



## **Final report**

### **WP 4**

### **Cross-border regional development**

**and**

### **WP 5**

### **Former forts and fortifications**

## Introduction

In the following report we try to finalise and summarise the work within WP 4-5. The work within WP 4-5 would mainly covers the following themes:

- Innovative sustainable regional development
- Develop and implement marketing strategies
- Develop and implement measures to attract investors/investments
- Define specific needs / challenges / constraints (cultural heritage/structurally weak areas)
- Redevelopment alternative

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Jaromer and Terezín have taken part in CONVERNET with an observer status.

Basic data about the different forts was collected during the partner meeting in Stockholm in March 2003. The data has been processed and developed and is presented in the Conversion Handbook produced and published by CONVERNET and in this report.

## WP 4: Cross-border regional development

The main goal of WP 4 is to use conversion of the former military site in Küstrin (Germany) as a catalyst for regional development in a structurally weak area within the framework of the German-Polish "Strategy Kostrzyn - Küstriner Vorland 2010". The Association Fort Gorgast is a member of the German – Polish Workgroup of "Cooperation across the borderline Kostrzyn – Küstriner Vorland" which aims to redevelop the fortress Küstrin and its outer forts.

### Innovative sustainable regional development

Also in a cross border context spatial planning / land use plans are necessary to perform a redevelopment of the area. The challenge here is that the legal system in each country must be followed. A number of studies and inventories has been performed in order to plan for the development of the region and the fortress.

- "Transborder Study for the Revitalisation of the Old Town of Kostrzyn"

- "Reconnaissance, documentation and strategy to the Lünette B as an element of the cross-border fortress Küstrin/Kostrzyn" for the conservation and revitalisation of the Lünette B.
- Conservation inventory by the Humboldt University

In addition, the City of Kostrzyn and the Association Fort Gorgast have agreed upon to arrange a common archive for the fortress Küstrin in the municipal administration of Kostrzyn.

Regular consultations have been made between the local and regional authorities in the German-Polish cross-border region Küstrin/Kostrzyn in order to work out common strategies for the region. For instance an expert conference took place in Gorgast in September 2003, discussing cross border regional development and taking a clear vote for the long-term "Strategy Kostrzyn/Küstriner Vorland 2010". Participants were e.g. the Brandenburg State Ministry for Economic Affairs (MW), the district Märkisch Oderland, the city of Kostrzyn, the municipality Amt Golzow, the Euroregion, different associations and the host, the Association Fort Gorgast. The discussion was based on a feasibility study that was developed in charge of the municipality Küstriner Vorland. The feasibility study for Küstriner Vorland / Kostrzyn highlights the development chances and constraints of the cross border region Küstriner Vorland /Kostrzyn, which includes Fort Gorgast.

Besides a common development of the old town, consisting of the destroyed parts of the fort on the Polish side and the Oder Island, the fortress Küstrin with its three Polish forts and the Fort Gorgast on the German side should be renovated and developed for tourism.

In the cross border cooperation Fort Gorgast and Küstrin / Kostrzyn five guideline projects have been defined. However, the public administration of the Amt Golzow blockades the implementation of the five main development projects for the fortress at the moment and the successful cooperation of the community, the association and the city Kostrzyn has temporarily stopped. Until this has been solved the further development is hampered. The Association Fort Gorgast tries to take small steps to stop this blockade. But this strategy has cost a lot of time and energy. Now the association has undertaken a venture to begin the five main projects in the time period 2007 - 2013 with help of INTERREG - support.

## Redevelopment alternatives

### *Sustainable tourism*

By implementing small-scale investments completion of the first phase of the reconstruction of a circular tourist trail on the ex-military property at Küstrin near the Oder river in June 2005 supported by BBG and MW has been achieved. The access to the Oder island (Küstrin) has been facilitated by constructing a gateway. The path near the riverbank provides bilingual information boards in German and Polish depicting the history of the century old barracks as part of the fortress Küstrin. The one kilometre trail leads alongside the western banks of the river Oder providing a view across the river of what remains of the old fortifications on the Polish embankment. Adjacent green and wilderness areas on the casern grounds, represent

valuable ecological territories and are supposed to serve natural habitat, bird sanctuary and flood retention purposes in the near future.

Further developments in tourism in this region should primarily focus on exploring, defining, connecting and jointly marketing historical and regional landmarks in order to offer thematic attractions (e.g. the bicycle route “The Outer Forts of the Fortress Küstrin” – realised in August 2005) to the public. Individual landmarks unless unique on its own, generally lack the potential to generate sufficient attractive power and long-term interest.

