Smart strategies for the transition in coal intensive regions

Project No: 836819

Factsheet:
The horizontal Eiffel Tower of Lusatia, Germany

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Description

Since the end of the 19th century, Lusatia has been an industrial region, producing **lignite and electricity**. The coal industry in the region, which needs vast areas of land, destroyed dozens of Lusatia villages in the past and is threatening some of them even now.

Lusatia's mining is at the centre of the debate on a socially acceptable lignite phase-out. The region is considered structurally weak, with high unemployment, low economic growth, and high levels of emigration. With the breakdown of Eastern Germany's heavy industry after reunification, tens of thousands of jobs disappeared. The region has still not fully recovered from this blow. Surface mining visibly shapes Lusatia region's landscape. Despite plans to gradually phase out lignite mining after unification in the 1990s, the industry is still there, though with significantly less personnel than the 60,000 workers it once employed. The scars are still well visible, 26,000 people being forced to resettle to make way for the mines.[1]

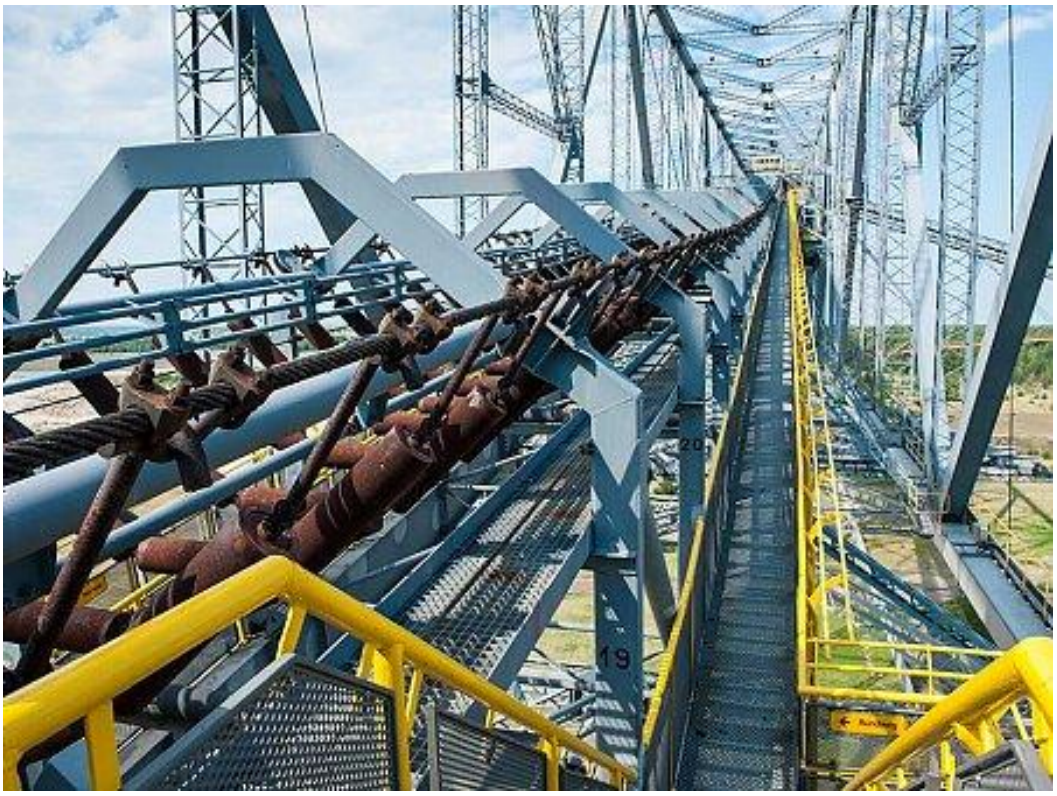

Figure 1: The horizontal Eiffel Tower of Lusatia (the former conveyor bridge - F60)

(source: https://www.f60.de/)

1. **Location: Lichterfeld (Elbe-Elster District), Lusatia Region, Germany**
2. **Type of action:** use of the former *overburden conveyor bridge F60* as a visitor mine & open-air museum and the bridge integration into future cultural and tourist projects on the Bergheider See (Bergheide Lake)
3. **Actors:** representatives from local government, regional policy makers, industry, science and research under the "LUSATIA CHARTER" of IBA, Förderverein F60
4. **Fund(s):** Federal Government of Brandenburg financial support for the IBA Fürst-Pückler-Land; financial support from Elbe-Elster District; and nowadays, non-profit public association self-financing with incomes generated from marketing activities

The age of industrialization and mining began in 1870 between Finsterwalde and Lauchhammer. Then, in GDR times, the lignite open pit mining started, in a very big style, in Klettwitz. People from all parts of the young GDR moved to the region. Around 10,000

[1] European Parliament, Briefing, Fact-Finding visit to Lusatia, Germany, 14-16 February 2018

people found work through the lignite around Klettwitz and thousands found a new home here. But, at the same time, more than 4,000 people lost their homes due to “local claims”, as was called the mining of villages. Shortly before the turn of 1989/1990 Lichterfeld lost a large part of its municipality, the district Bergheide no longer exists today.

