



Past - Present - Future



# REGIONAL STRATEGY

STEBO

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# CONTENT

Abstract .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Regional Status Quo .....	5
Strategy - stepping stones for a Living Industrial Culture .....	8
Roadmap .....	14
Conclusion .....	15
Context InduCult2.0 .....	16
Colofon .....	17

# Abstract

*The InduCult2.0 strategy paper outlines the future strategies for implementing Living Industrial Culture in the province of Limburg. It describes the current building stones present in the region, how they were further developed during the InduCult2.0 project and how they can support in the ongoing industrial transition processes - both in the fields of society and economy.*

*Industrial Culture has already (gained) a strong position in Stebo's corporate identity. While including it in our mission statement in 2018, the topic has been even more centralized. During the InduCult2.0 project we have especially looked for ways to get society involved in the current socio-economic transition. Specific (pilot) actions were set up for labour-seekers, companies and creative entrepreneurs.*

*Our mission is to assume a favorable position on this topic in the whole province of Limburg building on a strong corporate identity, and to put the opportunities of Industrial Culture on the agendas of all relevant players (heritage, education, companies, entrepreneurship,...). We will set the theme and actively engage in integrating it in relevant (policy) sectors and in each of the Stebo departments. Stebo is the main actor in designing and pursuing the strategic targets, yet doing so together with a dedicated focus group and stakeholder network, and touching numerous relevant sectors (education, labour-market, entrepreneurship, heritage, housing, tourism,...).*



## Introduction

This InduCult2.0 paper outlines the future strategies for implementing Living Industrial Culture in the province of Limburg. It describes the current building stones present in the region, how they were further developed during the InduCult2.0 project and how they can support in the ongoing industrial transition processes - both in the fields of society and economy.

Stebo is the main actor in designing and pursuing the strategic targets, yet doing so together with a dedicated focus group and stakeholder network, and touching numerous relevant sectors (education, labour-market, entrepreneurship, heritage, housing, tourism,...).

# Regional Status Quo

## Living Industrial Culture in the province of Limburg

The history of the province of Limburg is characterized by industry. The industrial episodes have intensively shaped the identity and culture of the region. The mining activities for example have caused the appearance of a typical blue-collar worker mentality, unique living environments (garden cities), a feeling of solidarity,... Migration has played an important role as well since the region was transformed from a mono- to a multicultural context, with migrants bringing along their own culture, habits, culinary traditions,... Industry has even found its way in the religious context (with industrial symbols: e.g. celebration of Saint-Barbara - patron of the miners, decorations and slogans in mining cathedrals,...).

The Ford factory - after the closure of the mines in the '80s/'90's up till 2014 the biggest employer of Limburg - has induced similar cultural manifestations (e.g. 'Ford community', leisure organisations,...). It is clear that in Limburg culture and economy are highly entangled. Industrial developments are always coupled with new cultural expressions. As a result the region has a rich industrial culture which is rooted deeply in the past and is currently very vivid. The manufacturing industries are still important employers today, covering 15% of the Limburg job market. Actions are taken to accelerate technological evolutions and to enhance companies' sustainability.

Currently the industrial environment is in transition again. Service related industries as well as circular and sharing economy are coming up at a major speed, and are influencing the traditional manufacturing industries. Digitalization processes are moreover frequently being

applied in the latter. This transition is coupled with a focus and attitude change. New competencies, entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and immediately cashing of opportunities are starting to become the new values. The current industrial landscape is however populated and shaped by inhabitants with still a strong connection to the manufacturing industries. It is however a clear fact that the competences, mentality and culture of these blue-collar workers (and their children) can contribute a lot to the industrial transition (job profiles; offering ideas as a basis of business start-ups). But the benefits and opportunities of the region's rich Industrial Culture are not yet maximized today. The added value and importance of Industrial Culture for regional development are in other words indisputable, but not yet fully recognized and implemented by the relevant actors.



## Living Industrial Culture as part of Stebo's past, present and future

Stebo is a non-profit organization, founded amidst the closure process of the mines. Community and regional development have formed, and still are at the core of, its activities. The idea of a Living Industrial Culture and its inherent potential for shaping the future region is already strongly represented in our organization's identity and ambitions. This has been the case over the last 30 years.

