



# GUIDANCE FOR CREATING ERIH REGIONAL ROUTES

## INDEX

- 1. Introduction
  - 2. Main Features of a Regional Route
    - 2.1 Size and structure
    - 2.2 Theme
    - 2.3 Sites and attractions
    - 2.4 Accessibility
  - 3. Setting up a Regional Route
    - 3.1 Establish a Steering Group
    - 3.2 Choice of theme and selection of sites
    - 3.3 Produce promotional material
    - 3.4 Training
    - 3.5 Launch of the Regional Route
    - 3.6 Costs
  - 4. Maintaining a Regional Route
    - 4.1 Management structure
    - 4.2 Tourism packages
    - 4.3 Special events
    - 4.4 Duties of sites on Regional Routes
  - 5. Regional Routes on the ERIH website
- Annexes

## 1. INTRODUCTION

ERIH, the European Route of Industrial Heritage, is a pan-European network of industrial heritage sites and attractions which together tell the story of the birth of industrialisation in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its subsequent spread across the continent and beyond. The many and varied sites which make up this network offer visitors fascinating insights into the processes, products, people and places which form the rich tapestry of the history of the Industrial Revolution and its impact. ERIH's Anchor Points share a seal of excellence which promises their visitors a high quality experience at some of the best of Europe's industrial heritage attractions.

An important element of the ERIH concept are its Regional Routes. These are a marketing tool which bring together a range of sites, large and small, to present in a coordinated way the industrial heritage of a particular area. The routes are presented in an attractive, visitor-friendly way designed to encourage visitors to explore what the routes have to offer. A precondition for the development of an ERIH regional route is that the region has an interesting industrial history and a sufficient number of sites which are attractive for visitors.

These notes provide guidance for creating a regional route or a regional network and are based on the experience gained from the routes that have already been established. Just as each region is different, so the routes which tell their stories will differ in content and presentation. However, there are features which all routes share. The process of establishing and then maintaining a route can present challenges. The notes describe the steps that can be taken to maximise the benefits of a regional route and to ensure its lasting effectiveness in attracting visitors and engaging sites and attractions.

## 2. MAIN FEATURES OF A REGIONAL ROUTE

**2.1 Size and structure:** Although called a regional route, there is no specific size that a route has to conform to. It must relate to an area that is recognisable and readily identifiable by visitors – it could be a city, a county or a region. A regional route will usually be focused on one or two Anchor Points, which provide the gateway(s) to the route and region. As well as telling their own stories, the Anchor Points will encourage visitors to explore the other sites and attractions that make up the route.

**2.2 Theme:** It is important that the area covered by the route has an interesting story to tell and



that the cultural tradition and history of the region is reflected in the route. The theme of a regional route will 'tie together' the sites and attractions on the route and it will be reflected in its branding and promotion. The theme should also distinguish the route from other offers and be sufficiently broad that it appeals to a wide range of potential visitors.

**2.3 Sites and attractions:** These should relate closely to the theme of the route and offer an attractive visitor experience. A regional route should include a variety of sites and attractions. As well as one or more Anchor Points, the route is likely to include other ERIH member sites, non member sites and even small unattended sites. The route may also include other places of interest such as museums, galleries and visitor centres. What is important is that each of the sites, large or small, tells part of the story that is depicted by the theme of the route.

Sites should be included that present the region's history using exhibitions, guided tours, special programmes and promotions as they will increase the attractiveness of the route. As well as involving sites and attractions, some routes have also included other stakeholders in the visitor experience, e.g. transport operators, cafes, accommodations, tourism promotion organisations. Participation by these groups can help to strengthen the attractiveness of the route to the visitor and also its long term sustainability.

**2.4 Accessibility:** It is important that visitors have easy access to and within sites on the route. Whilst most visitors are likely to be car-based, where possible, sites should be selected that also offer alternative access including public transport, walking, cycling, canals. Distances between sites on the route should be such that visitors can comfortably visit more than one site in a day.

