings were implemented from April to December 2023, both online and onsite. The workshops were attended by a total of 221 participants from just transition stakeholders in ÚR and KVR, including municipalities, NGOs, and SMEs (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 : Overview of implemented direct trainings (Deliverable 4)**



The 10 “train the trainer” sessions were implemented from April to November 2023, both online and onsite. The sessions were attended by a total of 457 participants from Group A – Local level (e.g., small projects and project promoters with limited capacity such as municipalities, NGOs and SMEs in ÚR and KVR) and Group B – Advanced/Regional/National level, e.g., CzechInvest, Chambers of Commerce, regional LAGs, large municipalities (see Figure 2).

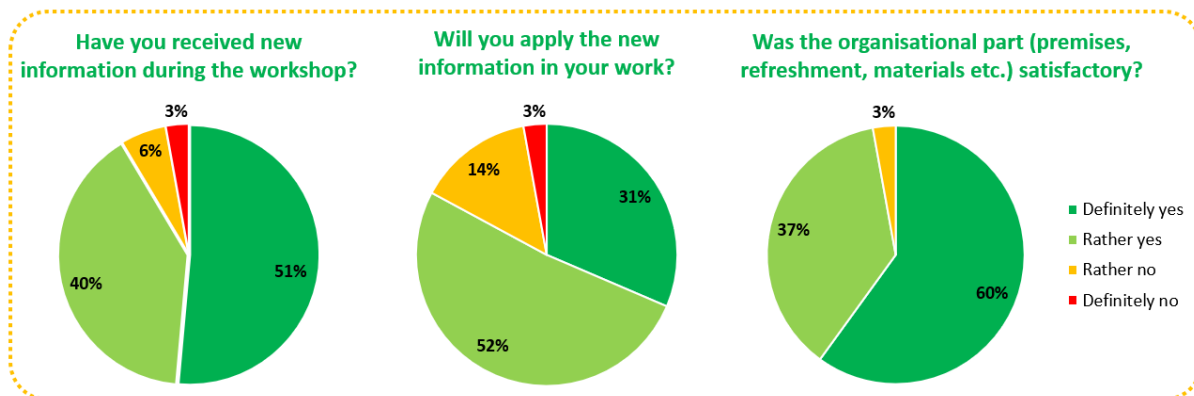
**Figure 2 : Overview of implemented “train the trainer” sessions (Deliverable 4)**



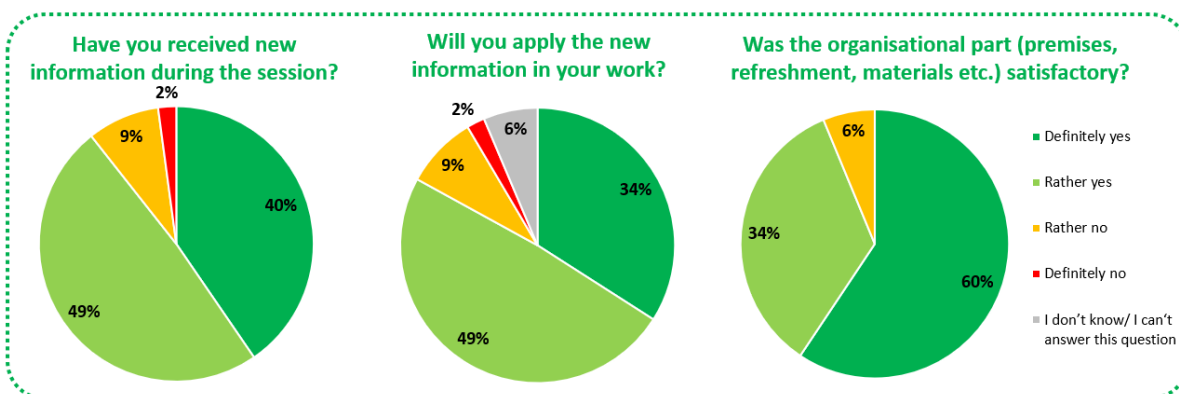
The two initial “methodology” trainings of the “train the trainer” sessions were replaced by individual coaching sessions with key regional representatives. The purpose was to design tailored trainings that met the expectations of the selected participant groups and to expand the training sessions beyond the regional capitals.

Collecting feedback from participants at the conclusion of each session was a crucial aspect of both training types (direct trainings and "train the trainer" sessions). Figures 3 and 4 provide an overview of the feedback gathered regarding the overall usefulness and satisfaction of the participants, which was generally very favourable, indicating that the trainings were well received.

**Figure 3 : Overview of feedback from direct training participants (Deliverable 4)**



**Figure 4 : Overview of feedback from “train the trainer” participants (Deliverable 4)**



All training events were carried out in close cooperation with MoRD, MoE and regional authorities. Efforts were made to foster synergies and streamline the events that were occurring simultaneously in relation to the Just Transition agenda.

The overview of the workshops and trainings of trainers, together with all training materials are available [via this link](#).

The draft of the D4 Report on trainings to support the JTF implementation was submitted to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE for feedback on 12 December 2023. The D4 Draft Report was discussed during the second Steering Committee organised on 19 December 2023 (online via MS Teams). No further revisions to the draft report were necessary after the Steering Committee meeting.

The D4 Final Report was submitted for approval on 27 February 2024. The D4 Final Report was officially accepted and approved on 27 February 2024, in both Czech and English languages. Subsequent to its approval, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#).

## 2.5 Deliverable 5: Dissemination of good practices in priority areas for the implementation of the Territorial Just Transition Plans

Activities to prepare Deliverable 5 were initiated in parallel with activities for the previously presented Deliverables.