The InduCult2.0 project offered the opportunity to further implement this philosophy through defining valuable pilot actions and reaching out to (new) stakeholders and target groups. As a first result a mixed focus group was created, connecting sectors and stakeholders which in general - due to different agendas and policy programmes - are not in close contact. Together with the focus group Stebo has produced a brochure with 5 arguments on the added value of Industrial Culture for regional development - serving as the basis for our work within the InduCult2.0 project.

Moreover, Stebo's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary was coupled with a large stakeholder event, integrating the topic of Industrial Culture as the common theme running through our organization's past, present and future. It was organized against the setting of Thor Park, a former mining site where heritage, nature, education, and research on sustainable energy currently meet. Stebo's past - and reason of being - was envisioned by the movie/music composition 'Suite voor de laatste Mijn' (honouring the former coal mines of Limburg). During a panel conversation the present challenges were outlined by members representing the local, regional, and European policy levels and subsidiary channels. Together with Angela Blanchard (former CEO of the largest community development organization in the US) we thought over Stebo's tasks in a fastly changing society. This event - gathering a very broad 2<sup>nd</sup> focus group ( heritage,

employment, education, housing, energy, environment, entrepreneurship,...) - has resulted in a strong content-wise basis for Stebo's future strategies on Industrial Culture. At the same time it was an opportunity to claim our position in the Limburg network of actors relevant for actually reaching those strategic targets.

## Actions and Insights

It is clear that Industrial Culture already has (gained) a strong position in Stebo's corporate identity. While including it in our mission statement in 2018, the topic has been even more centralized. During the InduCult2.0 project we have especially looked for ways to get society involved in the current socio-economic transition.

Specific (pilot) actions were set up for labour-seekers, companies and creative entrepreneurs.

Through organizing a culture focused job event we reinforced the relationship between labour force and companies. Speeddates enabled mutual feedback on vacancies and applications. Unlike other events this happened in a small-scale workshop (6 companies, 11 employees), proceeded by a preparation phase with feedback forms highlighting any cultural prejudices that might occur on the side of the two parties. Indeed traditional industries have created a distinct work culture, carried by current labour-seekers and made up of certain skills, loyalties, habits, attitudes. However, recent industrial and social transformations require their adaption. Also, partly because of historic connotations, industrial work and environment are today often perceived as little attractive. Industrial companies, on the other hand, often have not yet discovered the chances of binding/attracting work force by taking on regional responsibility. The event served as a kind of 'blind audition' in that respect.



15 creative entrepreneurs were offered the chance to participate in inspiration and learning sessions on setting up/reinforcing a link/cooperation with manufacturing companies, closed off by a meet and greet with those companies (opportunity to pitch their products). Five entrepreneurs - each with a close link to the industrial past, present and future (thematically, applied methods, new type of industries,...) - designed a new line of 'InduCult2.0' products which they showcased during one month to a broad public. All workshops, the meet and greet and the showmoment were organized at The Box, Genk ( a pop-up store in close vicinity of the former mining site of Winterslag), as such emphasizing the link between the region's industrial signature and its creative entrepreneurship.

Working on actions to enhance the relationship between creatives/employees and industry, we have reinforced our relationship with existing stakeholders and were able to broaden our network with new companies and support organizations active in the industrial sector. Also, we took the necessary steps to prepare our organization on closer and more frequent contacts with manufacturing companies. Having found out that this requires a more employer oriented approach, a number of Stebo employees have received training on these aspects. Peering with other partners participating in the InduCult project has proven very valuable regarding tools for matching creative entrepreneurs with companies (e.g. Pantopicon Antwerp, Creative Camp methodology elaborated by the POLITECNICO OF MILANO). Also a delegation from the Zwickau region (Germany) visited The Box in June 2018 for inspirational purposes.

Actions have been communicated on all (policy) levels ranging from local events and guidance-learning trajectories, towards presenting the project at the European Parliament in Brussels (March 2018).



