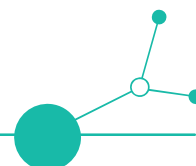


x-Inno Pilot Concept no. 3

Reviving industrial society`s pioneer skills
as basis for transformation



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Pilot activity A.2.3

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A. About x-Inno Radar and its Pilots

x-Inno Radar is an Interreg Central Europe project that aims to explore, promote, and integrate soft skills in industrial environments. A consortium of eight non-metropolitan regions, a think tank and a scientific institute (2024-2027) runs it.

x-Inno Radar builds on a joint structured approach consisting of three main phases:

- (1) screenings of the regional soft skill landscapes
- (2) jointly developed pilot activities
- (3) regional strategies and policy recommendations.

In the 2nd phase “pilot activities”, partner teams test new approaches in four thematically different pilots. These pilots take up the needs discovered in the screening phase. As well, their outcomes feed into the strategic considerations of partners. Each pilot consists of two test zones.

The four pilot themes are:

- (1) **Cross-Innovation:** “Strengthening transversal soft skills and cross-sectoral inspiration in industrial regions” (focus: transversal skills)
- (2) **Level Integration:** “Integrating maker skills in innovation ecosystem of industrial regions” (focus: maker skills)
- (3) **Pioneer Spirit:** “Reviving industrial society’s pioneer skills as basis for transformation” (focus: entrepreneurial skills)
- (4) **Territorial Cooperation:** “Improving skill capacities in industrial regions through territorial cooperation” (focus: networking amongst soft skill stakeholders)

This document here presents the concept for pilot 3 as the respective partner team jointly elaborated it. All four pilot concepts can be found on the project homepage www.x-inno-radar.eu.

B. Pilot Theme: Reviving Industrial Society’s Pioneer Skills as Basis for Transformation (Pioneer Spirit)

Many industrial regions in Europe face the challenge of reconnecting with the creative, entrepreneurial mindset that once drove their development. This mindset—rooted in local pioneer skills like collaboration, initiative, bold thinking, and adaptability—has faded under the weight of economic shifts and social fragmentation.

Pilot 3 of x-Inno Radar addresses this challenge by creating practical, people-centred experiences that bring soft skills back into focus. It combines two complementary approaches:

- **“Pupils for Pioneers” (3a)** works with the next generation, encouraging pupils to take initiative in shaping their surroundings through creative, team-based projects in schools and communities.



- **“Society Seedbed” (3b)** activates soft skills among the wider public through informal, low-threshold maker events. These labs turn everyday places into spaces of experimentation, learning, and shared reflection.

Despite targeting different groups, both pilots follow a shared logic: learning by doing, reflecting on the process, and building confidence in one’s ability to contribute to change. Common formats and tools support comparability and shared learning across regions.

Together, they demonstrate how soft skills can be re-anchored in daily life and how even small-scale engagement can spark broader transformation—reviving not just skills, but a renewed sense of regional agency.

C. Pilot Test Zone 3A: Pupils for Pioneers

C.1 Focus

The test zone 3a “Pupils for Pioneers” focuses on reactivating the pioneer spirit in industrial regions by engaging young people – especially pupils – in activities that build entrepreneurial and transformation-related soft skills. This pilot strand takes inspiration from the idea that many industrial regions once thrived on values such as open-mindedness, boldness, initiative, and problem-solving – all characteristics of a historic “pioneer mindset.” Today, as these regions face new economic and social challenges, there is an urgent need to reconnect with those soft skills and pass them on to the next generation.

This pilot promotes transformation and entrepreneurial skills among young people through in-school or extra-curricular offers. By doing so, it not only supports youth empowerment, but also strengthens their connection to their local environment, encouraging them to become active contributors to regional renewal.

This test zone is co-developed and implemented by a transnational team composed of the following partners:

- **PP2 CREARE (AT),**
- **PP3 KHK KK (CZ),**
- **PP4 CCIAA Padova (IT),**
- **PP6 BSC Kranj (SI)** – acting as **Test Zone Leader** and senior pilot strand coordinator.

The main **target group** of the pilot is **pupils aged approximately 12–19**, both from primary and secondary schools. Some partners also consider including students from vocational or even tertiary institutions depending on regional needs and capacities. All activities are structured to be age-appropriate and participatory, aiming to develop core soft skills such as collaboration, self-initiative, communication, and problem-solving.

C.2 Conceptual Approach

The pilot test zone is built around a shared framework: giving young people the opportunity to take initiative, explore their creativity, and engage with their local environment by working on real-world problems. Each partner adapts this framework to its specific regional setting.