The list of activities that contributed to D5 on the dissemination of good practices in priority areas for the implementation of the Territorial Just Transition Plans included:

- Organisation and delivery of three regional workshops to transfer good practices from successful projects to project promoters and discuss the approach to develop the handbook
- Design and preparation of the handbook for dissemination of good practices in the four priority areas
- Organisation and delivery of three regional workshops to present and promote the handbook

**Figure 5 : Overview of implemented workshops (Deliverable 5)**



As outlined in the task description, the handbook was prepared after research, feedback and consultation with MoRD, MoE, and regional representatives, which ultimately lead to the selection of 35 examples of best practice in four thematic areas (i.e., brownfield, renewable energy and hydrogen, energy poverty, and participation of small actors). The Project Team subsequently engaged the services of a professional graphic designer to develop the final visual format of the handbook.

An overview of the draft handbook was submitted for feedback to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE on 12 December 2023. The draft handbook, which included the text and graphics, was discussed during the second Steering Committee organised on 19 December 2023 (online via MS Teams).

Although not explicitly included in the ToR, a professional translation of the handbook into English was also coordinated. This was done to facilitate the dissemination of the good practices beyond the Czech Republic and in light of a highly favourable reception of the Czech version of the handbook.

The draft report summarising the workshops was submitted for feedback to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE on 12 April 2024. Subsequently, the final handbook in both Czech and English languages were submitted on 18 April 2024. The final draft report, as well as the final version of the handbook, were discussed during the third Steering Committee organised on 18 April 2024 in Prague,

Czech Republic (and online via MS Teams). No further revisions to the deliverables were necessary after the Steering Committee meeting.

The D5 Final Report summarising the workshops and the handbook for dissemination of good practices in priority areas for the implementation of the Territorial Just Transition Plans were submitted for approval on 5 June 2024. The D5 Final Report (English version) was officially accepted and approved on 6 June 2024. Subsequent to its approval, the report has been edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage and has been authorised by the European Commission for publication. To access the report, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#). To access the handbook, refer to this [link for the Czech version](#) and this [link for the English version](#).

## 2.6 Deliverable 6: Recommendations for the transfer of good practices on regional development and innovation from Moravia-Silesia to the Karlovy Vary and Ústí regions

Activities to prepare Deliverable 6 were initiated in parallel with activities for the previously presented Deliverables.

The list of activities that contributed to the preparation of the D6 Report on recommendations for the transfer of good practices on regional development and innovation from Moravia-Silesia to the Karlovy Vary and Ústí Regions included:

- Desk-research and mapping of the institutional structure in the coal regions of the Czech Republic
- 29 semi-structured interviews with representatives of the local/regional government, regional agencies, R&D agencies, NGOs in all three coal regions (20 on-site interviews, 9 online interviews)
- Organisation and implementation of two regional workshops in the Karlovy Vary and Ústí regions to verify and discuss the findings of the draft report

The interview process, including the list of questions and interviewees, was designed in close cooperation with MoRD and MoE. The implementation of the stakeholder interviews kicked-off on 29 January 2024 and was finalised on 8 March 2024. The interview questions were developed based on analysis of the existing institutional framework of the Czech coal regions and identification of the key differences between MSR and the Ústí and Karlovy Vary Regions.

The D6 Draft Report on recommendations for the transfer of good practices on regional development and innovation was submitted for feedback to the European Commission, MoRD and MoE on 12 April 2024. The draft report was discussed during the third Steering Committee organised on 18 April 2024 in Prague, Czech Republic (and online via MS Teams). Adjustments following the discussions, comments and suggestions by the Steering Committee are reflected in the revised report.

Following the Steering Committee meeting, the Project Team organised two regional workshops in KVR and ÚR to present the draft findings and collect further feedback at the regional level. After the workshops concluded, participants had the opportunity to provide written feedback by 30 May 2024. As such, the following workshops were implemented:

- Hybrid workshop in the Ústí Region on 22 May 2024, with participation from MSR
- Hybrid workshop in the Karlovy Vary Region on 23 May 2024, with participation from MSR

The D6 Final Report was submitted for approval on 15 July 2024 and approved on 18 July 2024, in both Czech and English languages. Thereafter, it was submitted for English proofreading and edited for publication on the [www.dotaceeu.cz](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) webpage in both Czech and English languages during October 2024.

## 2.7 Project visibility and communication

The communication and visibility activities of the project aimed to: (1) generate awareness of the events to the public, and (2) communicate the EU's involvement about the project to the public.

MoRD has created and published **a dedicated page** on the [www.dotaceeu.cz website](http://www.dotaceeu.cz) that contains a detailed description of the TSI project in June 2023, which was prepared by the Project Team in coordination with MoRD:

- General information about the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) and TSI project: [click here to view](#)



- Project leaflet in English: [click here to view](#)
- Project leaflet in Czech: [click here to view](#)

Additionally, the dedicated webpage serves as a **platform for publishing all project deliverables** edited for publication: [click here to view](#) (Documents).

Following the completion of project milestones, the Project Team coordinated subsequent communication activities with the European Commission and MoRD throughout the project implementation:

- After completing **all events in Task 4**, the Project Team prepared a communication proposal to share information about the activities and other project updates through online channels:
  - Project-related news article in Czech language, February 2024: [click here to view](#)
  - Detailed updated on the TSI project implementation in Czech language, February 2024: [click here to view](#)
  - Dedicated post in Czech language on the Re:START Ústí and Karlovy Vary Regions Facebook page, February 2024: [click here to view](#)
  - Dedicated post in Czech language on the RE:START Moravian-Silesian Region Facebook page, February 2024: [click here to view](#)
  - Project-related update on the DG REFORM institutional X account linked to the news article published by MoRD, March 2024: [click here to view](#)
- A communication proposal to disseminate information about the **project's closing event**, both before and in follow-up to the event, was prepared:
  - Invitation to the closing event in Czech language on the website, May 2024: [click here to view](#)
  - Detailed news article in Czech language about the closing, including topics addressed during the event, June 2024: [click here to view](#)
  - Project-related update on the DG REFORM institutional X account linked to the news article published by MoRD, July 2024: [click here to view](#)

Additionally, MoRD has also promoted the project via the news section of its webpage for the workshops, which was organised to present and promote the D5 handbook: [click here to view](#). Furthermore, details concerning the organisation of the D4 training events were published in the [events section](#) of the webpage. Furthermore, following the completion of the project, MoRD has released a series of news items available on its web pages [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Further efforts to ensure the project visibility and involvement of the EU have been made by integrating the visibility rules of the Commission throughout the implementation of all project workshops and training events via digital or printed support materials such as invitations, agenda, presentations etc.