# Strategy - stepping stones for a Living Industrial Culture

## Stebo Mission statement

As in many European regions industry continues to be a very important employer in the province of Limburg, as such touching everyday life in several ways (jobs, education, society,...). Stebo's activities lay in the core of industrial transitions and the organization has noticed that the industrial setting is changing substantially again and with it, the communities and culture.

The strategy set out in this paper aims at communicating and realizing the idea that a progressive Industrial Culture, shaped by the communities who have lived it and are still living it, comes in as a key transformative power in this transition. Our mission is to assume a favorable position on this topic in the whole province of Limburg building on a strong corporate identity, and to put the opportunities of Industrial Culture on the agendas of all relevant players (heritage, education, companies, entrepreneurship,...). We will set the theme and actively engage in integrating it in relevant (policy) sectors.

## Strategic Targets and Fields of Action - Stebo departments

In order to meet that mission, we will further integrate Industrial Culture into our corporate identity, presenting it as an opportunity to Stebo's General Meeting and looking for valuable connections between the topic and each of the Stebo departments (community work, housing, energy, entrepreneurship, job- and career guidance)

- leading to five strategic targets:





### *Deploying Industrial Culture as an innovative catalyst within entrepreneurship*

Although industrial culture brings forth structures and processes of industrial production towards creative mind-sets, traditional industrial regions have until now rarely discovered the potential of creative entrepreneurs. Additionally, culture and creative workers prefer urbanity - a social factor usually less developed in non-metropolitan industrial settings. At the same time, such regions do hold specific location assets for attracting creative entrepreneurs, e.g. producing industrial companies, vacant old-industrial sites, personal networks.

*By 2030, Stebo's guidance trajectories and innovative incubator methods have stimulated local creative entrepreneurship with socio-industrial themes as common grounds. Companies have discovered the potential of the Limburg creative pool, and 'metropolitan' entrepreneurs are attracted to the province of Limburg with its network of incubators and redeveloped industry locations. This cross-over will have led to innovation and diversification of the economic basis.*

### *Investing in Industrial Culture as a matchmaker between Industry 4.0 companies and job-seekers*

Industry 4.0 companies introduce completely new working methods and ethics. Locating and employing the 'right people with the right skills' is considered one of the main challenges. Companies have difficulties filling their vacancies while local job-seekers do not feel acknowledged. The latter experience difficulties in identifying themselves within the Industry 4.0 environment.

*By 2030 companies use Industrial Culture as a pull factor for suitable future labour forces. They will have acknowledged the culturally based values and needs of future employees and will have integrated them in their company standards. Job-seekers will be able to enter companies in early (earlier) stages of their career while being offered 'place-and-train' contracts. As a result companies have a more diversified working floor, reflecting competences and skills of all education levels while meeting the expectations set for the 'factory of the future'.*



### *Introducing Industrial Culture as a building stone in society and living environments*

Industrial Culture is both a means to preserve a distinct cultural heritage, as well as a concept to strengthen the present and future cultural diversity of the province of Limburg. As a communication platform, Industrial Culture provides a frame for a public discourse on industrial transformation, both referring to local tradition and skills and, dynamic, forward-looking opportunities. As such it enables inclusive cultural progress.

*In 2030 a new dialogue has been opened that sensitizes and involves the population into shaping the economic and societal future whilst staying rooted in the region's past. Stebo's community workers have introduced the theme in that sector of the Limburg population which has been raised within a blue-collar mentality, having difficulties to identify with the current Industry 4.0 transformations.*



### *Presenting Industrial Culture as a premise for locally supported sustainable energy projects*

Both in the past and present the quest for energy has been an important factor in the province of Limburg. Currently sustainable energy research projects are conducted on yesterday's coal mining sites. Yet it remains difficult to convince the local population to participate in these projects and contribute in reaching the climate goals set out by the government.

*By 2030 Stebo has developed renovation trajectories in the garden cities, building upon and respecting the heritage values of these locations. It will deploy Industrial Culture as a common and connecting theme in setting up collective renovation projects.*

### *Introducing Industrial Culture as a connectivity factor in thematic (international) networks*

As proven by the composition of the focus groups, Industrial Culture has many dimensions and is relevant in multiple sectors (heritage, education, community development, housing, labour market, landscape and nature,...). There are still many open opportunities which could be cashed once cooperation between these sectors is maximized.