Across all participating regions, pupils are encouraged to form teams, identify local challenges or opportunities, and develop project ideas to address them. These ideas can relate to their schools, communities, or broader social and environmental topics. The teams receive support through mentoring, workshops, and – where feasible – small-scale funding to prototype or implement their ideas. Each partner sets up their own local call or format but follows this common structure.

The pilot builds on a range of tested, pupil-focused reference practices:

- **“Get on Track” (PP10)** offers an interactive parcours for lower secondary pupils to explore personal strengths and life choices through playful, team-based scenarios.
- **World Robot Olympiad (PP10)** engages school-age teams in designing and programming robots, fostering technical problem-solving, teamwork, and resilience in a competitive format.
- **E-Mint (PP2)** introduces guided, problem-based learning projects for pupils to tackle real community issues and prototype solutions.
- **Supermarket WC challenge (PP3)** tasks school groups with designing concrete improvements for local public spaces, using creative, user-centred approaches.
- **Youngster FabLab (PP7)** allows pupils to access digital tools for making and prototyping, encouraging hands-on innovation and experimentation.
- **Future Space and Next Generation You (PP9)** use scenario-based learning and coaching to enhance self-awareness, communication, and entrepreneurial mindset among young learners.

These practices provide concrete examples of how different educational formats can engage pupils in authentic, skill-building experiences. The pilot partners adapt these tested elements—such as challenge formats, mentoring, design thinking, or team-based exploration—to their own school systems and youth environments.

Each pilot partner also draws on their regional focus group composed of relevant experts and stakeholders – including administrations, SMEs, NGOs, as well as institutions from the education and business support ecosystems. These permanent groups were not only already a source of insight during the design phase but will continue to support pilot implementation and evaluation throughout the project. Their role is to bring in local expertise, validate ideas, and increase the relevance and impact of activities by ensuring they are well-anchored in existing regional dynamics and needs.

The findings and input gathered through these focus groups directly informed the design of local pilot activities. As a result, the activities reflect regional contexts and available resources – from structured “soft skills labs” in Italy and public school challenges in Czechia, to microfund-supported projects in Slovenia and collaborative youth programmes in Austria. Each region selects the formats and methods that best fit their educational environment, youth culture, and institutional partnerships, while remaining aligned with the joint transnational approach.

At the **transnational level**, the collaboration ensures:

- a shared pilot logic and outcomes,
- regular exchange of concepts, methods, and learning materials,
- peer feedback on the design and progress of activities,
- and a common reflection on what worked and what could be transferred elsewhere.

C.3 Key actions

The following key activities outline the joint and locally adapted implementation of pilot 3A across partner regions:

- **Joint development of a pilot concept** focused on fostering entrepreneurial, creative, and transformation-related soft skills among young people.



- **Local adaptation of implementation formats:** partners apply different approaches, ranging from microproject calls (SI) to workshops, challenges, or creative labs (AT, IT, CZ).
- **Collaboration with schools, mentors, and experts** who support youth in developing ideas and improving their skillsets.
- **Development of project concepts, prototypes, or small-scale implementations,** depending on the regional approach and available resources.
- **Organization of public presentations or evaluation events** to showcase results and gather feedback.
- **Joint reflection and evaluation** of pilot activities, feeding into a transferable model and contributing to the joint pilot blueprint.

C.4 Expected Outcomes and Desired Effects

The “Pupils for Pioneers” pilot aims to achieve both **immediate learning outcomes** for participating youth and **longer-term systemic impacts** in each region. The pilot is designed to empower pupils to become active agents of change in their communities by developing and applying key soft skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, initiative-taking, and communication.

By the end of the pilot, we expect:

- **Increased self-confidence and motivation** among young participants through real-life problem solving.
- **Strengthened soft skill sets** related to teamwork and entrepreneurship.
- **Raised awareness of local challenges** and the role of youth in addressing them.
- **New connections** between schools, youth organizations, municipalities, local innovation actors.
- **Positive visibility for youth initiatives** and growing recognition of their value in the community.

For the regions, the pilot serves as a **testbed** to explore how soft skills development can be better integrated into educational ecosystems. Through documenting and evaluating the pilot experiences, each partner will derive insights to:

- feed into **regional action plans** and shape future youth engagement programmes,
- inform the development of **regional soft skills strategies** within WP3, ensuring they include youth-oriented elements,
- contribute to the **transnational recommendations** on soft skill promotion in industrial regions.

Moreover, the pilot is designed for **transferability**. Key elements such as the design of local calls, mentoring structures, workshop content, and evaluation methods will be captured in a **pilot blueprint**. This blueprint will be shared within the x-Inno partnership and beyond, offering a modular and adaptable concept for other regions interested in fostering a pioneer mindset among youth.