## 2.8 Closing event

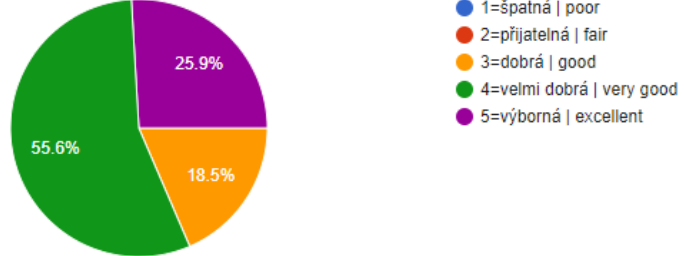
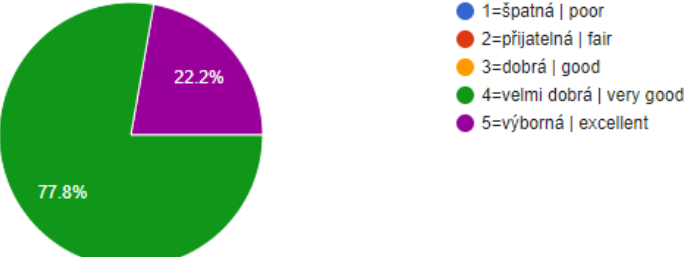
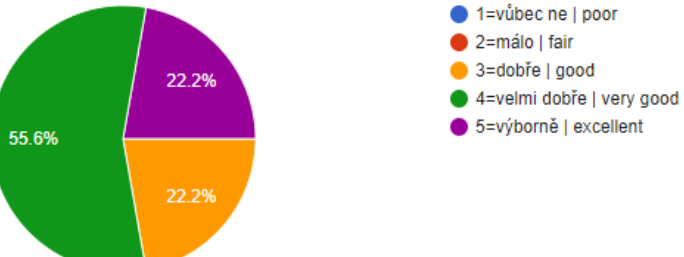
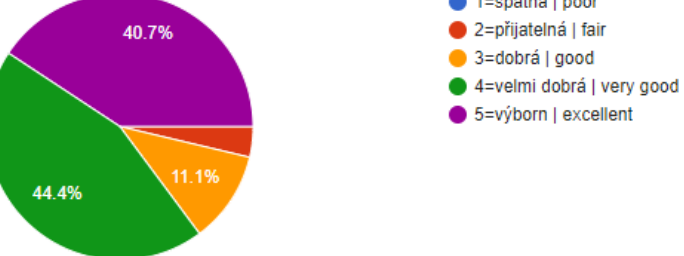
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A final workshop was held on 12 June 2024 in a hybrid format. The closing event brought together representatives from the European Commission, MoRD, MoE, and relevant stakeholders from the Czech coal regions. The event was hosted at the Sokolov Municipal Office and online via Zoom to allow for broader participation. A total of 80 participants (out of 100 registered) attended the event (45 onsite participants, 35 online participants). The primary language of the event was Czech, with Czech-English-Czech interpretation provided for international participants. All communication related to materials, including invitation emails, reminder emails, and follow-up emails, were prepared bilingually in Czech and English. The coordination of the closing event was carried out in close cooperation with MoRD and the European Commission.

The comprehensive event agenda followed a synergistic approach. In addition to presenting the results of the TSI project for Pillar I, it also featured the progress from the TA projects developed in parallel for Pillars II and III of the JTM in the Czech Republic. There were also regional and local presentations that were relevant to the Just Transition agenda.

All registered participants received the presentations via an email link following the event. Additionally, a short feedback form (anonymous) was also shared after the event, resulting in 27 responses. A summary of participant feedback is provided below:

**Figure 6 : Overview of collected feedback from participants (closing event)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1. Jak byste zhodnotil/a svou celkovou zkušenost z akce?   How would you rate your overall experience at the event?</b></p>     | <p>➤ 81.5% of respondents rated the overall event experience as very good or excellent</p>                    |
| <p><b>2. Jak hodnotíte kvalitu prezentací a diskusí?   How would you rate the quality of the presentations and discussions?</b></p>  | <p>➤ 100% of respondents rated the quality of the presentations and discussions as very good or excellent</p> |
| <p><b>3. Jak moc užitečné pro Vás byly poskytnuté informace?   How useful did you find the information provided?</b></p>            | <p>➤ 77.8% of respondents rated the information provided during the event as very good or excellent</p>       |
| <p><b>4. Jak hodnotíte organizaci akce?   How would you rate the event organization?</b></p>                                        | <p>➤ 85.1% of respondents rated the overall event organisation as very good or excellent</p>                  |

Participants valued the opportunity for personal meetings with European, national, and regional stakeholders, as well as the subsequent interactions facilitated by the event. They also appreciated

the information and experience sharing, concrete examples, and variety of presentations, among other aspects.

**In terms of follow-up actions or initiatives to continue the progress made during the project, several suggestions were made.** These included:

- Organising a travelling roadshow to illustrate the experiences of coal regions in other countries
- Facilitating practical exchanges between just transition regions in the Czech Republic and other EU countries
- Maintaining a regular working group format in all affected regions to support the implementation of the project's findings

### 3. LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 Lessons learnt during project implementation

The Project Team has collected several insights and lessons during the implementation of the project, which could be used by the Czech authorities and other member states for similar projects in the future.

