



# **Participation process and master plan for the expansion of the Gusen Memorial**

## **Executive Summary**



## Introduction

In 2021-22, the Republic of Austria purchased several properties at the site of the former Gusen I concentration camp and the entrance area to the "Bergkristall" tunnel system built by prisoners in St. Georgen an der Gusen. Two former SS buildings, the gravel crusher and parts of the former roll call square are located here. It also acquired a piece of land at the entrance area to the "Bergkristall" tunnel system in St. Georgen an der Gusen. All new sites are to be designed as places of commemoration in the coming years, connected to the concentration camp memorial sites around the Memorial de Gusen and intertwined with existing memorial site interventions. The memorial site is thus going to undergo a major expansion.

To ensure the widest possible engagement of all interest groups and stakeholders from the start, a participation process to develop a master plan with design and functional guidelines was established. After carrying out an award procedure in accordance with the Federal Public Procurement Act (direct award), the art:phalanx Kommunikationsagentur GmbH and heri&salli Architektur ZT GmbH consortium was commissioned to carry out this process. art:phalanx are responsible for the participation process, whereas heri&salli, as the team of architects, are responsible for drawing up the master plan based on the results obtained in the participation process. After a comprehensive baseline survey was completed, the contractors began their work with the participation formats in August 2022. Phase 1 (Analysis phase) was completed at the end of 2022 and was followed in the first half of 2023 by Phase 2 (Consolidation phase). Parallel to this, the findings were incorporated into the master plan.

At the end of the overall process, a clear and thorough recommendation is now available in the form of the elaborated master plan, which draws on the results of the participation process developed cooperatively. This master plan provides the basis for political decision-makers to further develop the concentration camp memorial into a European place of commemoration that will allow for a dignified memorial of the victims of the Gusen concentration camp. The following brief summary provides an overview of the participation process and presents the main principles and strategies of the master plan.

# Participation process

To be able to guarantee the engagement of all stakeholders throughout the entire process in a manner that is as open, transparent and partnership-based as possible, the methods were individually tailored to the respective interest groups and the project phases (analysis and consolidation) were designed to build on one another. In this context, the following participation formats were developed and held from August 2022 to June 2023:

## Phase 1 (Analysis phase)

- 13 semi-structured interviews with survivors of the Gusen concentration camp as well as individuals serving as representatives
- 3 full-day stakeholder workshops with representatives of the Comité International de Mauthausen and its respective country representatives, national commemoration initiatives and representatives of victim-group interest groups as well as diplomatic representatives
- 1 full-day participation workshop with participants from the population of St. Georgen and Langenstein
- 3 information events with residents and interested parties from the population of St. Georgen and Langenstein

## Phase 2 (Consolidation phase)

- 4 half-day stakeholder workshops with representatives of the Comité International de Mauthausen and its respective country representatives, national commemoration initiatives and representatives of victim-group interest groups, diplomatic representatives as well as participants from the population of St. Georgen and Langenstein
- 1 full-day workshop as part of a two-day youth exchange project with 20 pupils from France, Austria, Poland and the Czech Republic
- Quantitative survey for all households in the municipalities of Langenstein and St. Georgen an der Gusen
- Quantitative survey for international and trans-regional interest groups and bodies
- Panel discussion with five international experts on contemporary history, education, culture of remembrance and memorial sites

→ A summary of the results from the participation formats is included in the final report (from p. 16). The data evaluation can be read in detail in the documents [Data Evaluation Phase 1](#) and [Data Evaluation Phase 2](#).

In the participation formats, in addition to the content focus of the expanded Gusen Memorial, the different functions as places of remembrance, education and for meeting were discussed in detail, and suggestions in this regard were put forward. Various forms of commemoration and the representation of different nationalities and victim groups were taken into account in this context. In addition, design criteria and individual qualities of the plots were worked out in dialogue with the participants, and specific proposals for infrastructure planning and mobility concepts were collected. Relevant issues became clear from the very beginning, and subsequently a broad consensus was reached on the main focal directions with regard to functions, locations and qualities. Many of the suggestions made were incorporated directly into the master plan.



## Master plan

**This master plan defines the design and functional framework conditions for one or more competitions to design the new pieces of land owned by the Republic of Austria (represented by Burghauptmannschaft Österreich) in Langenstein and St. Georgen and the municipal property in St. Georgen added in the course of the process. The total land area is 67,741 m<sup>2</sup>.**

The master plan can be seen as a direct result of analysing the current situation and incorporating the findings of the participation process. This enabled the formulation of a master plan based on the cooperative approach to determining the results and thus based on broad acceptance.