*By 2030 Stebo has introduced the topic of Industrial Culture on diverse network agenda's which has led to a regional development approach touching upon and connecting all relevant sectors. It has also presented Industrial Culture as a best practice example in European methodological networks (e.g. Appreciative Inquiry).*



## Tools

### Coordination structure and stakeholder network

During the InduCult2.0 project a focus group was installed, defining the basic premises for the project implementation and setting out the first strategy lines and future challenges. This task will be transferred to Stebo's Board of Directors, and the strategic outlines discussed by the General Annual Meeting. Indeed, the strategy will not be executed by a policy making body or a region, but by the organization itself.

In that task Stebo reaches out to a broad stakeholder network which will be further developed during the upcoming years, and representing many relevant sectors. Also local and regional policymakers will be addressed.

In each of the structures (General Annual Meeting, stakeholder network, and policy makers) Stebo will set the theme of Industrial Culture and shape it as an opportunity according to the fluctuating (policy) priorities set in regional development. We will keep track of developments within the topic of Industrial Culture, communicate on them to policy makers and respond to them by introducing new relevant members in the General Annual Meeting, and in our stakeholder network.

Coordination will be enhanced on an international level through membership of the Central European Network of Industrial Culture Coordinators, which was installed in the runtime of the InduCult2.0 project.





## Content- and Financial Resources - Services, strategies and plans

In the past 30 years, Stebo has developed a strong (service) offer in each of its departments. Ranging from guidance (learning, juridical, financial) and space for (starting) entrepreneurs, job counseling and company coaching/education, towards renovation and housing coaches. All offers are strongly rooted in community development while targeting society as a whole - yet with special attention for people having difficulties in accessing one or more of these sectors. Stebo can count on a theme of 65 employees.

Stebo will strongly invest in integrating the topic of Industrial Culture in each of these offers, and continuously look for links with relevant policies and subsidiary channels to arrange co-financing.

