

# CWE ermöglicht

Chemnitzer Wirtschaftsförderungs- und  
Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH





## LIVING LAB

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**Regional Test Case Documentation**

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## 0. Abstract

In this particular Living Lab we tried to define “New Level Grounds” for cooperation between CCI and established industries in the Chemnitz region. “New Level Grounds” meant trying to find places where CCI and industry can meet in a new way and at eye level, and to leave the otherwise often dominant customer-supplier relationship for a moment in order to explore potentials for broader cooperation.

## 1. Introduction

The two-phase InduCCI action ‘Living Lab’ and ‘Living Lab - New Level Grounds’ dealt with the new and further development of specific business opportunities for the CCI. In particular, the measures of the work package aim to bring CCI and the traditional key industries of the region to new cooperative collaborations. In order to be able to react to the current and future demands of the industry, it is necessary to open up the industries and their companies more. In connection with this, new co-operations with partners from outside the sector are also indispensable. Especially in cross-sectoral cooperation, innovative approaches can be developed for the challenges ahead.

## 2. Objective

On the one hand, this practical test aimed to create a model that connects the CCI with industry. On the other hand, it should include a matchmaking process that is as precise as possible, bringing together industry and CCI. Subsequently, problems/issues/ideas that have a common intersection should be worked on in a workshop. The participants should determine the problem area themselves on site and jointly find an initial solution approach that creates a win-win situation for both sides. It should be possible for both industry and CCI stakeholders to contribute to the tasks. In the best case, the workshop should lead to concrete further cooperation for the development of products, services or business ideas.

## 3. Applied approach

The first phase of the practical test was primarily concerned with interviewing a selection of Chemnitz companies on the subject of networking and mutual perception of industry and the CCI.

The aim of the second phase of the practical test was to network industry partners, the CCI and ‘intermediaries’ in order to create ‘new level grounds’ - in the sense of new forms of cooperation beyond classic supplier-customer relationships. This goal was broken down into the following sub-goals that served as guidelines for the workshop schedule.

- sub-goal 1: Gaining knowledge of whether and to what extent partners from industry and the CCI have already been found and to what extent cooperation is already taking place or can take place in the future

- sub-goal 2: To show that there are already industrial companies today that use creative methods to optimise processes in order to be able to work with ‘role models’ in the further course of the project and to show other actors the resulting added value
- sub-goal 3: Enable other industry partners to achieve the status quo of the partners defined in goal 2 through CCI
- sub-goal 4: CCI and industry should recognise their similarities and differences

The process of the “New Level Grounds” - Workshop was developed on the basis of the interviews from Phase 1 as well as on the basis of regular conversations with entrepreneurs in the operational process of CWE, in which InduCCI and the contents of the test cases could be addressed. An important driver and inspiration for the setting were the experiences from the visit to the “Tabakfabrik” at the partner meeting in Linz, which made it clear that both the strategic bringing together and the specificity and attractiveness of a location contribute significantly to achieving new results.

## 4. Results

In the spirit of the project name and the formulated goals, the second workshop phase took place in a location that was ‘new’ for both the representatives of the industrial companies and the representatives of the CCI’s. The old Germania halls on Schulstraße in Altchemnitz, which are now empty, served from the 19th century until 2010 as a production site for heat exchangers, chemical plants, reactors, reaction columns and locomotive boilers, among other things, and are among the cultural monuments of the city of Chemnitz. By implementing the workshop at this location, it was possible to create a momentum for the matching of industry and CCI already through the selection of the location and the realisation of the workshop in it.

The rundown of the workshop was a viable mix of input sessions, group work, presentations and free floating time for exchange and networking. In section 7. Annexes a few quotes of participants and the photo documentation hopefully transport some of the spirit of the day.

Results for sub-goals as listed in chapter ‘2. Objectives’

- results for sub-goal 1: It was found that currently none of the interviewed companies in the region has already reached the described ‘New Level Grounds’ through a partnership with the CCI. Currently, companies work together in classic supplier-customer relationships
- results for sub-goal 2: So far, only one company could be identified that already uses creative methods to optimise its own processes and continuously develops them further. However, this does not take place in the form of ‘New Level Grounds’. The traditional industry is also very hesitant because further development requires upheaval and change. There are no ideas on how new business models can work. According to individual industry experts, too little pioneering work is being done here
- results for sub-goal 3: The empowerment of the actors poses the challenges of ‘lack of customer centricity’, ‘unwillingness to break out of existing business models’, ‘too little knowledge about new opportunities’ and ‘lack of marketing department’. In contrast, the ‘Corona crisis’ and ‘business successions’ could be identified as opportunities for cooperation between the CCI and industry

- results for sub-goal 4: The self-image of the respective representatives from the CCI and industry who were interviewed did not consistently correspond to their assignment to the respective sector by definition. In the interviews, CCI often stood for 'creative and creative things' and for 'developing something new outside the usual'. Industry stood for standardisation and efficiency with physical products and raw materials.