As a tool for developing urban planning strategies and methods, the master plan sets out various parameters for the area. These parameters determine both the flow of visitors through the area, the places various groups can spend time, focal points for conveying knowledge, and the possibilities for development, landscape interventions or infrastructure measures. The information in the master plan can be roughly divided into the following categories:

- Zoning
- Development and accessibility
- Building and adaptation
- Landscaping
- Assignment of functions
- Cubature and site studies

→ The full master plan including layouts is included in the final report (from p. 34).

The following pages present the key principles and strategies of the master plan.

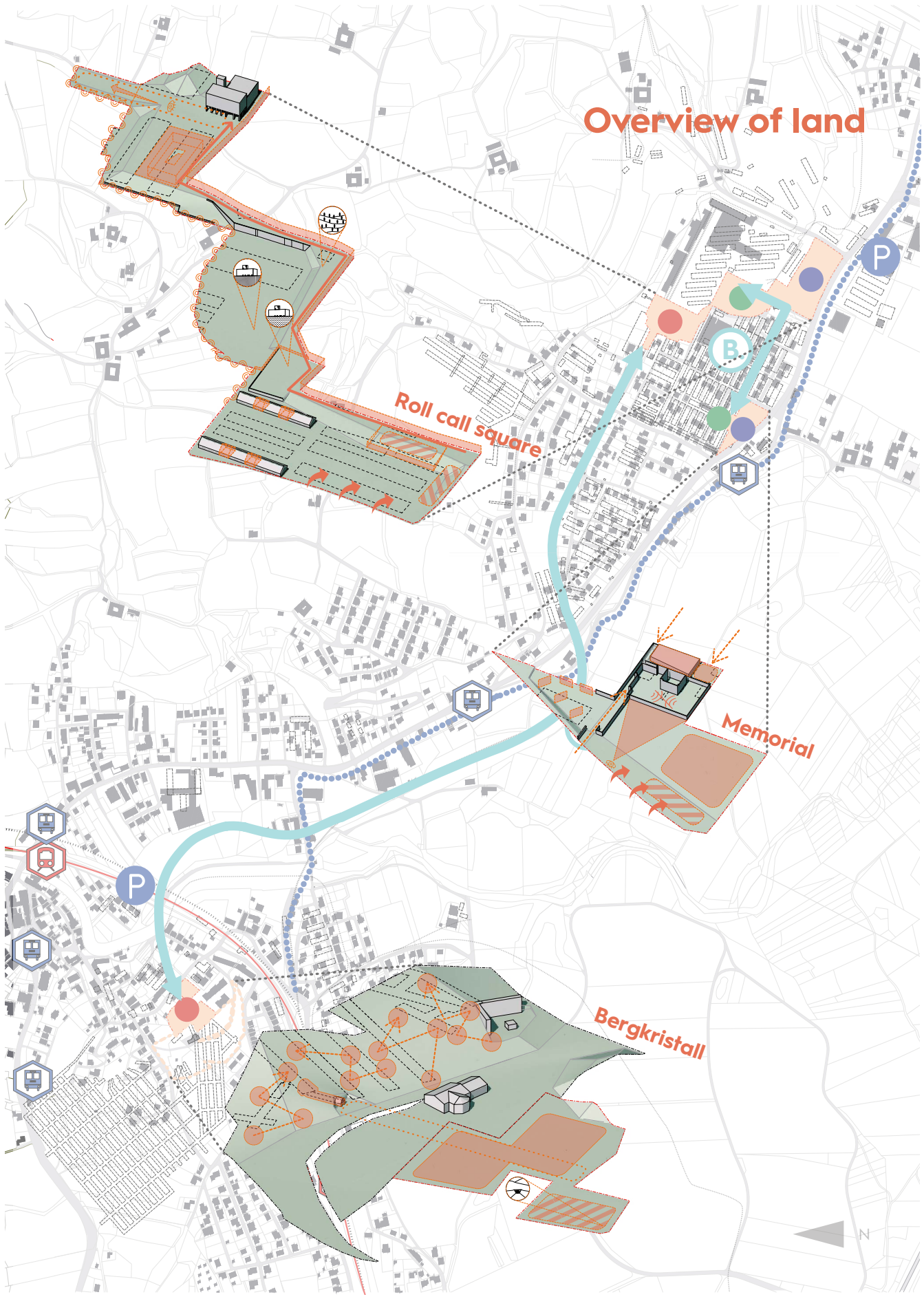


Fig. 1: Overview of land

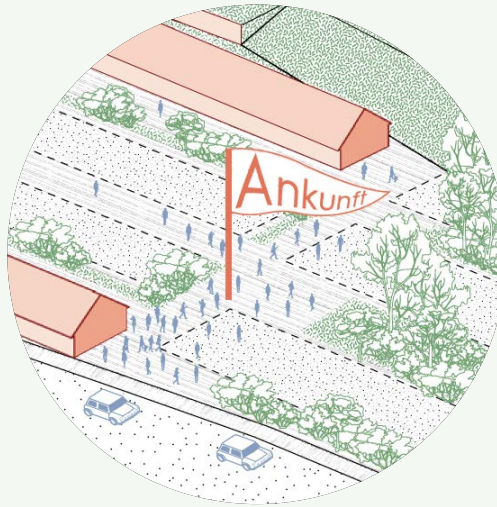
# Principles

## General

# Strategies

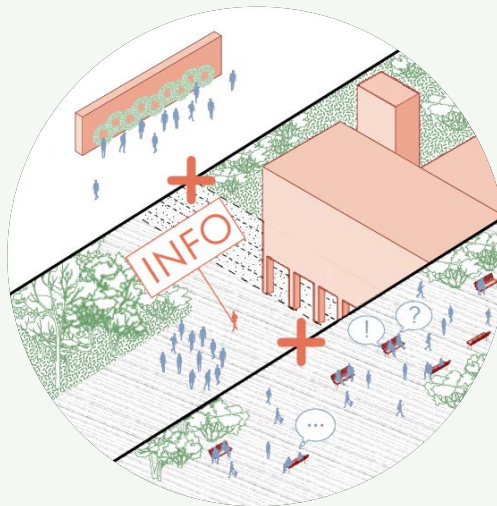
## General

1 A clear and recognisable **arrival system** should be created for all area (Gusen Memorial). It should nevertheless be possible to visit individual areas separately.



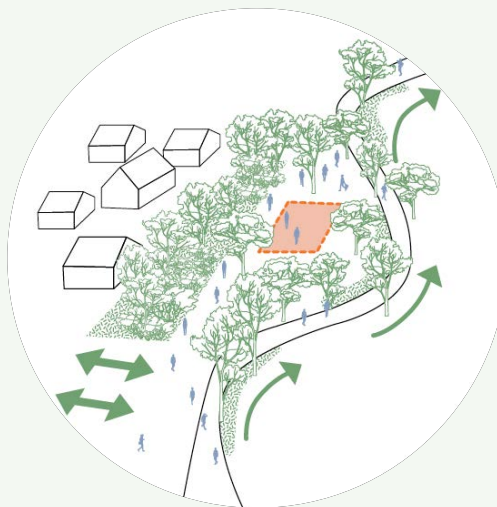