#### Marketing strategies and measures to attract investors/investments

Within the WP the development of a marketing strategy for the cross border region Küstrin / Kostrzyn has been in focus. A step in this direction has been to perform a feasibility study and to create a visualisation of what a reconstructed fort in Küstrin / Kostrzyn and Fort Gorgast could look like.

In addition, the city Kostrzyn has decided to develop a concept to revitalise the old part of town and perform a study on how to revitalise the Oder-island so it can attract private investors. A challenge is that Fort Gorgast is not yet sufficiently attractive to be advertised to private investors. For instance, the conditions for the infrastructure must be renewed. The association performs a number of strategies in order to attract more tourists into the fort. Some examples are:

- The bicycle - tour "The fortress Küstrin/Kostrzyn and the outside-forts " launched in August 2005, advertising the fortress in Germany and Poland (regional level)
- Production of including information in German, Polish, English and Lithuanian (national and international level)
- The three-dimensional virtualisation of the Fort Gorgast as part of the homepage (national and international level)

In addition, the following activities have been performed for marketing the forts:

- Exhibition
  - The exhibition "Four centuries fortress of Küstrin" about the fortress Küstrin in Fort Gorgast was prepared together with the Polish historian Wichrowski.
- Brochure, pamphlets, books;
  - A new book about Fort Gorgast has been published.
  - Preparations of the brochure “Lünette B as a part of the fortress Küstrin”.
  - Brochure “Fascination Fort Gorgast”
  - Brochure “International cooperation of the association ‘Fort Gorgast’ 2003 – 2005”
- Events
  - “Days of the fortress Küstrin” was arranged, in Kostrzyn/Poland in 2004 and 2005.
- Homepage
  - Development of a homepage of the Association Fort Gorgast in German, Polish and English.

- The web-presentation "Fort Gorgast virtually" supported by the Federal Ministry for Transport.

#### Attract small and medium sized enterprises (SME)

The Association Fort Gorgast has tried to attract SME to locate to the fort. Unfortunately, the efforts have been unsuccessful so far. There are several reasons for this:

1. The technical infrastructure is obsolete and the development of it implies high expenses. The reconstruction of these installations demands investments and the development has been performed step wise. Wide areas of the fort are still to be reconstructed.
2. The vaults offer few possibilities in order to satisfy the requests of SME. They are too big, too cold and too moist, which would imply high expenses for the SME.
3. The monument protection has to be taken into account for the development.
4. There are logistical restrictions connected to bigger transports to and from the site.
5. The distance to the greater cities and potential markets is great.
6. In general, the number of the SME in the region is very low.

Additionally, the region is competing with other areas in Poland and Germany to attract investments. Due to the lack of industrial and service traditions, the area as a whole needs infrastructural improvements and economic incentives to promote future economic developments. The presence of major enterprises is to a large extent a prerequisite for the establishments and increase of SME in the region.

#### *Increase region's attractiveness for the local population*

Since the fort has always been a military area and not accessible for the civil population, the fort is hardly known to the population. The association tries to overcome this by a number of measures (see above), but this is a long process. In addition, the language barrier (German and Polish) is an obstacle that must be overcome.

#### *Small scale investments*

Most of the small scale investments in the project have been used for maintenance and for producing information material. For instance has the electrical system and windows in one part of Fort Gorgast been renovated. Also the festival casemate has been reconstructed. In addition, a new driveway to the fort was constructed.

In case of the planned investments on the Oder island (BBG) the location of the investment activity was changed due to unpredictable difficulties on the site:

- The proposed site became a part of land purchase negotiations.
- There are substantial threats from ammunition deposits on the aforesaid area.

#### Exchange of experience

Apart from the ordinary WP and partner meetings a number of additional activities has been performed in order to exchange experience. For instance an exchange of information about content, goals and results of the work of the network

CONVERNET took place between Fort Gorgast and municipality Nowy Dwor in August 2004.

## **WP 5 Former forts and fortifications**

The focus of the work package is to develop sustainable reuse concepts for historical fortresses, firstly old forts (Gorgast, Kaunas, Jaromer, Terezin) and secondly modern forts (Fårösund).

### **Innovative sustainable regional development**

A prerequisite to develop a fort is to perform studies and inventories since such background information often is lacking.

In Kaunas an internal CONVERNET work group has been established. The work group has gathered and analysed historical material on Kaunas fortress as well as information on current initiatives in Kaunas fortress.