Based on the tasks that the participants worked on in the sessions of the workshop, results were analysed and discussed, especially during the breaks. Here, the desire for freedom and the associated demand for trust took on a high priority for the representatives of the CCI. For the industry representatives, too, the desire for a form of cooperation characterised by trusting partnerships was a wish whose fulfilment has the potential to implement future projects on a new level of cooperation.

For the realisation of the desire on both sides for trusting cooperation, which at the same time also ensures the achievement of the goals of the participants, a mission statement was developed at the beginning of the workshop, which was taken up again and again by the participants in the further course. A tramway served as an association for the mission statement. This meant that ways had to be found to reconcile standards and creativity. The network plan of a street map and the stops noted in it served here as an association for the sensible use of standards. The tram and what happens in it as an association for the creativity space. The consensus between industry and CCI representatives that the standards, in the form of goals and working hypotheses, can be formulated together should be emphasised here.

So far, cooperation has often been based on the selective involvement of CCI representatives, limiting their range of solutions on the one hand and the possible output of the industry representatives on the other. In order to transform these rather selective and anonymous contacts into strategic partnerships at eye level, which actually allow trust and the joint formulation of goals, ideas were also developed through whose implementation New Level Grounds are made possible.

Ideas to be mentioned here include:

- **Innovation Days.** A format in which industry and CCI representatives regularly exchange ideas on innovations, technological changes and current challenges
- **Job Shadowing.** A format in which industry and CCI representatives look over each other's shoulders in day-to-day business
- **The Community Platform.** A digital and/or analogue place where industry and CCI representatives can interact on a regular basis and where events take place (e.g. a kind of "speed dating") for which certificates of participation are also issued

## 5. Goal Achievement and Lessons Learned

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn for the further course of the project:

- the definition and advantages of the CCI must be clarified. Creativity as a term is clearer than 'culture'. The challenge is above all to show that the CCI are more than 'marketing'

- the terms ‘creativity’ and ‘innovation’ need to be more clearly separated. So far, both terms are mostly used only in the context of the core business
- creativity should be emphasised more strongly as a competitive advantage. It is important to note that creativity is seen as a process
- so far, both actors do not have cooperation in the sense of ‘New Level Ground’ on their agenda. In phase 2 of the project, the main task is to find a way that enables the representatives to find a common way of doing business/creating value. This process should definitely be moderated and curated
- the insurance that comes with change / transformation could be identified as one of the major current ‘preventers’ of new level ground. Therefore, in the further course of the project, care should be taken to minimise the uncertainties and to combine continuity and flexibility
- a clear vision should be developed of how new level grounds work, why they exist and how they can be installed in the future

One important finding, namely that there must be one (or better several) fixed locations in the region for the continuation of such Living Labs, has been included as an important recommendation for implementation in the regional policy recommendations for Chemnitz after these experiences.

## 6. Outlook, Sustainability and Transferability

Based on the results of the workshop, three specific fields of action were identified. Working on these fields of action promotes innovative capacity both on the side of the traditional industries and on the side of the CCI and thus contributes significantly to pursuing the goals of the Interreg project InduCCI for the Central European region in the long term and to achieving sustainable change in the economy and society.

### **The future of the Living Lab**

Against the background that cooperation between industry and CCI is currently characterised to a large extent by classic supplier-customer relationships, there is a demand for formats that raise this form of cooperation to a new level (New Level Grounds). The main focus of these formats should be that the respective representatives develop a deeper understanding of the potentials and competences but also of the solutions that the respective actors provide for their customers. The aim is to reduce "blind spots", build trust in each other and meet challenges together.

One possibility of realisation is the permanent installation of a "Living Lab" which jointly defines and works on challenges on focus topics. The foundation of such a "venue" for hosting Living Labs is described as one recommendation in the regional InduCCI policy paper for the region of Chemnitz. It is recommended to be installed as a permanent offer during the program phase of the so called "MBA - Makers, Business and Arts" flagship project in the ECoC Chemnitz 2025. The exchange and connection of metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions is particularly important so the recommendation specifically includes setting up a systems of "venues" in the region as well. The Living Lab(s) then also function in the long term and across the board as incubators for achieving the goals of the Interreg project InduCCI as well as serving regional development strategies for all industries and society.



## 7. Annexes

Pictures of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase workshop / Germania halls, Altchemnitz



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**Participant voices:**

“CCI should already be specialised and not say: "I can do everything".”

“We need to standardise processes without limiting creativity.”

“We need to develop new ways of thinking together.”

“What is important for us is to know the destination, but in the path we want to be free.”

“CCI = half hour discussion and three bullet points”.

“The more diverse the partners, the greater the potential added value.”

“Interdisciplinary and different, then something emerges. More of that is the right imperative.”

“Change and transformation needs many perspectives and regular exchange.”

“Was a cool workshop in grand setting.”

(See also <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6818481135086010368>) - German only but with built-in translation function