1 A **primary arrival zone** between the former SS barracks and the former ornamental garden at the roll call square is defined in the master plan. However, the **provision of information and knowledge transfer** will be available **at all areas**.

2 **Respect** is a keyword: respect for the different **commemorative / visiting and meeting activities**, which take place at a memorial site. The aim is to offer education, added value and quality for both visitors and the local population.



2 To ensure the respectful coexistence of different interest groups, **communicative zones** transferring information as well as **contemplative areas** for quiet and individual time and **public meeting places** are defined. Different target groups and perspectives of "others" come together in the public zones.

3 Development of **green structures** as a contribution to **ecological resilience**, as **added value** for visitors, residents and the immediate neighbourhood.



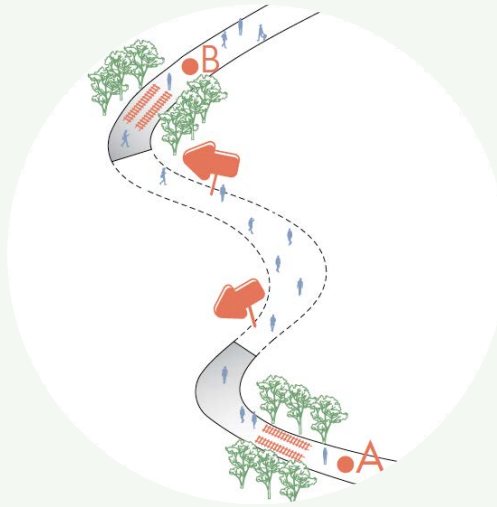
3 Wooded areas such as rows of trees, field hedges, etc. can be used as **buffers** between the memorial and the municipality or the commercial area, facilitating orientation and increasing the **quality of time spent**.