##### *PJT implementation phase and TSI project activities*

During the implementation of the TSI project, there was a **significant difference in the intensity of PJT operation and awareness of actors during the various project phases**: initiation phase (i.e., November 2022), during the implementation of various input data analyses and empirical research (spring 2023), during the peak information phase of PJT promotion in May and June 2023, and during the start-up period of the main calls for project submissions. This aspect influenced, for example, the level of awareness of key actors and potential PJT applicants. The intensity of awareness-raising, trainings and information activities was fundamentally different at the beginning of 2023 compared to the end of the first half of 2023. The PJT MA, in coordination with the Project Team, began to focus more on the coal regions as the calls for projects were already underway or in the preparation stage. In this sense, outreach activities are improving significantly. This development also corresponds to the implementation phase of the PJT, which was approved much later than the other Operational Programmes. As this is a specific Operational Programme with new support instruments, the methods and intensity of communication with potential applicants and beneficiaries should be considered. The rationale for this activity is the pursuit of transformation in coal regions.

##### *Lessons learnt from implemented training activities*

A large part of the TSI project was the **preparation and implementation of a series of informative events, workshops and seminars** in the coal regions (D4). The organisation of 20 training events over a six-month period (including two months of summer) across two regions was deemed excessive when also considering that other TA projects were simultaneously conducted (same regions and timeframe). In response to the specific needs expressed by regional stakeholders, some of the trainings were conducted in an online format and/or integrated with other TA events. **The high level of engagement in online events** and the focus on the requested topics demonstrated the benefits of doing a thorough needs analysis with participant input; it also indicated that online events should be the recommended format for future events in similar projects. **However, while the online format allows for broader participation, it should not completely replace in-person trainings.** The in-person format allows for more information and detailed communication between participants and speakers while also facilitating dialogue among participants themselves. In addition, the in-person format enables informal meetings between representatives from the public and private sectors, which are necessary to achieve quality and long-term impact projects within the just transition areas. For similar projects in the future, it is recommended to organise one-third or one-quarter of the trainings in-person, with the remaining two-thirds or three-quarters conducted online. However, the optimal mix of in-person and online events should be determined based on the specific purpose of each training activity/TA project.

Additionally, several attendees of the all-day trainings expressed regret for having to leave the event early due to other professional obligations. Thus, it is advisable to opt for half-day trainings whenever feasible.

**The delayed implementation of the PJT affected the execution of the trainings** and necessitated adjustments to the agenda. As previously indicated, some of the disseminated information was misunderstood by specific target groups (e.g., LAGs identified the programme with large strategic projects that do not correspond to their scale of work) and many participants of the “train the trainer” (T-T) sessions often criticised the lack of information related to PJT during the first part of the training period. These remarks were discussed during internal meetings with the ministries and regional authorities. The following proposals were approved following deliberations:

- MoE increased the promotion of the existing newsletter that provides updates on PJT activities (the newsletter has been promoted, including during Task 4 trainings).
- Enhanced promotion of the website that hosts video recordings related to PJT (the channel has been promoted, including during Task 4 trainings).
- An additional webinar covering specific aspects of the PJT (e.g., application process, terms of reference, application system, annexes) was agreed upon and organised on 27 June 2023 (see T-T 11). A post-event video recording of the webinar has also been promoted.
- MoE created a leaflet to clarify the target groups and provide examples of supporting activities. The leaflet aims to enhance transparency in understanding the unique structure of the PJT, particularly in relation to strategic projects and umbrella projects. The structure of the programme, with a focus on particular target groups, was also explained during the trainings.
- The lack of information on financial instruments was reflected in the preparation of workshops organised by BeePartner, including intensive T-T sessions in Karlovy Vary (see T-T 9 and WS 5).
- The workshop for evaluators was postponed until December 2023 in order to provide updated information.
- The representatives of MoE and MoRD agreed to participate in additional training sessions and addressed numerous inquiries during the events.

While most of the required training topics were addressed during the Task events, several topics were requested for future trainings organised within the framework of additional TA projects. **Remaining or repeated topics to be covered include:**

- Re-skilling in just transition regions
- Craft incubators
- Financial instruments (repeated topic for diverse public and private groups)
- Workshop for evaluators (repeated topic of PJT umbrella project evaluation with MoE representative(s). The workshop was pre-confirmed by MoE)
- Informal meetings of evaluators from all three Czech coal regions (proposal from ÚR to share experiences and recommended procedures among the regions; moderated by an external representative familiar with the topic)

Overall, **the feedback from the events was predominantly positive, albeit with a relatively low response rate of 10%**. A potential solution to improve the response rate is to require participants to complete a questionnaire prior to departing the training facility; however, this approach may be viewed unfavourably by some participants. However, good practice suggests that there should be a follow-up evaluation at the end of the workshop/training session rather than introducing a time lag between the event and the evaluation. This would help to ensure a higher response rate of feedback forms.

#### *Lessons learnt from dissemination of good practices*

The promotion of good practices in priority areas for the three Czech coal regions was achieved by developing a comprehensive handbook of good practices and facilitating workshops with key stakeholders (D5). **Dissemination of the handbook outputs has proven to be more effective as a sub-section within a workshop of a broader program.** To disseminate the handbook, consultations with the stakeholders (regions) indicated that the handbook alone was insufficient to support the workshop agenda. As a rather broad document, it would have been challenging to engage the intended audience. Therefore, the workshops in each region centred around a specific topic, aligning with the priority areas in the handbook and addressing the immediate needs of the regions (e.g., "small" actors' involvement, energy poverty, or renewable energy sources). This helped increase the attractiveness of the dissemination workshops. In addition, conducting the workshops with the support of the regions also proved particularly helpful.

### *Transfer of experience and good practice in just transition management between regions*

To identify key elements of good practice in the institutional functioning of MSR in the just transition process compared to ÚR and KVR, several factors should be considered.