In the Czech city of Terezín the municipality has defined three basic problems to be solved:

1. to compensate the loss of income after the closure of the military base
2. to reconstruct the town after the damages caused by the flood disaster in 2002
3. to connect 1. and 2. for an integrated concept for urban renewal

A development programme for the whole Terezín fortress was developed after the flood of 2002 and this will be implemented during the next 5-6 years. CONVERNET supports the development of the “Euro-project” for the fortified town Terezín, initiated by local and state authorities in the Czech Republic. The project aims to reshape the urban environment of the fortress Terezín, which was devastated due to the withdrawal of the military and the damages caused by the Elbe flood 2002.

In Fort Gorgast a geological exploration of the artesian fountain has been performed. In addition, a study on protection of fortress underground fundaments against plant roots has been accomplished. A feasibility study for Fort Gorgast has also been prepared.

In Fårösund, Vasallen AB has been looking for innovative development strategies, but also old strategies have been used for redeveloping old buildings to offices, schools and industries. In the area plans for a golf course in Bungenäs have been developed. Preparation of disposition plans for infrastructure, communications and suitable plots of land for new developments. These activities have only used the CONVERNET as a platform for knowledge exchange.

Specific needs / challenges / constraints (cultural heritage/structurally weak areas)

During the project the following problems related to the redevelopment of the forts have been defined:

- Contamination.
- Lack of public awareness due to the military history.

- ❑ It is an enormous task to include the establishments in the spatial planning documents, this demands for instance inventories.
- ❑ High renovation and maintenance costs.
- ❑ Legislative problems concerning who is the owner of the property, this influences how it can be used.
- ❑ Cooperation between different actors authorities, agencies, NGO's, local population are needed

Some of these problems are highlighted in the case of Fort Gorgast. Here the technical infrastructure is very old and was planned for military purposes. The financial possibilities for the reconstruction are dependent on the number of visitors. Therefore the increase of the turnout is the most important step for the conservation, redevelopment, reconstruction and utilization of the fort. In addition, the local municipality where Fort Gorgast is situated has big social and financial problems. In focus of the work of the representatives of the commune are:

- the effects of the migration
- the redevelopment of the economy
- the absorption of the effects of the unemployment, above all young inhabitants through lacking education opportunities and jobs
- shutdowns of schools and an increasing number of empty apartments.

The mayor and the representatives of the community work hard with these prioritised questions, therefore questions of the development of the fort rarely get any attention. But the Association Fort Gorgast tries to encourage the representatives of the community to engage themselves in the questions of the development of the fort. The concept for the utilization and the transposition was discussed and decided together with the municipal representatives.

#### Marketing strategies and measures to attract investors/investments

Various strategies (visualisation, theme days, events etc.) for marketing and attracting investors have been established. During the work it was stated that private capital and other support i.e. from EU is necessary in order to supplement public money. Below follow some examples of what strategies that have been used:

- Homepage
  - Fort Gorgast has translated its homepage to Polish and English.
  - Fort Gorgast has developed a 3-dimensional presentation of the Fort Gorgast at [www.fort-gorgast.de](http://www.fort-gorgast.de)
- Brochures, pamphlets, books etc
  - Publication of a folder about Fort Gorgast
  - Translation of a brochure about the Fort Gorgast into Polish, English and Lithuanian.
  - Development of an information book about Fort Gorgast and its history with the help of a Polish expert.
  - Publication of a brochure "International cooperation of the Association Fort Gorgast in 2003 – 2005"
- Exhibitions
  - Preparation of the exhibition "Four centuries of the fortress of Küstrin" in Fort Gorgast.

- Information boards
  - Preparation of signs along streets and highways and improvement of information boards about Fort Gorgast at the federal highway nr. 5 in the Fort Gorgast region.

The conversion process in Fårösund and the search for tenants and opportunities was pushed forward step by step by Vasallen. In Fårösund marketing activities have been performed in order to find new tenants and investors in the field of tourism and SME. A vision for the development activities was developed and used for the continued spatial planning, marketing and PR activities.

## Redevelopment alternatives

### *Tourism*

Forts usually are a great tourist attraction and can for instance function as location for museums. In addition, Fort Gorgast, close to Oder Island area, has a great potential for eco tourism. The association Fort Gorgast has implemented a number of different strategies in order to attract more tourists into the fort, for instance:

- Transaction of the bicycle route "The fortress Küstrin/Kostrzyn and its outside-forts in August 2005
- Advertising the fortress in Poland and Germany(regional level)
- Development of brochures in German, Polish, English and Lithuanian
- Development of 3-dimesional virtualisation of the Fort Gorgast as part of the homepage

