

Case 13

● UA–Drohobych: Saltworks

Location: Drohobych, Lviv Region, Western Ukraine

Type of site: Pre-industrial heritage industry and active production site

Size: ~4 ha (production complex and saline landscape)

Ownership: Municipal and cooperative ownership (community-managed enterprise)

Main legacy: Salt extraction and evaporation, continuous operation since medieval period

Period of activity: 13th century – present

Main challenges: Economic instability, outdated infrastructure, limited funding for preservation

Priority of cluster relevance: Heritage & City Image, Economy & Reuse, Green Development

Historical Overview

The Drohobych Saltworks is one of the region's oldest continuously operating industrial sites. Salt has been produced here since the 13th century using wooden evaporation halls, brine wells, and traditional furnaces.

Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later socialism, the saltworks became a regional economic pillar and symbol of identity.

After 1990, production declined drastically, and the site faced neglect, but local cooperatives preserved its unique craft-based methods.

Present Condition

The complex still produces salt using historic wooden infrastructure – a living example of intangible industrial heritage.

Buildings require urgent restoration, yet the craft-based production process remains intact. Community initiatives now link the site to eco-tourism, cultural education, and small-scale bio-energy innovation.

The saltworks attract visitors from across Ukraine and neighbouring countries as a model of sustainable cultural enterprise.

Governance & Actors

- Municipality of Drohobych – heritage protection and promotion.
- Local Salt Cooperative – manages production and employment.
- Cultural Heritage NGOs – develop educational and tourism programmes.

Key Insights

Drohobych demonstrates how continuity of craft can equal continuity of community. It merges economic activity, cultural identity, and ecological sensitivity in one operational

system. While resources are limited, the site embodies a principle crucial to the broader region and beyond: heritage can still produce value without large-scale capital, when supported by collective efforts.

Leverage Points	Lessons Learned	Transferable Tools
Craft-based production continuity	Living heritage sustains identity	Heritage enterprise manuals
Cooperative governance	Collective ownership maintains viability	Community stewardship framework
Cultural tourism with ecological focus	Small-scale tourism stabilises rural economy	Sustainable heritage tourism toolkits



The deteriorating saltworks building in Drohobych, a reminder of the town's centuries-long extraction economy and the challenges of preserving industrial heritage.
Photo: Natalia Mykhalchenk