Overall, the literature review shows that **the management of the just transition within the European Union is a complex process that relies upon the key principle of multi-level governance**, with an important role for policy makers at the regional level. Analysis, structured interviews and regional workshops showed that, despite some differences in the initial conditions of ÚR and KVR where unique institutional models of regional governance are emerging, **it is necessary to maintain a participatory approach and a strong level of communication and transparency** throughout the transformation process as it is the basis for trust between regional actors. With an understanding of the initial conditions in each region, the examples of good practice from MSR related to the formation of an institutional model of regional management can be adapted. The core challenge in both regions is the lack of a comprehensive institution focused on regional development, which either does not exist (KVR) or its activities are insufficient/overlap with competences of other agencies (ÚR). There is also a differing potential in the area of research and university. ÚR has potential for R&D, but it is not sufficiently integrated into the long-term development of the region. KVR does not have an adequate university setting to realise R&D activities. **The long-term historical contexts in ÚR and KVR are also different**, which influences the low level of regional patriotism, enthusiasm of local and regional actors, weak mutual communication and weak political leadership. In this context, recommendations are formulated separately for each region.

Each region has unique challenges and opportunities, slightly different economic and settlement structures, diverse geographical areas, and therefore their situations are different. **The MSR is in the north-east of the Czech Republic and has a long industrial history, which is transitioning from the industrial sector towards more modern and sustainable industries.** The region has considerable potential for successful transition given its existing capacities and long-term investments in innovation and education. **ÚR and KVR are located in the north-west of the Czech Republic have historically been dependent on brown coal mining and heavy industry (as well as the chemical industry in ÚR). These regions may face greater challenges in the transition process**, especially in terms of job losses and economic restructuring. Nevertheless, the specific regional effects related to the labour market may not be as severe with respect to broader Europe given the overall low unemployment rate in the Czech Republic and the new job opportunities that will arise in the renewable energy sector. A significantly higher unemployment rate may therefore be more problematic at the local and micro-regional levels compared to the broader region.

## **3.2 Recommendations contributing to the Just Transition Agenda**

This section briefly summarises each recommendation from the individual deliverables that are relevant for the Government of the Czech Republic, with the following two parameters as defined in the ToR:

- Proposed indicators to be used by the Czech authorities to monitor the outcome and impact of the project after the conclusion of the contract.
- Recommendations for actions or measures that could facilitate and complement the implementation of the project results and increase the impact of the project. Where possible, priority should be given to recommendations that are easy to implement ("quick wins").

### *3.2.1 Recommendations for the Government of the Czech Republic*

**Deliverable 2** identified barriers to the use of public funds at the regional level in the Czech Republic, including barriers to the JTF implementation. Task 2 included an assessment of monitoring data and relevant evaluation reports, a brief document analysis, an evaluation of empirical research, and finalisation of the assessment according to results from discussions at the regional workshops. On the basis of these analyses, the Project Team compiled a set of recommendations, which are further refined according to the context, timing and responsibilities of the relevant institutions. Table 1 outlines the specific recommendations.

**Table 1: Recommendations from Deliverable 2**

| Recommendations   | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact   | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1. Strengthening the transformative potential of the PJT and thus the initial absorption capacity of smaller actors</b></p> <p>1.1 Strengthen the awareness of potential PJT applicants among smaller stakeholders about the possibilities of obtaining specific information or consultations on their upcoming projects from existing staff and consultants of RSCs and MAs at the regional level (in the form of a one-stop shop or regional PJT consultation point).</p> <p>1.2 Maintain a high level of awareness on the objectives of the transition process.</p> <p>1.3 Greater sharing of good practice at the international level on the topic of transition - more intensive use and promotion of results using EU level support (i.e., "Initiative for coal regions in transition", Just Transition Platform, Interreg Europe 2021-2027).</p> | <p>Number of informative actions</p> <p>Number of supported participants</p>   | <p>Retrospective (ex-post) evaluation of implemented actions - partial evaluation of questionnaires completed after the trainings</p> <p>Additional evaluation of the PJT communication strategy</p> |
| <p><b>2. Reducing administrative complexity and facilitating project preparation</b></p> <p>2.1 Prepare guidance project templates in the selected thematic calls of the PJT.</p> <p>2.2 Establish standard information tools to support the sharing of experiences between applicants and beneficiaries (discussion forums for networking between applicants and beneficiaries).</p> <p>2.3 Promote awareness of the differences between subsidies and financial instruments (i.e., Pillar I vs. Pillar II and Pillar III of the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)).</p>   | <p>The level of perception of administrative complexity at the beginning of PJT implementation and comparing the situation with possible improvement during the implementation</p> | <p>Process evaluation of PJT in 2025 and 2026</p>  |
| <p><b>3. Reducing the administrative complexity of project implementation and facilitating their implementation</b></p> <p>3.1 Ensure greater coherence and consistency of control mechanisms by strengthening the single audit principle.</p> <p>3.2 Greater flexibility to change the project budget for innovative projects in the thematic call "Innovation in the Circular Economy".</p> <p>3.3 Conduct an assessment on human resources and processes regarding potential strengthening of the staff capacities of the PJT Managing Authority (MA).</p>   | <p>The level of perception of administrative complexity at the beginning of PJT implementation and comparing the situation with possible improvement during the implementation</p> | <p>Process evaluation of PJT in 2025 and 2026</p>  |
| <p><b>4. Strengthening the capacity of consulting companies, LAGs and micro-regions (training of trainers)</b></p> <p>4.1 Continuous training of trainers in coal regions, which will correspond to the specifics of individual coal regions. The identified training needs were related to the content of project preparation and specifics of project management in relation to different types of subsidy programmes.</p>  | <p>Degree of involvement of external training of trainers</p> <p>Increasing the capacity of small actors to prepare project applications</p>                                       | <p>Ongoing PJT evaluation</p>  |

| Recommendations  | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Other recommendations</b>   |  |  |
| <b>5. Strengthening institutional capacity for project preparation in the Karlovy Vary and Ústí Regions</b><br>5.1 Establish a regional development agency in the Karlovy Vary Region.<br>5.2 Strengthen the agency system for the development of the Ústí and Karlovy Vary Regions. | --   | --   |

