

## AUSTRIA

# Rural revitalisation

### Location

LAG  
Regionalentwicklungsverein  
Zukunft Linz-Land

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local  
development

### Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 126 121  
EAFRD 40 359  
National/Regional 10 090  
Private 75 673

### Project duration

2016 – 2019

### Project promoter

Tourismus & Stadtmarketing  
Enns GmbH (Enns Tourism  
and City Marketing Ltd)

### Contact

[management@tse-gmbh.at](mailto:management@tse-gmbh.at)

### Website

[www.popupstores.at](http://www.popupstores.at)  
[www.enns.at](http://www.enns.at)

An innovative concept to revitalise city centres with vacant sales spaces is to offer flexible rental options to pop-up shops

## Summary

‘Enns Tourism and City Marketing Ltd’ developed a pop-up shop concept for the town centre of Enns, Upper Austria. It aims to make use of vacant sales space on a temporary basis, providing new businesses with an opportunity to launch new ideas, to test out the location and to attract new customers with minimum risk. The anticipated upturn will, it is hoped, attract more new businesses and customers to the town centre.



The project promoter is the SME Tourismus & Stadtmarketing Enns.

## Results

Nine pop-up stores let on a long-term basis (one to six months).

11 pop-up stores let on a short term basis (one day to one month).

Four new businesses set up, no longer operating within the project framework, but settled permanently in the spaces they rent.

There are now fewer vacant retail spaces in the town centre.

Customer traffic has increased on ‘Linzer Straße’ promenade. Much more marketing and press for the inner city of Enns and its commerce.

Increased number of micro-events within the shopping precinct (by new and existing business owners alike).

Other cities in Austria will participate in the Pop-Up Store Project.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- The work in collaboration with the landlords, the tenants and the municipality is essential to solve the problem of vacancy.
- The best marketing strategy for the Zeitgeist project is online marketing, social media and word of mouth.
- The Zeitgeist project combined with the digitisation of the small inner-city commerce is a very useful method to reduce vacancies. See [www.enns.at](http://www.enns.at).
- The city Wiener Neustadt will take over the Zeitgeist project and will work together with Enns, to solve the problem of vacancies.
- One part of the project has to deal with costumers. They have to rethink their purchasing behaviour and they have to use the shopping facilities within the town or city.
- Other towns such as Amstetten or Zeltweg are discussing their participation in the Zeitgeist project.

### Context

Enns is a small town (population, 12 044) in Upper Austria and the first cittaslow town of Austria. The nearby capital Linz with its large sales areas and shopping centres has left a visible mark; the amount of vacant retail space in downtown Enns is ever-increasing while customer traffic is dwindling. Existing businesses are leaving and rental prices are set too high. Many properties are old and in need of renovation, but due to a lack of perspective for the future, their owners are reluctant to invest. The range of services and products is poor and the customers' needs and expectations can barely be met, this in turn leaves them no other option but to visit bigger shopping centres.

Many communities and small towns are currently facing a similar situation. Due to clustered sales space set up in peripheral locations, small businesses and shops situated in town centres are increasingly losing out. On the one hand, customers enjoy the extensive range of products available at large-scale shopping malls but are on the other hand communities are lamenting the increasing loss of traditional local retailers.

In order to address this issue, it is essential to create innovative and tailor-made revitalisation schemes that help to once again attract businesses and minimise vacant space.

### Objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- Revitalise semi-abandoned shopping precincts by introducing pop-up-shops.
- Increase the number of visitors by offering a frequently changing range of services and products.
- Increase the number of customers for all local businesses.
- Prevent further delocalisation of businesses.
- Promote the establishment of new businesses.
- Encourage long-term tenancies.

### Activities

The concept is to provide possible tenants with a choice of two rental options: A. a short-term use option for several days and B. a long-term use option for approximately one to six months. The features and benefits of these two options are illustrated below.

#### Short-term use option:

- Duration: several days.
- Creates diversity within the shopping precinct and increases footfall.
- Gives the feeling of an event-like setup all year round and can attract the media attention.
- Revitalises the district.

#### Long-term use options:

- Duration: one to six months.
- Permanently increases the number of customers.
- Encourages businesses to permanently establish themselves on site.
- Allows for experimentation with new business ideas.

The combination of these two variants is particularly suitable as the town centre of Enns features a relatively large number of different-sized properties within a small area, offering numerous possibilities for a wide variety of business concepts. At the start of the project, information about the vacant spaces available was collected and the idea was presented to the property owners. Their reaction was very positive as they saw new ways of renting out their spaces.

The system is designed in such a way that it can be set up quickly and flexibly, regardless of room size or layout, creating a 'room within a room'. This makes it possible to adjust the setting to the needs of the tenant, without having to undertake alterations to the existing structure of the property, thus avoiding extra costs for the landlord.

In order to implement the project on the ground, the following activities were carried out by the project team:

- Conducted a conceptual analysis and opinion poll among local citizens.
- Provided ongoing support for both landlords and tenants.
- Developed a consistent interior shop design to create brand recognition using a modular design system consisting of coloured partition walls that can be adapted to different room settings.
- Developed an equally consistent exterior shop design.
- Created and implemented a detailed and comprehensive marketing strategy.
- Oversaw the operational and administrative management of associated events.

### Main Results

#### Economic benefits :

- Nine pop-up stores let on a long-term basis.
- Eleven pop-up stores let on a short term basis.
- Four new businesses set up (two fashion stores, photographer, architecture firm ), no longer operating within the project framework as they signed long-term renting contracts.
- There are now fewer vacant retail spaces in the town centre.
- Customer traffic has increased on ‘Linzer Straße’ promenade.
- The project has raised the profile of the town of Enns.
- Increased marketing and promotional activities.
- Property owners are increasingly willing to invest.
- Both business owners and customers show greater satisfaction.
- Increased number of micro-events within the shopping precinct (by new and existing business owners alike).
- Existing businesses and new shops motivate one another by working together and assisting each other.

#### Networking value :

In order for a project of this nature to succeed, it is incumbent upon tenants, property owners and the municipal government to work closely together. Only when all parties involved are able to cooperate with one another is it possible for the project to progress.



#### Transferability :

Word is getting around and the project is becoming well-known. Excursion groups from all over Austria and beyond are regularly visiting the shops and there are many ideas about how to take the concept forward.

#### Synergies with other EU policies :

Within Rural Development, this project supports the achievement of Focus Area 1A (fostering innovation, cooperation and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas), Focus Area 6A (facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation) as well as Focus Area 6B (fostering local development in rural areas)

*“I believe that this project leads the way to revitalise city centres sustainably. Currently there are seven more destinations throughout Austria, which are interested in the concept. Suitable destinations will receive our know-how in revitalising inner cities.”*

Mayor of Enns, Franz Stefan Karlinger



#### Additional sources of information

<https://www.facebook.com/popupstoreenns/>  
[www.enns.at](http://www.enns.at)  
[www.popupstores.at](http://www.popupstores.at)  
[www.linz-land.at](http://www.linz-land.at)  
[www.cittaslow.org/](http://www.cittaslow.org/)

\*This project has been categorised under ‘Rural Revitalisation’ by the nominating National Rural Network