C.5 Roadmap

Timing	Pilot team / single PP	Joint / local key activities
Preparation phase (Mar - Jun 2025)		
<i>Mar 25</i>	<i>Pilot team</i>	<i>Joint concept development in 2nd partner meeting Czechia</i>
<i>Apr 25</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Alignment of regional concepts and pilot formats</i>



<i>Apr – May 25</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Design of local pilot formats and planning implementation steps</i>
<i>May – Jun 25</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Initial outreach to schools and stakeholders</i>
Implementation phase (Jun 2025 - Apr 2026)		
<i>Jun – Jul 25</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Launch of youth engagement activities (e.g. open call in SI, school-level selection in CZ, programme setup and outreach in AT and IT)</i>
<i>Aug – Sep 25</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Start of workshops, design sessions, and mentoring</i>
<i>Sep – Nov 25</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Project development by youth teams under guidance of mentors or facilitators</i>
<i>Nov 25</i>	<i>Pilot team</i>	<i>Jointly monitoring of ongoing pilot implementation in 3rd partner meeting Slovenia</i>
<i>Dec 25 – Mar 26</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Finalization of youth-led outputs and implementation of local showcases</i>
Assessment and reporting phase (Apr - May 2026)		
<i>Mar / Apr 26</i>	<i>Pilot team</i>	<i>Jointly assessing pilot implementation in 4th partner meeting Germany</i>
<i>Apr – May 26</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Local evaluation of pilot implementation and collection of feedback from participants</i>
<i>Until May 26</i>	<i>Pilot team</i>	<i>Jointly elaborating pilot implementation report</i>
Roll-out phase (Jun - Nov 2026)		
<i>Until Sep 2026</i>	<i>Single PP</i>	<i>Locally defining future action planning based on pilot results</i>
<i>Until Oct 2026</i>	<i>Pilot team</i>	<i>Jointly elaborating pilot blueprint</i>

D. Pilot Test Zone 3B: Society Seedbed

D.1 Zone Focus

The pilot test zone “Society Seedbed” explores how temporary pioneer labs (pop-up experimental environments) can function as accessible spaces where industrial societies reconnect with the entrepreneurial soft skills that once fuelled their growth. These labs aim to revive a distinct pioneer spirit through open, inclusive events that invite the public to co-create, experiment, and engage in hands-on activities.



Soft skills like open-mindedness, communication, creativity, adaptability, and leadership are not only exercised but also made visible to participants. These “labs” serve as local catalysts for transformation, helping individuals rediscover their agency in a time of significant societal transition.

This test zone is co-developed and implemented by a transnational team composed of the following partners:

- **PP10 Creative Chemnitz (DE)** – acting as **Test Zone Junior Leader**,
- **PP6 BSC Kranj (SI)** – acting as senior pilot strand coordinator,
- **PP5 CIKE (SK)**,
- **PP7 ARRSA (PL)**.

The pilot addresses the wider industrial society – with a primary focus on the general public, and secondary inclusion of local professionals, educators, creatives, and decision-makers.

D.2 Conceptual Approach

The “Society Seedbed” pilot was co-developed by the participating partners to explore how temporary, low-threshold labs can activate pioneer skills in industrial communities. Although each partner adapts the activities to their local context supported by local expert panels (x-Inno focus groups), they all work within a shared concept: creating accessible, co-creative spaces where people engage in hands-on making, reflection, and exchange.

Every participating partner will organize at least one open event in their region—hosted in a welcoming, accessible environment such as a FabLab, makerspace, or temporary pioneer lab. These events may be repeated or adapted to suit local conditions and interest.

Each event centres around a simple productive core that attracts participants from various backgrounds to easily join in. Proposed activities include crafting a textile keychain, participating in a collaborative 3D design, or constructing a mobile phone holder. These hands-on experiences encourage creativity while making soft skills visible and tangible.

A central feature of every event will be a Memo Board or Soft Skills Wall, where participants reflect on and share the soft skills they believe they’ve used—ranging from communication and collaboration to problem-solving, leadership, and adaptability. This creates not only a reflective space but also a public showcase of transformation in action.

All activities, including the board, will be documented through photos, feedback, and collected content, to be shared locally and across the partnership. Events will be promoted primarily through existing communication channels of the involved partners to ensure strong outreach to local communities, while x-Inno Radar communication channels will support visibility at transnational level. Dedicated hashtags and social media mentions will further amplify engagement and visibility online.