The excavators and overburden conveyor bridges used over the decades in Klettwitz open-pit mine and the later started Klettwitz-Nord became ever larger. At the end, a gigantic, over 500-meter-long Conveyor Bridge - F60 type was used in the direction of Lichterfeld, which tilted up to 60 meters overburden above the coal - hence the name **F60**. Developed and built by the former VEB TAKRAF Lauchhammer, it was the last bridge built in the GDR.

The decision to end the opencast mine was taken in 1990 during the political changes. In 1991, the F60 *went into operation on a transitional basis* and it was shut down 13 months later. There Lichterfeld was already right on the edge of the mine. Like most of the region’s open-cast mines, the mine was taken over in 1994 by the federally-owned Mining Restoration Company LMBV. "Restoration" meant not least: *removal of mining equipment*, the F60 being scheduled to be blown up.[2]

The *overburden conveyor bridge* is a steel construction spanning the open pit with built-in conveyor systems that directly connect the extraction side (overburden) and the tilting side (dump). The steel giant, which weighs 13,500 tons, was able to skim a maximum of 60 metres of overburden. The two excavators were theoretically capable to convey 29,000 cubic metres per hour, which corresponds to a weight of 50,000 tons of overburden. This equals the amount of overburden that would be necessary to fill up a football field up to a height of 8 metres. The maximum annual production capacity of the whole complex was 130 million cubic metres. With the cutting height of 60 m, up to 80 m high and 240 m wide and with a length of 502 m, F60 is the longest vehicle and the largest vehicle by physical dimensions ever made by mankind.

Figure 2: Overburden Conveyor Bridge - F60 in the 90’

(source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

The bridge F60 is situated directly next to Lake Bergheide, so from the above you can see the panorama of the lake (320 ha), which is a flooded residual hole of the former Klettwitz-Nord opencast mine, located North-East of the Lower Lausitian Heathland. The lake was named after the former village of Bergheide, which had to give way to the extraction of lignite from the Klettwitz-Nord opencast mine. On the North shore there is the possibility for swimming, the other shore areas are reserved for nature conservation.

Achievements

From 1995, local politicians discussed the idea of Senftenberg planner to receive the F60. However, who should pay for the conversion of the steel giant to a visitor-accessible destination? Who should run the F60 touristic? How should be organized the necessary support of higher authorities? There were no commercial statements and too little

[2] http://www.iba-see2010.de/de/verstehen/projekte/projekt3.html

experience, how to implement the idea concretely. The project initially had more opponents than advocates.

In 1998, an expert opinion from the German Institute for Tourist Research, Berlin, answered the most important questions and in its results led to a far-reaching decision-making security for the mayor of the community Lichterfeld-Schacksdorf and the official director of the office Kleine Elster.