### 3. SETTING UP A REGIONAL ROUTE

There are different ways to approach setting up a regional route, but experience has shown that following the steps below will help the process, including securing the buy-in of key stakeholders and establishing a structure to oversee the ongoing management of the route.

**3.1 Establish a Steering Group:** Creating a regional route is best undertaken by a partnership of interested parties led by a coordinator. Not only does this ensure a wide variety of ideas and experience but it also helps to ensure early engagement with the key stakeholders that are likely to be involved in delivering and promoting the regional route. A typical steering group could include representatives from:

- Site and attractions
- Tourism-related businesses
- Statutory heritage organisations
- Tourism promotion organisations
- Local and Regional Authorities
- Local history and community groups
- Academia

To ensure progress, it is important to assign roles and responsibilities and to set timescales and deadlines.

**3.2 Choice of theme and selection of sites:** Having set up the steering group, its first task is to decide on the theme of the regional route and select the sites and visitor attractions which will support that theme and comprise the route. The region's industrial history will normally be interpreted through a single regional route, though in some cases, sub-routes may also be included. A stronger message will be communicated by concentrating on a limited number of industrial themes which will help to keep the tourist offer clear and well defined.

Examples of sites on regional routes include the following:

- Former industrial sites now open to visitors e.g. coal mines, iron works, textile mills
- Former industrial sites that are now re-used for other purposes e.g. exhibitions, museums, events
- Historic transport infrastructure e.g. canals, railways, ports
- Workers housing and planned industrial communities
- Buildings funded by the proceeds of industry e.g. municipal buildings, industrialists' mansions, workers' halls
- Derelict structures in the landscape
- Memorials and statues
- Industrial landscapes

Sites on regional routes should meet the following criteria:

- Relate to the development of industrial history and important events
- Offer a high degree of historical authenticity
- Present the region's history through exhibitions, guided tours, special programme and promotions
- Be accessible to visitors (physically and intellectually)
- Identify with the marketing goals of the regional route

To strengthen its appeal to visitors, it is helpful to give the route an attractive, 'catchy' title, something which is easily remembered by visitors yet reflects the theme of the route.

**3.3 Produce promotional material:** The type and variety of material produced will depend on the funding and staff resources available. The most important and cost-effective method is the production of a website and social media presence. Social media creates awareness and relationships that otherwise would not be achieved. It is best used as a communication tool and integrated with other vehicles of marketing. Other promotional activities include the following:

- Production of leaflets, posters, signage, examples of press releases. Examples of regional route leaflets can be viewed on the ERIH website. The promotional material should be made available to all sites on the regional route as well as to relevant tourist organisations. The display of leaflets at other locations such as tourist information centres and motorway services is also desirable, but this will be dependent on local circumstances and financial constraints.
- Creation of a brand / style for the route, to be used by all participating sites and attractions. This can either be designed specifically for the Route (but incorporating reference to ERIH) or it can adopt the layout and style of the promotional material in the ERIH Design Guide available in the download section of the ERIH website.
- Production of a list of key phrases and messages to be used by all sites in their promotional material

- It is recommended that the marketing activities are coordinated with those of the local and regional tourism organisations.

**3.4 Training:** Before a regional route is launched, it is important that all participating sites are fully engaged with the project and that staff are familiar with the aims and content of the route and the contribution their site makes to the wider story. This is especially important for front-of-house staff who will be the main interface with visitors and will need to have a basic understanding of ERIH, the regional route and its sites. Some regional routes have organised familiarisation trips as a way of acquainting staff with sites on the route.

**3.5 Launch of the Regional Route:** An official launch of the route is a good way of publicising the route. The event should take place at one of the sites on the route, probably an Anchor Point, and should involve the press and media, representatives of all sites on the route, politicians, tourist organisations, local community representatives etc. Organising an attractive cultural supporting programme will help to raise awareness of the event and attract attendees.