The objective of Task 3 was to prepare and review documents to support the application of promoters of small projects to the JTF under the “group of projects” schemes being prepared in the Karlovy Vary and Ústí Regions. This included reviewing the calls and guidelines for SME and public sector beneficiaries under the schemes prepared by the regions and formulating possible recommendations for improvement. An assessment of the documents related to the announced calls for “groups of projects” suggests that all types of vouchers for final beneficiaries are appropriately set in terms of their content. The programme conditions are clearly formulated and relatively easy to navigate. However, the administrative requirements for the final beneficiaries in relation to the preparation of applications are seen as the most problematic. The Project Team has the following recommendations in this area, as illustrated in Table 2:

**Table 2: Recommendations from Deliverable 3**

| Recommendations  | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact  | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation |
|--|---|--|
| <b>1. Maximise effort to reduce administrative burden.</b> The current formal criteria and eligibility criteria, which must be met by SME applicants and subsequently integrated into of the evaluation process by the regions, represent a relatively significant administrative obstacle, especially for this type of financial support, when relatively smaller funds are distributed (see definition of “groups of projects” as a tool to support simple template projects). <b>Recommendation:</b> If similar calls are being preparing, the administrative burden for the final beneficiaries should be reduced, especially in the area of documentation during the preparation of the application itself. | The level of perception of administrative complexity at the beginning of PJT implementation and comparing the situation with possible improvement during the implementation | Process evaluation of PJT in 2025 and 2026             |
| <b>2. Focus on problematic annexes to calls.</b> In particular, the “Form for Assessment of Business Undertakings in Financial Difficulty” and the “Form for Determination of Business Size and Linked Enterprise.” As grant providers, the regions may shoulder the increased administrative burden, due to the possibility that beneficiaries will commit more errors. <b>Recommendation:</b> Simplify the forms as much as possible, ideally into the form of a sworn statement. The accuracy of the filled data can be verified through an on-site inspection. The sworn statement may contain information on the method of calculation or description of the individual items.                              | The level of perception of administrative complexity at the beginning of PJT implementation and comparing the situation with possible improvement during the implementation | Process evaluation of PJT in 2025 and 2026             |
| <b>3. Use of sworn statements instead of other annexes and documents.</b> <b>Recommendation:</b> We  | ---   | Partial formal recommendation -                        |

| Recommendations   | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact   | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>strongly recommend that a cautionary note be prominently displayed on every form or in another location, cautioning that the information provided in the sworn statement serves as the basis for the distribution of funds from public budgets and that by intentionally providing false information, the recipient may commit subsidy fraud or a serious breach of budget discipline.</p>   |  | <p>verify retrospectively through process evaluation</p>   |
| <p><b>4. Linking businesses with research organisations.</b> SMEs often insufficiently develop their own research and development capacities and need to find suitable partners while some SMEs struggle with this and have no prior expertise in this area. <b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> We recommend adding a table with a list of possible research partners, including contact persons, together with the regional calls for innovation vouchers. It would also be appropriate to add the available infrastructure and capacity. Alternatively, a contact person(s) should be allocated who would be able to consult with companies on their plans if necessary. Interested SMEs can refer to the database of the National Platform Transfera.cz (<a href="https://www.transfera.cz/">https://www.transfera.cz/</a>).</p>  | <p>Increasing interest of businesses in cooperation with research organizations (number of vouchers)</p> | <p>To support informative and promotional events to facilitate contact with possible research partners, including contact persons, together with the regional calls for innovation vouchers would be promoted.</p> |
| <p><b>5. Reconsider certain conditions for the use of vouchers for entrepreneurs.</b> The first experiences with the use of vouchers indicated that some conditions were identified which, from the point of view of the final beneficiaries, may represent obstacles to the use of the support, such as: the inability to use funds for the purchase of specific types of vehicles (micro-mobility, small excavators or lawnmowers), the inability to purchase training courses outside the database of experts, the impossibility of ex-ante financing for the smallest beneficiaries, the inability to finance the costs of company registration for non-entrepreneurs or the limited duration of project implementation. Another problematic limitation is the inability to develop a business in a different CZ-NACE than the existing one. <b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Consider changes to conditions listed.</p> | <p>Increasing interest of business applications (number of successful vouchers)</p>                      | <p>Process evaluation of PJT in 2025 and 2026</p>  |
| <p><b>6. Narrowing and specifying the focus of “group of projects” schemes.</b> The announced calls are quite broad in terms of themes, which is similar for all regions. Only the innovation vouchers are restricted to one of the dimensions of the Regional Innovation Strategy. <b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> It would be useful for the evaluators to be able to work with the consistency of the selected projects with the thematic priorities of the regions or MoE). It might be desirable for projects supported by the “groups of projects” schemes to be complementary to strategic projects or key thematic areas, thus strengthening their synergistic impact.</p>  | <p>Increasing the allocation for the digital and innovation voucher</p>                                  | <p>---</p>   |
| <p><b>7. Communication of the specific conditions the “groups of projects” for the public sector projects.</b> This includes, for example, the condition</p>  | <p>Number of supported public sector projects</p>  | <p>Advance notices on upcoming calls and conditions for</p>  |



| Recommendations   | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation  |
|---|--|---|
| of having project plans included in their strategic plans, the need to comply with 'Do No Significant Harm' (DNSH) conditions for infrastructure projects, or the condition of having a contractor already selected before submitting an application.<br><b>Recommendation:</b> Clearly communicate specific conditions well in advance to allow the final applicant time to adequately prepare before the launch of the calls and include relevant paragraphs in the calls themselves that explicitly define these conditions.                                 | covering the planned allocation              | supporting umbrella projects of the public sector (e.g., rules, eligible expenses and other conditions) |
| <b>Other recommendations</b>  |  |   |
| <b>8. Scaling of the criteria and harmonising the view of evaluators.</b> Given the current set-up of the eligibility criteria, the evaluation might be considered subjective, i.e., two evaluators may independently assess the same application in ways that diverge. <b>Recommendation:</b> A simple handbook for evaluators prepared by the Project Team can be used. At the same time, in view of the possible amount of the grant, a single developed sentence, or at most a paragraph, should be sufficient for the applicant to justify each criterion. | --   | --  |

**The objective of Task 4** was to prepare and deliver direct trainings and “train the trainer” sessions, which aim to stimulate project preparation and develop a pipeline of quality projects to be funded (primarily) by the JTF. In particular, the trainings targeted small project implementers and project promoters with limited capacity, such as municipalities, NGOs and SMEs in the Karlovy Vary and Ustí Regions. Table 3 summarises the key findings and conclusions related to actionable recommendations for future trainings.