The joint concept draws inspiration from several best practices:

- **Košice 2.0 (SK)** – a civic innovation project that blends art, data, and urban engagement to activate local communities. Through creative labs, urban games, and public interventions, the initiative encourages citizens to co-shape their city while enhancing collaboration and problem-solving skills.
<https://kosice2.sk/en/>
- **Makers United** – an inclusive maker festival format that brings together people of all backgrounds to explore creativity, technical curiosity, and collective problem-solving through DIY workshops. These events lower the barriers to innovation and emphasize the value of informal collaboration.
<https://www.makersunited.info/>
- **Regional makerspaces in Saxony (DE)** such as:



- *auf weiter flur* – a mobile lab that brings creative engagement to rural areas, encouraging hands-on experimentation and local dialogue.
<https://www.aufweiterflur.org/>
- *Sternenlabor* – a community-driven lab that combines artistic exploration with local problem-solving in accessible, low-threshold formats.
<https://www.sternenlabor.de/>
- *Rabryka* – a cultural space in Görlitz that uses maker tools and participatory design to foster youth engagement, creative learning, and regional development.
<https://rabryka.eu/>

C.3 Key actions

The following key activities outline the joint and locally adapted implementation of Pilot 3A across partner regions:

- **Joint development of a pilot concept** for low-threshold pioneer labs aimed at the general public.
- **Local adaptation of implementation formats:** partners organise hands-on, open events that invite broad participation.
- **Use of creative, participatory activities** (e.g. making objects, collaborative tasks) to stimulate soft skill development.
- **Application of visual tools** such as the “Soft Skills Wall” to support participant reflection and awareness.
- **Documentation and promotion of activities** through social media, photos, and local communication channels.
- **Joint collection of feedback and evaluation** of implemented formats and participant experiences.
- **Development of a transferable blueprint** and practical “how-to” guidelines for use in other regional contexts.

D.4 Expected Outcomes and Desired Effects

What we aim to achieve:

- Citizens become more aware of their own soft skills, such as communication, adaptability, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Participants gain confidence and a sense of agency through hands-on co-creation and reflection.
- Local communities experience renewed identity and stronger ties through collective learning and making.
- Regions build public low-barrier spaces for innovation and transformation, rooted in everyday contexts.

Looking ahead, the results will:

- feed into **regional action plans** of the involved partners;
- serve as a **reference point for regional soft skill strategies and transformation frameworks**;
- be transferred to other regions via the **jointly developed blueprint and practical “how-to” materials**.



D.5 Specifications on Slovenian test zone (small scale investment)

The aim of Slovenian pilot activities is to help develop soft skills by bringing workshops and activities closer to people, what we want to achieve through a flexible and outreach-based approach.

Activities will not be limited to the indoor space but will also take place in various public locations to directly engage communities. The aim is to meet people where they are and provide accessible opportunities for developing soft skills in everyday contexts. To support this approach a small-scale investment will be made to equip a public room in the business incubator Kovačnica in Kranj. This space will serve as a flexible venue for soft skill activation workshops and will be equipped with essential furniture and materials, including partly movable items suitable for both indoor and outdoor use. These items consist of tables and chairs for participants, small workshop equipment (e.g. 3D foam, creative supplies), a storage cabinet for materials, table protection and other basic and supporting equipment required for conducting various types of workshops.

The investment will enhance the incubator's capacity to host skill-oriented events while supporting an outreach-based approach.

All investments will be duly labelled in line with program publicity rules. BSC Kranj will be responsible for managing and maintaining the equipment and ensuring its continued use within the pilot logic.

D.6 Roadmap

Timing	Pilot team / single PP	Joint / local key activities
Preparation phase (Mar - Jun 2025)		
Mar 25	Pilot team	Joint concept brainstorming in 2nd partner meeting Czechia
May 25	Test zone Leader	Concept development
Jun 25	Test zone Leader	Concept finalisation
Jul – Aug 25	Pilot team	Planning Phase
Implementation phase (Jun 2025 - Apr 2026)		
Nov 2025	Pilot team	Monitoring pilot implementation in 3 rd partner meeting in Slovenia
Oct - Dec 2025	PP10, PP5, PP6, PP7	Pilot implementation
Assessment and reporting phase (Apr - May 2026)		
Mar 26	Pilot team	Jointly assessing pilot implementation in 4 th partner meeting Germany
Until May 26	Pilot team	Jointly elaborating pilot implementation report
Roll-out phase (Jun - Nov 2026)		
Until Sep 2026	Individual partners	Locally defining future action planning based on pilot results
Until Oct 2026	Pilot team	Jointly elaborating pilot blueprint

Disclaimer

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