Fig. 2: General principles and strategies

# Principles

## General

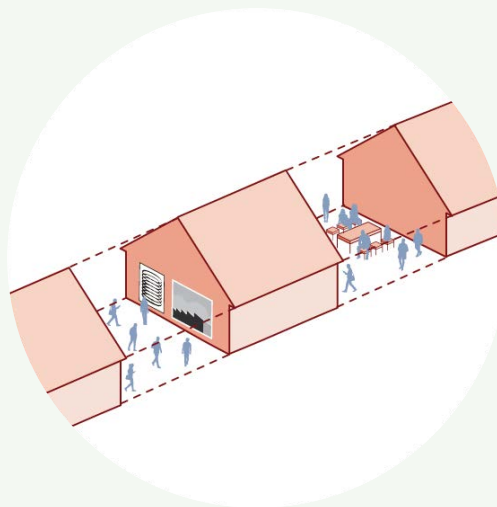
- 4 The aim is to ensure **recognisability** and "**visual links**" between the areas due to functional and historical connections. Keyword: semantic links



- 5 Consideration of **historical** and **current** situations regarding noise levels is recommended.



- 6 The **integration** of the existing former **SS buildings** as well as the continued use of the visitor centre ("Memorial" site) and the **House of Remembrance** should also be considered.



# Strategies

## General

- 4 A recognisable intervention in the area of the original **industrial railway** leading from the "**roll call square**"/**stone crusher** to the "**Bergkristall**" tunnel system is suggested. Other connections between the plots, such as the **camp wall** ("Memorial" - "roll call square") can also be considered.

- 5 Several places within the area were characterised by constant noise when the camp existed. Some of these places are nowadays in the immediate vicinity of industrial and commercial zones. It is recommended that **consideration be given to this aspect regarding future functional areas**.

- 6 The existing buildings are to be used for **presentations, exhibitions** and **educational activities**. Existing activities can be expanded and deepened.

Fig. 3: General principles and strategies

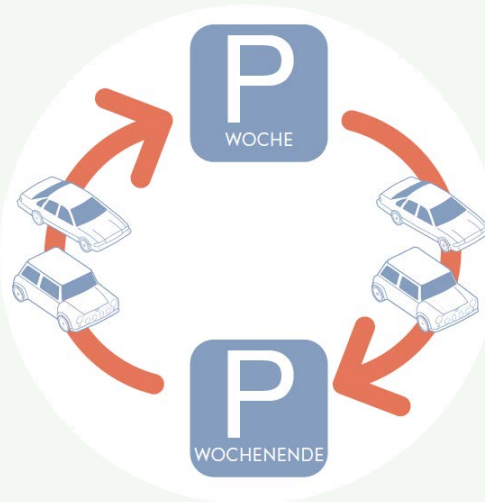
# Principles

## General

# Strategies

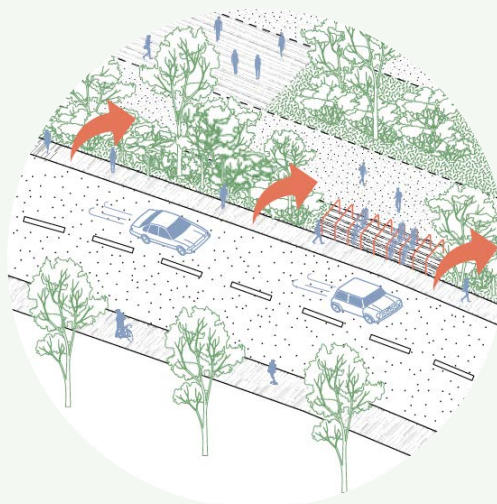
## General

7 The development of an **innovative mobility concept** including additional synergies within the municipalities is envisaged. The aim is to positively influence both the daily exercise habits of the local residents and those of the visitors.



7 **Mobility Points** will be created in each area. These provide a **minimum number of parking spaces for employees, accessible parking spaces, e-parking spaces** and a minimum requirement for visitors. In addition, **synergies** are being sought **within the communities**.

8 Transition zones are defined for the areas adjacent to **Georgestraße**.



8 In the **transition zones**, innovative concepts should be developed both with regard to the **external impact** (how does the place become recognisable/accessible?) and the adjacent traffic (how can a **buffer** be created?) in combination with a new mobility concept.