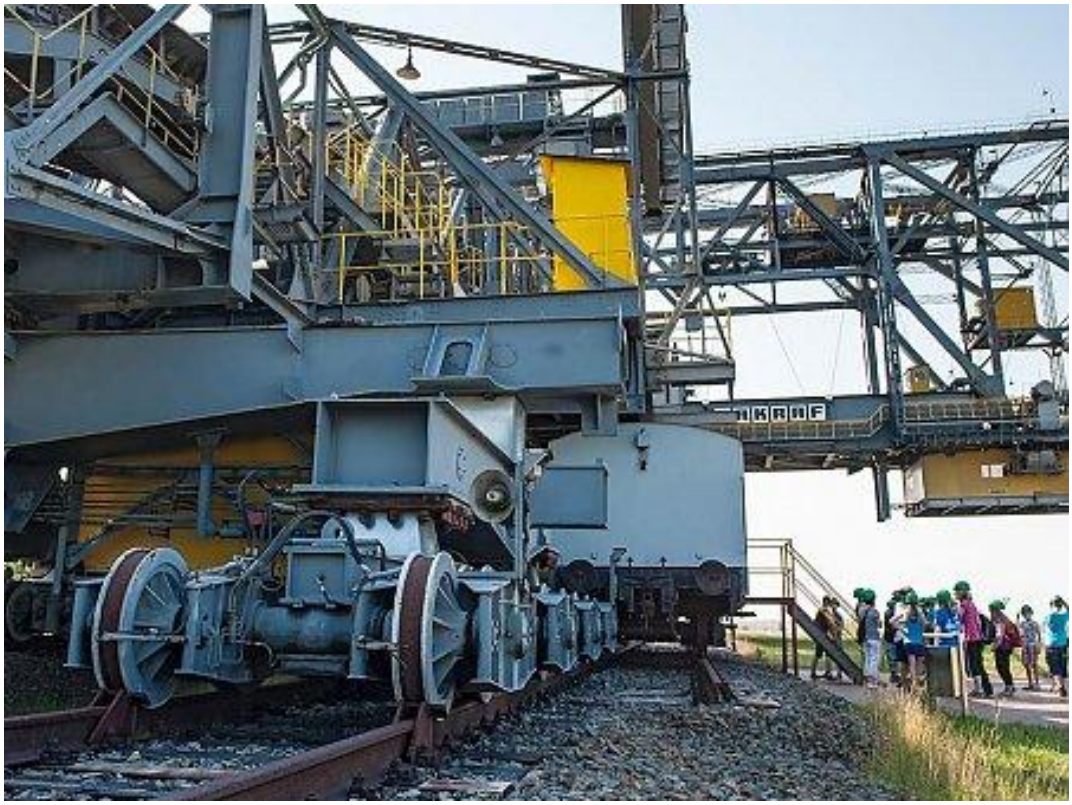

Figure 3: Guided tours to the horizontal Eiffel Tower of Lusatia

(source: https://www.f60.de/)

From today's point of view, it was also a lucky coincidence that it was at this time that *the state government* decided to support an international building exhibition in Lusatia. Therefore, there was a certain pressure to be able to present as quickly as possible best practices. Supported by the **IBA** (The International Building Exhibition) and many committed players from the region, the Conveyor Bridge F60 was saved from being blown up.

With the founding of the ***Förderverein F60***[3] in the spring of 2001, the required operator structure quickly took shape. Numerous conversions and safety measures on the part of the LMBV made it possible to hand over the bridge to its new destination as a visitor mine in May 2002, managed by the municipality of Lichterfeld-Schacksdorf under its own direction.

IBA particularly supports the two operators in the marketing of the visitor mine and creates publicity under the winged word of the **"Lying Eiffel Tower of Lusatia"**. The concept worked: In the first year, over 70,000 guests visit the F60. However, this was only the beginning. To make the F60 even more attractive, the IBA drew in the light artist Hans Peter Kuhn, who staged the F60 as a unique light-sound work of art for the dark evening hours. The Federal President Johannes Rau inaugurated the installation and the illuminated F60 went through the media

Figure 4: Light and sound installations

(source: https://www.f60.de/)

[3] https://www.f60.de/en/the-bridge/aid-association.html

and became something of a symbol for the IBA and the structural change.

Today it is open for visitors, as a project of the *Internationale Bauausstellung Fürst-Pückler-Land* (International Mining Exhibition Fürst-Pückler-Land) and is an anchor of the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH).

In order to make this understandable and to convey the regional history of mining in its entirety, a visitor and information centre with gastronomy moved in next to the F60 in a modernized workshop car. The same objective is pursued by networking the F60 with other sites of industrial culture such as the Plessa adventure power plant, the Biotürmen or the briquette factory Louisezum IBA project “ENERGY Route Lusatian Industrial Heritage”.

Gradually, the immediate environment of the F60 was redesigned: there were created parking lots and an entrance building. A student workshop by BTU Cottbus and IBA resulted in innovative ideas for the further design of the environment. This is how a terrace-like outdoor stage was created at the foot of the F60. In the summer, varieties of cultural events take place in front of the impressive backdrop, from the rock festival to the techno-spectacle to the opera performance. By 2010, well over half a million people have visited the F60 - a success that everyone involved can look forward to together.

In a short time, around 20 jobs and two apprenticeships were created. Young Lusatian are now trained on the old mining equipment to leisure and tourism merchants.

Challenges

Visitor mine F60, heart of a unique adventure area can offer more. Concerning the touristic development of the area, the community Lichterfeld-Schacksdorf and the office Kleine Elster consider the F60 and Lake Bergheide as one unit. In the course of the next years, a (nearby) recreational area will be created, as soon as the LMBV grants the mining-law-release. The municipal side (Lichterfeld-Schacksdorf community) already established the basics of the plan. Together with the IBA and its partners, various visions and concepts for the project „Floating discovery centre Sonne (The Sun)” were developed.

Enabling conditions

The joint forces of the representatives from local government, regional policy makers, industry, science and research under the "LUSATIA CHARTER" of IBA, Förderverein F60 to promote the project have been the success key of this structural changing process related to transitions in coal intensive regions.

References and further links

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