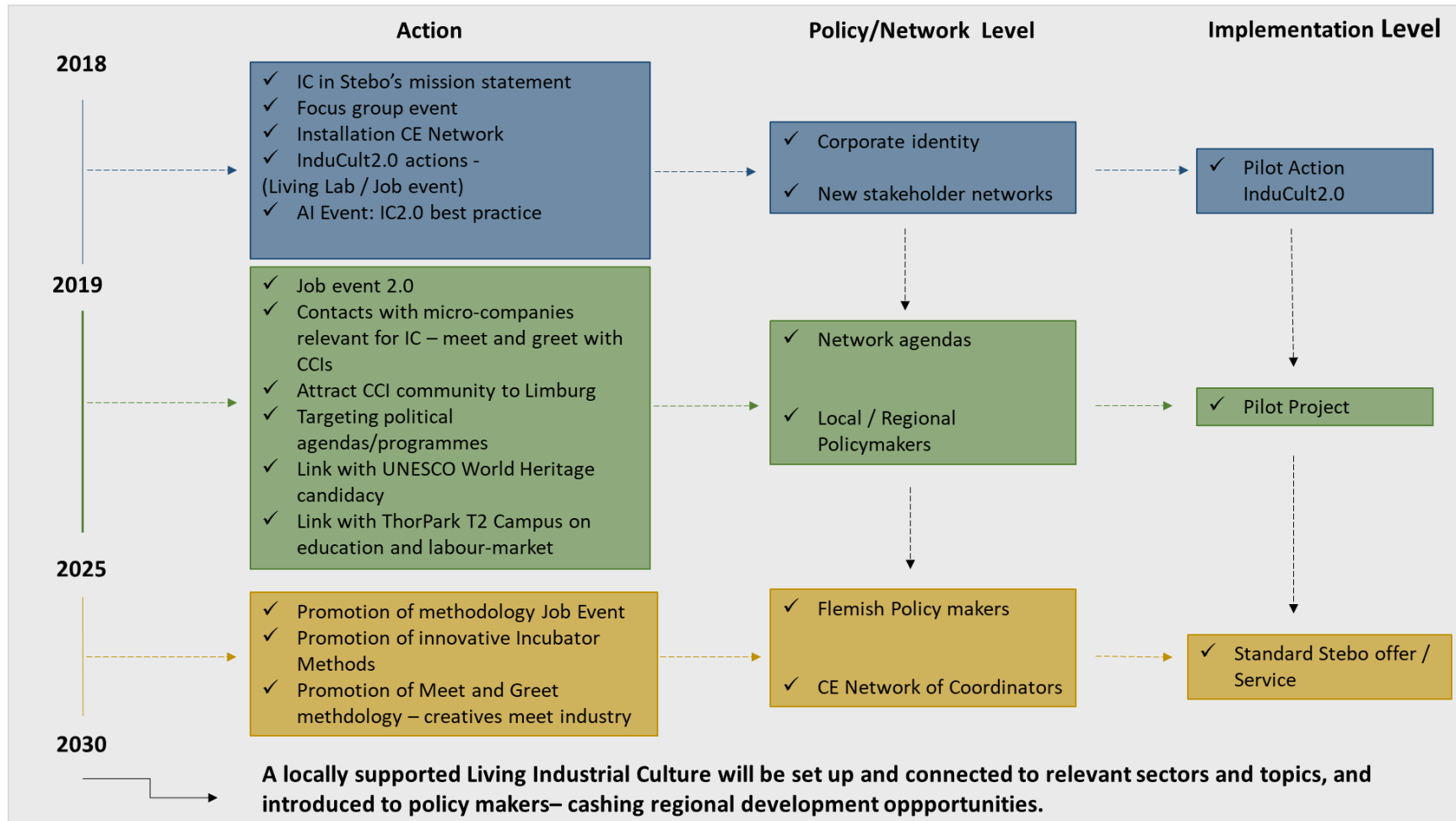
As a result all Stebo services will stand as important stepping stones for reaching the strategic targets, be it in their current formula or adapted to new policy or thematic priorities. In the latter case we will make sure that we will be an official provider of new government financed service frames (e.g. Place and Train, Methods for flanking starters, Energy House 'one-stop-shop',...).

On a corporate level we will moreover strive to further develop any (InduCult2.0) pilot actions into pilot projects, and if possible, into actual standard service offers.





# Roadmap



# Conclusion

The history of the province of Limburg is characterized by industry which continues to be a very important regional employer and affects society in many ways. As Stebo's activities lay in the core of industrial transitions, Industrial Culture has been an intrinsic part of the organization's reason of being.

The strategy described in this paper aims at more strongly integrating the topic in Stebo's corporate identity, work and professional contacts. Awareness raising and action planning will reach all possible levels:

- Stebo mission statement
- Stebo departments
- Stebo network of stakeholders and policymakers

Stebo's 70 employees yearly reach 7000 beneficiaries, after 10 years counting up to the presence of about 20% of all Limburg households in our database. Therefore, by connecting the topic to our corporate identity and introducing it in all our departments' ambitions and activities, it will gain strong grounds and create impact - even more than when being adopted as an item on a vast policy agenda.



# Context InduCult2.0

*The Central Europe INTERREG project 'InduCult2.0' brings together eight representative regions from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia and Poland. They are supported by two scientific partners from Germany and Austria.*

*The regions are mono-focused on industrial production. The partnership sets out to discover the full industry-based culture of these regions for positioning them as appealing places for work, life and recreation.*

*The project intends to:*

- Promote and establish the idea of Industrial Culture in Central Europe;*
- Strengthen the distinct culture of industrial regions and utilize it as a location factor;*
- Empower industrial regions by re-activating their pioneer spirit.*

*InduCult2.0 goes beyond heritage preservation and utilization: past, present and future cultural assets related to industry are combined and jointly utilized as one powerful force. This way, Industrial Culture becomes a living and dynamic concept mirroring the ongoing transformations of industrial economy and actively shaping the cultural sphere of the affected communities.*

*The InduCult2.0 project is implemented by the Central Europe INTERREG B programme and co-funded by ERDF. The project run-time is from summer 2016 to summer 2019.*

# Colofon

Stebo vzw

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