**3.6 Costs:** The costs of setting up a regional route will vary according to local circumstances, but it is likely that most routes will require funds for some of the work, e.g. drafting of text, photography, design and printing of leaflets, website. Grants may be available from local or regional tourist organisations and also help in kind from participating sites. Commercial sponsorship, e.g. from transport operators or accommodation providers, can also be explored. There is also an annual fee for those sites on the route that are ERIH members.

## 4. MAINTAINING A REGIONAL ROUTE

Once a regional route has been created and launched it is essential that steps are taken to maintain the route and keep it alive in order to ensure its long-term sustainability and viability. Experience with existing routes has shown that the following steps will help to achieve this:

**4.1 Management Structure:** Without an effective management structure and coordinator a regional route is unlikely to survive much beyond the initial enthusiasm and set-up funding. Keeping sites on board and maintaining contact between them is



essential. The Steering Group that was formed to create the route can form the basis of a management structure for the route involving all the sites and key stakeholders. The coordinator will play a key role in keeping the route alive and coordinating route activity and links between sites. This role can be taken on by an Anchor Point, tourist organisation or volunteer, or if funding permits, a full or part-time person can be appointed to the role.

The tasks of this group include the following:

- Joint meetings and information days
- Exchange of experience and information between the sites
- Joint promotional activities and events
- Familiarisation visits and training events
- Press and media activity
- Internet and social media activity
- Securing funding e.g. for leaflet reprints, events, route coordinator
- Maintaining links with and promoting ERIH
- Liaising with ERIH National Coordinator

**4.2 Tourism packages:** Organising excursions and travel offers to the sites on the route as half-day trips, day trips or overnight stays can be an effective way of increasing the number of visitors to the regional route. This can be undertaken in co-operation with local and regional tourist organisations, tour operators, accommodation providers and also walking and cycling organisations.

**4.3 Special Events:** These can be an effective way of raising awareness of a regional route and attracting visitors to it. They can be large scale, annual events such as *Industriada* (Silesia, Poland), *ExtraSchicht* (Ruhr District, Germany) or *Tage der Industriekultur* (Rhein-Main Region, Germany) or much smaller, one-off events. Their aim is to encourage visitors to explore sites on the Route which, hopefully, will encourage longer visits and stimulate a desire for repeat visits.

**4.4 Duties of Sites on Regional Routes:** The sites on Regional Routes and Anchor Points are constituent elements of the European Route of Industrial Heritage and make a positive contribution to the ERIH brand, trademark and image. This quality benchmark is what makes ERIH a real market force in sustainable tourism,

and each site takes on an obligation to strive for and maintain a high standard of interpretation and tourism offer.

## 5. REGIONAL ROUTES ON THE ERIH WEBSITE

Subject to the agreement of the ERIH Board, Regional Routes will be presented on the ERIH website. The Board will want to ensure that the Route is of high quality in terms of its content and presentation and that it has tourist potential. It is also a requirement that the coordinating institution and/or some sites are members of the ERIH association. For information about ERIH membership please visit [www.erih.net/about-erih/erih-membership](http://www.erih.net/about-erih/erih-membership)

ERIH presents on its website all sites which form the route - Anchor Points, ERIH member sites and non member sites with different levels of information (see Annexe 3). Details of the sites required for their presentation on the ERIH website are collected by questionnaire (see Annexe 4). The text describing the site should be limited to about 200 words. It should interest and invite people to visit the attractive sites and destinations and therefore should not be too technical. In order to maintain a consistent written style, it is recommended that the texts are drafted by a single author.

In addition every Regional Route is presented with an introductory text about the industrial history of the region, followed by links to other relevant websites in the region.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## Annexes:

1. Examples of ERIH Regional Routes
2. Summary of Regional Route Success Factors
3. Presentation of sites at ERIH website
4. Site Questionnaire

### **Annexe 1 - Examples of ERIH Regional Routes**

Of the Regional Routes already developed there is considerable variation in character and scale, from stunning architecture to dramatic landscapes, from domestic communities to industrial giants.