Also the Fortress Küstrin offers big potential for the development of the tourism. The association is eager to include regional partners. This involves other sights, monuments, gastronomy businesses and hotels. A regional network is needed for this. The Association of Fort Gorgast strives to offer visitors a broad palette of recreation possibilities. An important step is to improve the connections with the existing possibilities. The favour of the transport link to Berlin, the two international bicycle paths, the rivers Oder and Warthe as well as the nature reserves offers many reasons to visit the Fortress and the Fort Gorgast. The most important task is to fill the fort with content and reach a wide public, which likes to return to the fort. For that different events are organised: art exhibitions, history, landscape, nature, music-festival, open-air concerts, Christmas-market, meetings of military, etc

To further develop the fortress and its forts for tourism, the Association Fort Gorgast has collected necessary basic data for developing a working program a "Project for the creation of tourist and economical infrastructure and for the improvement of the environment" with the following parts:

1. Analysis of the fort and stocktaking
2. Investigation of utilization alternatives
3. Drafting of development plan
4. Improvement of security, reconstruction and rebuilding of the monument
5. Preparation of the economical infrastructure
6. Feasibility study and program of measures

Also Josefov, the fortress in Jaromer, is situated in a region attractive for tourists and the former fortress of Josefov represents a complex of a rich cultural heritage. However, the existing touristic infrastructure (i.e. restaurants, accommodation etc.) is insufficient.

### *SMEs*

Only in Fårösund has SMS been a real option for the future use of the establishment. Parts of the establishments can be rented out to small and medium sized enterprises in Fort Gorgast. However, the renters must have some use of being situated in such a building. The cultural heritage and the architecture also limit how much the buildings can be adopted to suit private firms.

### *Distance working*

Fort Gorgast is not suitable as location for apartments. The fort is localized between two communes. The utilization of the facilities of the social infrastructure requires rather long distance travel.

### *Residential purposes*

A problem for transforming forts to housing is that it demands a lot of investments, for instance the ventilation must be improved. In Fort Gorgast the rebuilding of the vaults to residential-purposes is very expensive. In the community sufficient living space is available on the basis of the declining population.

### *Exchange of experience*

Apart from the ordinary WP and partner meetings some additional activities have been performed to exchange experience. For instance have representatives of the Association Fort Gorgast visited the Czech project partners in Jaromer and Terezin.

A one-day workshop was organised in Kaunas with representatives of local authorities. In the workshop ideas and goals for the future development of military forts and its adaptation for tourism purposes in local and international level were formulated.

In September 2004 a meeting and exchange of information on marketing, conservation, reconstruction etc took place between the Municipality of Terezin, Municipality of Kostrzyn and Association Fort Gorgast in Gorgast/Kostrzyn/Seelow.

During the project Jaromer has found new contacts to partners facing similar conversion problems from the Baltic Sea Region. As a result of these activities, a delegation from Jaromer visited Fort Gorgast in October 2005 in order to exchange experiences with the Association Fort Gorgast and partners from Kostrzyn.

A knowledge exchange also took place between Paldiski and Fort Gorgast on the re-use of the ancient fort of Peter the Great in Paldiski for tourism. The planning of a common project started in 2004 and the implementation of it will start next year.

In CONVERNET an additional need of co-operation was identified and this led to the development of a project application “Baltic Culture and Tourism Route Fortresses”, which was approved by the INTERREG IIIB BSR Steering Committee.

#### Small scale investments

Approximately 45.000 EUR have been spent as small-scale investments for infrastructural measures (e.g. information boards and hiking path at the Oder island, refurbishment measures at Fort Gorgast and an information centre at Fårösund). This upgrades the facilities of the former military sites and is important especially in initiating the development of the sites, providing infrastructure necessary for the better accessibility for visitors or investors. Small-scale investments that have been used to renovate, maintain and develop Fort Gorgast have been used for installing windows; reconstructing the water, sewage, heating and electricity systems; demolishing garages of the former national people’s army in Fort Gorgast etc. In addition, a new driveway to the fort has been constructed.

## Conclusions

Based on the work performed in the two WPs the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Cross-border networks can work as an inspiration for conversion development. Poland's entry into the EU has freed the communities along the Polish-German border from their old peripheral situation and provides the impetus for the conversion of what was once one standard, compact military complex.
- Legislative problems concerning who is the owner of the property influences how it can be used.
- Uncertain ownership relations complicate a creation of a successful conversion strategy.
- It is important to have cooperation between different actors, authorities, agencies, NGO's, local population etc in order to perform a successful conversion. At the moment few NGOs are included in the renovation of fortifications.
- Contamination is a problem for forts. The environmental risk should be audited by the military.
- Conversion of forts implies high renovation and maintenance costs. Many neglected objects need a renovation.
- Requirements of monument conservation enhance renovation and maintenance costs.
- The conservation of the monument is a long-term task that can only be realized, with help. It is clear that the support through the European Union, national, regional actors as well as private investors is important for the future development of forts.