**Table 3: Recommendations from Deliverable 4**

| Recommendations   | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact   | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>1. Although online trainings offer broader participation, they should not totally replace in-person events.</b> In-person trainings provide more information, communication, and dialogue. By contrast, online trainings facilitate informal meetings between public and private sectors. Future trainings should have a balanced mix of in-person and online events. Furthermore, to accommodate the availability of participants, it is recommended to schedule half-day sessions. | Statistical evidence online vs. on-site vs. hybrid events, training, seminars and workshops, including detailed breakdown of the number of participants in different types of events | Set up an action plan to promote and increase awareness among actors, including the implementation of actions in a hybrid form                                 |
| <b>2. The events offered participants the opportunity to interact with representatives from the ministries,</b> which was highly appreciated. Participants expressed interest in taking part in similar informal discussions in the future, which suggests the need to organise similar informal discussions in future events.  | --   | Include representatives of central public administration bodies in PJT information sessions, as they will be able to provide additional contextual information |

| Recommendations  | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact                       | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation   |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>3. Several topics were suggested for future trainings within the scope of further TA projects, including:</b> Re-skilling in just transition regions, craft incubators, financial instruments, workshop for evaluators, informal meetings of evaluators from all three Czech coal regions.</p>                                   | Increase the number of training topics                             | Advance planning of the relevant specialists who will be able to provide trainings for a given topic |
| <p><b>4. For future events, there should be follow-up on the evaluation questionnaire and active promotion of evaluation's objectives at the end of the workshop/training session</b> rather than introducing a time lag between the event and the evaluation. This would help to ensure a higher response rate of feedback forms.</p> | Increase the number of responses to evaluate training environments | Provide the ability to evaluate immediately upon completion of training                              |

**Task 5** promoted good practices in priority areas for the three Czech coal regions covered by the Territorial Just Transition Plans: Karlovy Vary Region, Ústí Region, and Moravian-Silesian Region. This was achieved by developing a comprehensive handbook of good practices and facilitating workshops with key stakeholders. No specific recommendations were made to the regions or government as part of this task, but some lessons can be drawn from the preparation and production of Task 5 outputs as illustrated in Table 4:

**Table 4: Recommendations from Deliverable 5**

| Recommendations  | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact  | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation   |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1.</b> The initial workshops and discussions with stakeholders, as well as consultations with experts, indicated <b>a clear need to focus on smaller or mid-sized projects since the potential for replication is the highest in the Czech context.</b> Similarly, the research focused on European (coal) regions. For "small" actors, <b>there was more emphasis on Czech cases to ensure replicability.</b></p> | --  | Focus good practices on smaller, highly replicable projects  |
| <p><b>2.</b> <b>During the preparation of the handbook, the Project Team received continuous, step-by-step feedback from stakeholders and experts. This ensured that the case studies aligned</b> with the specific needs and opportunities of the regions.</p>  | ---   | Support a participatory approach in the creation of informative handbooks  |
| <p><b>3. Visualisation of outputs is important.</b> The handbook's visually appealing graphic design greatly contributed to its excellent reception from stakeholders. Information for each case study was succinctly presented, with a strong emphasis on providing specific information to avoid making generic claims.</p>  | Increasing the interest of applicants and beneficiaries in selected topics that are promoted in the handbooks and promotional materials | When preparing informative brochures, emphasise graphic and visual elements to improve the clarity and attractiveness of the documents |
| <b>Other recommendations</b>   |   |  |
| <p><b>4. Prepare more examples of good practice and final selection according to the expectations of the representatives of the regions.</b> An extended pool of projects</p>  | --  | --   |

| Recommendations  | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation |
|--|--|--|
| provides an opportunity for the stakeholders and target audience of the handbook to select the most relevant case studies. |  |  |

**The main objective of Task 6** was to prepare a report analysing the experience of the Moravian-Silesian Region in supporting regional development, entrepreneurship and innovation through specific organisational structures and processes and to make recommendations for the development of similar measures in the Karlovy Vary Region and Ústí Region. Most recommendations were therefore at the regional level. Nevertheless, Table 5 presents two recommendations for each region that also apply to the Czech Government.

**Table 5: Recommendations from Deliverable 6**

| Recommendations   | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact  | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation                     |
|---|---|--|
| Ústí Region   |   |  |
| <i>Recommendations Group 1: Institutional framework of the ÚR</i>   |   |  |
| <p><b>1.1.</b> Strengthen the role of the RDA ÚR through multi-year contracts with the Ústí Region in the preparation of other planned services.</p>  | <p>According to the recommendation, multi-year contracts are formulated specifically for the joint-stock company RDA ÚR. However, considering the experience of MSR, expanding applications to agencies that have a different legal form (e.g. a contribution organisation) is recommended. This should increase stability and predictability over a multi-year horizon, not only for agency representatives, but especially for regional stakeholders who are users of the agencies' services.</p> | <p>Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the multi-year contracts</p>       |
| <p><b>1.2.</b> From the national government level, it is recommended to monitor the degree of fulfilment of set goals or obligations at the level of the TCÚR infrastructure project from the point of view of its real functioning. This mainly concerns the specified institutional functioning and, in particular, the specific programmes of planned public services to be provided by the TCÚR as an added value to the current activities of the regional authorities involved.</p> | <p>TCÚR functional infrastructure with specific activities in cooperation with partner institutions</p>   | <p>Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the operation of TCÚR</p>          |
| <p><b>1.3.</b> Initiate the Establishment of a regularly meeting platform of regional stakeholders at the level of directors/managers of the participating organisations</p>  | <p>Regularly meeting platform and number of meetings, including other research institutions in</p>  | <p>Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the regularly meeting platform</p> |