- In the German region of Lusatia '*ENERGY! Route of Lusatian Industrial Heritage*' concentrates on the brown coal mining industry and energy production, its exciting sites and impressive structures. The Route includes 13 sites. The tourist facilities offered by the sites varies. Therefore on the route's website ([www.energie-route-lausitz.de](http://www.energie-route-lausitz.de)) as a guide the sites are sorted as follows:  
Highlights: tourist attractions with good visitor facilities  
Recommendations: exciting places  
Insider tips: special gems.
- The cross-border route *Euregio MeuseRhine* (Belgium, Germany, Netherlands) presents the variety of the region's industrial heritage (including mining, textiles, iron and steel, glass, paper, food) by 26 selected sites (4 ERIH Anchor Points, including a UNESCO

World Heritage Site), while the association operating the route has nearly 40 member sites ([www.industriemuseen-emr.de](http://www.industriemuseen-emr.de)).

- In the Polish region of Silesia '*The Industrial Monuments Route*' includes 42 sites, 5 of which are ERIH Anchor Points and 2 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (including mining, iron and steel, transport, communications and food). ([www.zabytkotechniki.pl](http://www.zabytkotechniki.pl))
- In South Wales in the UK, *The Valleys that Changed the World* route tells the story of the global impact of the region's iron, steel, copper, tinplate and coal production and the early industrial landscape it created. The route lists 73 sites and attractions, of which 2 are ERIH Anchor Points and 7 ERIH member sites. (<http://www.visitblavenavon.co.uk/en/VisitBlaenavon/Explore-the-valleys-that-changed-the-world/Explore-the-valleys-that-changed-the-world.aspx>)



## Annexe 2 – Summary of Regional Route Success Factors

### Reasons for creating a Regional Route

- Concept suitable for marketing
- Shows connections (thematic, historical)
- Creates and fosters identity
- A route is more visible than individual sites
- Cross-marketing raises awareness
- Synergetic effects in marketing
- Intensify co-operation and exchange of experience of stakeholders
- Stronger lobbying impact

### Success factors - selection of sites

- Quality not quantity
- Story-telling (tell the shared story)
- All sites engage on an equal level
- Common aims
- Similar opening times, offers, target groups
- Active cooperation, ideally bottom-up
- Staff knowledge about the route and the sites

### Success factors - offers

- Industrial heritage is not necessarily the main travel motive
- Combination with other tourism offers (cycling, hiking, culture etc.)
- Offers for different target groups
- Events (new formats, collection and presentation of existing events)
- Cooperation with tourism stakeholders and service providers

### Long-term success factors

- Secure financial sustainability (plan for this when route is created)
- Management, responsibilities
- Cooperation and communication
- Clear aims
- Common marketing (logo, website, print)

### Success factors - management

- Central management / co-ordinator
- Clear agreement about do's and don'ts (contract)
- Common marketing (logo, website, print), cross-marketing
- Regular meetings
- Training (in general, about the route)
- Share financial obligations
- Enthusiasm

### Success factors - tourism

- Integrate tourism stakeholders from the start
- Consider tourism aspects, not just monument protection
- Common quality criteria
- Identification with the route
- Cooperation with tourism stakeholders e.g. accommodation, restaurants etc.
- If applicable, tourism organisation takes over management of the route

### Success factors - marketing

- Know your target groups and focus on them
- Create a brand (CD obligatory for all sites)
- Signage
- Up-to-date website (portal or more information depending on the quality of the sites' websites)
- Social media activities
- Cross-marketing
- Print (at least flyer, better map)

### Risks – Why do routes “die”

- No co-ordinator
- Funds for creation of the route, but not for long-term maintenance
- Sites leave after end of funding period
- Lack of brand identity
- Lack of 'buy-in' by sites
- No marketing partner