Fig. 4: General principles and strategies

## Further recommendations

→ For more details see the final report on p. 65

The master plan focuses on the three plots of land owned by the Republic of Austria (roll call square, Memorial de Gusen, and Bergkristall tunnels) and the municipal plot in St. Georgen, which was added in the course of the process. In addition, issues arose in the course of the participation process that cannot be reflected in the master plan:

- Future expansion to include Jourhaus and prisoner building
- Accommodation offers in the region
- Traffic concepts for days with above-average footfall
- Renaming of memorial site
- Inclusion of other former concentration camps



# Overview of rough cost estimate\*

**The rough cost estimate\* is based on the master plan with the following items divided over a period of eight years:**

## **Landscape design and presentation of archaeological remains**

Currently, the new plots largely consist of forest and meadow areas or fallow land. These outdoor spaces must be designed according to uniform principles and made safe to walk on. Transition zones to the surrounding municipality or the industrial area must be created, including privacy protection. Pathway systems for visitors must be created. It is also important to conserve the existing archaeological remains of the camp and to make them accessible to visitors via design measures. This part of the project comprises the largest area of the redesign and extends across all pieces of land. A budget of EUR 19.2 million has been estimated for this item.

## **Rehabilitation and safeguarding of historical building fabric, and user adaptations**

Two fully preserved former SS buildings and the concrete silo of the former stone crusher are located on the acquired land. The SS buildings are to be renovated so that they can house exhibitions, seminar areas and administrative areas of the concentration camp memorial in the future. The stone crusher needs secured and preserved, and could be made partially accessible to visitors in the future. EUR 13.2 million is budgeted for the planned renovation and adaptation costs.

## **New construction measures**

In addition to adapting existing buildings, the master plan also proposes the construction of two new buildings. A new arrival building with the necessary (visitor) infrastructure and space for a museum depot and gastronomy options is to be built. A second new building would create the necessary ambience for individual acts of remembrance ("Room of Silence"). EUR 9.1 million is budgeted to implement the new construction measures.

## **Exhibitions, digital visualisations and knowledge transfer as well as artistic interventions**

The designed outdoor areas and renovated or newly constructed buildings require content curation that makes the place understandable for future visitors and provides them with the necessary information. For this purpose, several indoor and outdoor exhibitions will be designed and information systems will be set up for all areas. There will be a particular focus on digital measures. Several artistic interventions are also planned, in particular to make the semantic relationship between the individual areas tangible. The costs for planning and implementing the content curation are expected to amount to EUR 6.9 million.

## **Technical infrastructure, access and traffic routes**

It is contractually obligatory to erect some kind of boundary to the neighbouring commercial enterprise, which will have to be designed appropriately for a memorial site. A new access road is to be constructed to connect the individual plots for internal development purposes. Mobility Points in the arrival areas of the individual plots should ensure basic transport connections. There should also be shading and seating available on all pieces of land. A budget of EUR 6 million has been earmarked for these measures.

### **Accessibility of "Bergkristall" tunnel system**

In the participation process, the desire for improved access to the "Bergkristall" tunnel system was clearly expressed. The master plan therefore envisages the permanent opening of a smaller part of the tunnels in the entrance area. In this regard, safety and legal framework conditions and possibilities must first be clarified. If implemented, however, several structural and technical measures will be necessary, such as erecting a partition glass front or a ventilation system, for which EUR 2.8 million is proposed.

### **Structural adaptations of existing visitor infrastructure and furnishing of interior spaces**

There is already existing memorial site infrastructure in Gusen and St. Georgen. In Gusen there is a visitor centre with a permanent exhibition, in St. Georgen there is the House of Remembrance used by the "Awareness Region". This infrastructure is to be incorporated into the future expanded memorial and adapted and extended for this purpose. EUR 1.5 million is budgeted here.

### **Further project costs**

For the entire project implementation, consisting of the EU-wide competition and the architectural and content-related redesign of the Gusen Memorial, personnel and material costs of EUR 6.7 million are planned over an 8-year project term.

**The rough cost estimate, taking into account the implementation steps described above, produces a total budget of around EUR 65 million over a project period of 8 years.**

*\* according to ÖNORM B1801*

## **Outlook and planned implementation steps**

Assuming a funding commitment before the end of 2023, a preliminary implementation schedule for the expansion of the Gusen Memorial was drawn up. This envisages the organisation of a design competition for architectural and landscape planning services.

Parallel to this, research and investigation projects will develop the foundations for the content and curatorial design of exhibitions, educational formats and digital knowledge transfer. The first measures from the competition are expected from the beginning of 2026.

The planned timeline envisages partial operation once the site is taken over in 2024. From this point on, the areas will be accessible to accompanied visitors. From the completion of the outdoor facilities, probably from 2029, there will also be general public access to the outdoor areas for individual visitors. The newly designed Gusen Memorial is expected to be fully operational upon the completion of the exhibition in 2031.

## Project team

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