| Recommendations   | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact   | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation   |
|---|--|--|
|   | the region (participation of regional MoRD representatives may be highly appreciated in some comprehensively focused platforms for regional development or transition process)   |  |
| 1.4. Restore comprehensive support for (not only) the non-profit sector using the example of Future Development of the Ústí Region (FDÚR)   | Consistent cooperation with NGOs and other organisations in the region such as municipalities, micro-businesses and SMEs   | Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the support for municipalities, the non-profit and business sector in the region                      |
| <i>Recommendations Group 2: Procedural framework of the ÚR</i>  |  |  |
| 2.1. The functioning of the RSC is fully within the competence of the individual regions, but it is recommended that the national level of government monitor the degree of improvement in the functioning of its thematic working groups, especially in terms of their objectives and the degree of fulfilment of these objectives. In particular, this concerns possible methodological support and coordination by the Ministry of Regional Development, which may also consist in coordinating various cross-cutting regional development issues common to regions. | Increasing the functionality of the RSC and the outputs achieved   | Ongoing evaluation of the functioning of the RSC and their thematic working groups in connection with just transition (process evaluation) |
| 2.2. Strengthen the visibility of regional agencies (including agency collaboration in applied research aimed at strengthening their processes)   | Research to quantify the direct impacts of the energy agencies in the region (applied research project supported by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, application partner MoRD/MoE and selected regional energy agencies in the Czech Republic) | Ongoing coordination and monitoring of the research on the side of the application partners (i.e., energy agencies)                        |
| 2.3. Strengthen positive marketing of the Ústí Region as a whole  | Image/marketing campaigns of the region in a coordinated effort across regional agencies   | Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the marketing campaigns   |
| <b>Karlovy Vary Region</b>  |  |  |
| <i>Recommendations Group 3: Institutional framework of the KVR</i>  |  |  |
| 3.1. From the national government level, it is recommended to monitor the degree of fulfilment of the set goals or commitments at the level of the KVBDA/KIC infrastructure project from the point of view of its real functioning. This mainly concerns the definition of the institutional functioning of the KVBDA/KIC in terms of specific projects or programmes as an added value to the  | KVBDA/KIC functional infrastructure with specific activities in cooperation with partner institutions  | Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the operation of KVBDA/KIC  |

| Recommendations   | Indicators to monitor the outcome and impact  | Actions and measures that could enhance implementation  |
|---|---|---|
| <p>activities of other institutions supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in the region. It is advisable to consider the establishment of a polytechnic university in cooperation with the business community, while methodological support should come from the government level, in particular with regard to the process of possible establishment of such a public polytechnic university.</p>   |   |   |
| <p><b>3.2.</b> Strengthen the functioning of REMAKVR along the lines of the Moravian-Silesian Energy Centre (MEC) and ECUR.</p>   | <p>Increasing the funding and staffing of REMAKVR</p>   | <p>Ongoing evaluation of the functioning of REMAKVR and its work agenda</p>   |
| <p><b>3.3.</b> Find ways to support "one-stop-shop" consultation points at LAG level.</p>   | <p>Number of one-stop-shop consultation points at the LAG level</p>   | <p>Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the operation of the one-stop-shop consultation points</p>  |
| <p><i>Recommendations Group 4: Procedural framework of the KVR</i></p>  |   |   |
| <p><b>4.1.</b> The functioning of the RSC is fully within the competence of the individual regions, but it is recommended that the national level of government monitor the degree of improvement in the functioning of its thematic working groups, especially in terms of their objectives and the degree of fulfilment of these objectives. In particular, this concerns possible methodological support and coordination by the Ministry of Regional Development, which may also consist in coordinating various cross-cutting regional development issues common to regions.</p> | <p>Increasing the functionality of the RSC and the outputs achieved</p>   | <p>Ongoing evaluation of the functioning of the RSC and their thematic working groups in connection with just transition (process evaluation)</p> |
| <p><b>4.2.</b> Clearly define the competences of the institutions in relation to the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation.</p>  | <p>Partnerships between KVBD/KIC and key representatives of the region (i.e., the region, Regional Chamber of Commerce, LAGs)</p> | <p>Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the operation of KVBD/KIC</p>   |
| <p><b>4.3.</b> Strengthen the positive marketing of not only of the whole region, but also of sub-regions of the Karlovy Vary Region (Sokolovsko, Chebsko).</p>   | <p>Identification and marketing of positive examples in the socio-economic development of the region and sub-regions</p>          | <p>Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the marketing activities in relation to promotion of positive examples</p>                                |

### 3.3 Recommendations for follow-on work

With respect to follow-on work, the Project Team proposes the following three issues to be considered:

1. Discussion on the continuation of PJT 2028+, i.e., information on the expected possibilities and, in particular, the level and scope of EU involvement in terms of funding in the next period. Within this context, discussions should be initiated on the 2028+ transformation steps with representatives of smaller stakeholders (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, business).
2. As part of the discussions with regional and national representatives of the just transition process, the possibility of a one-day study visit to MSR by KVR and ÚR representatives was also raised, focusing on various aspects of the institutional functioning in MSR (e.g., in terms of public relations support and the overall image of the region). This activity would be supported at the conclusion of

this TA project, while the Project Team is able to provide logistical support to the organisation as needed (indicative period September 2024).