**Annexe 3 – Website Presentation**

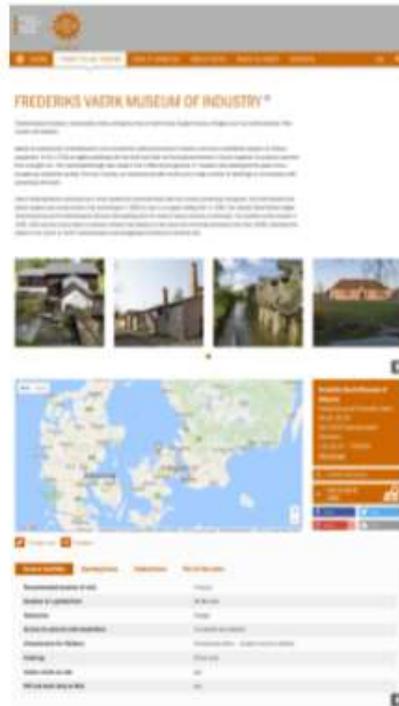
**PRESENTATION OF NON-MEMBER SITES, ERIH MEMBERS AND ANCHOR POINTS AT ERIH WEBSITE**

**NON-MEMBER SITES**



Text (short)  
1 Photo  
Google Maps & Route Planner  
Address  
Link to website

**ERIH MEMBERS  
(Individual Sites / [Corporate] )**



Text (> 200 words)  
4 Photos  
Google Maps & Route Planner  
Address  
Link to website  
  
Link to tourism organisation  
Link to events of site  
  
Opening hours  
Service facilities  
Part of the route  
Related links  
  
Presentation on ERIH Facebook site

**ANCHOR POINTS**



Large photo on top of the site  
2 Texts (The Site: av. 170 words; Its History: av. 270 words)  
Photo Gallery (12+ photos)  
Google Maps & Route Planner  
Address  
Link to website  
Link to Facebook site of AP  
Link to YouTube films of AP  
Link to tourism organisation  
Link to events of AP  
  
Opening hours  
Service facilities  
Part of the Route  
Related links  
  
Presentation on ERIH Facebook site



## Annexe 4 – Site Questionnaire

- for the complete document please contact our office –




### Site Questionnaire | Objekterfassungsbogen

#### Site Data | Objektdaten

*	Site name   Objektname		
*	Country   Land		
*	Regional Route		
*	EuropeanTheme Route   Europäische Themenroute	<input type="radio"/> Mining   Bergbau <input type="radio"/> Iron and Steel   Eisen und Stahl <input type="radio"/> Textile   Textil <input type="radio"/> Production and Manufacturing   Produktion und Handel <input type="radio"/> Salt   Salz <input type="radio"/> Paper   Papier <input type="radio"/> Industry + War   Industrie + Krieg <input type="radio"/> Energy   Energie	<input type="radio"/> Transport and Communication   Transport und Kommunikation <input type="radio"/> Water   Wasser <input type="radio"/> Housing and Architectur   Wohnen und Architektur <input type="radio"/> Service and Leisure Industry   Service- und Freizeitindustrie <input type="radio"/> Industrial Landscapes   Industrielle Landschaften

#### 1. General Data | Allgemeine Angaben

##### 1.1 Address details | Adresse

*	Street   Straße	
*	Post code   PLZ	
*	Town   Stadt	
*	County   Kreis	
*	Region   Land	
*	TelNo	
*	E-mail	
*	Internet	

##### 1.2 The person responsible for project-related contacts is |

	Name	
	TelNo	
	E-mail	

##### 1.3 Object Description | Objektbeschreibung

*	<p><i>[The text describing the site should be limited to about 200 words. Please describe the history of your site/museum in brief and what a visitor can experience visiting your site/museum. The texts should interest and invite people to visit your attractive sites and therefore should not be too technical.   Der Text sollte ca. 200 Wörter lang sein. Beschreiben Sie kurz die Geschichte Ihres Standortes und was man bei einem Besuch erleben/besichtigen kann. Der Text sollte die touristische Attraktivität des Standortes herausstellen und neugierig auf einen Besuch machen; daher sollte er nicht zu „technisch“ formuliert werden.]</i></p>
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\* Information will be published on ERIH website /  
Diese Information wird auf der ERIH Webseite  
veröffentlicht.

- 1 / 3 -

