

# Land

## Planning and development of land resources

The most important aims of sustainable *Land* and regional planning in Germany are sustainable land use, and reducing land use through sustainable management of human settlements and conservation of open spaces, supported by cross-sectoral strategies and visions for cultural landscapes.

Regional plans are the central policy instrument. The determinations they contain governing settlements and open spaces play a substantial part in restricting the scale of land use, improving development quality and optimising site factors.

German *Land* and regional planning has distinctive coordination procedures for settlement, open-space and infrastructure development. These operate at supramunicipal level and are geared to supralocal requirements. Furthermore, its land resources policy is characterised by an emphasis on making effective and economical use of land. Stipulations designed to encourage inter-municipal and regional cooperation support the supralocal coordination of settlement and open-space development in peri-urban zones and agglomerations.

Regional planning at the federal level and at *Land* level is aimed at integrating the economic, social and environmental goals of sustainability for the purposes of sustainable land-use management, conserving resources and safeguarding development potential. Accordingly, regional planning seeks to take balanced account of the spatial implications of new demand for land, e.g. for energy generation or the cultivation of replenishable resources, and other needs such as economic development and mobility. For the future, sustainable spatial planning in Germany will primarily mean safeguarding the diverse functions of land through active management of land resources, acknowledging both the competing forces behind growing conflicts over use and the underlying necessity for prudent management of land and soil as natural resources.

Preservation of open spaces is intended to conserve the capacity of natural systems to perform their essential functions and to safeguard the use of natural resources in the long term. Safeguarding and developing open spaces and their ecological functions is a fundamental element of sustainable spatial development.

The goal of reducing land use is a further central element of sustainable spatial development in Germany. It is in the vital interests of a densely settled country like Germany to conserve soil, both for the ecological functions it performs as a life-sustaining resource base and habitat for humans, animals and plants, and for its role in the natural ecosystem and in hydrological and natural cycles. At the same time, it remains a necessity to develop existing and future land use for diverse functions – e.g. for settlement, recreation and transport, for the production of food and replenishable resources, for economic and public uses and for nature conservation purposes – in keeping with the principle of sustainability. Land use today is increasingly influenced

by changing socio-economic conditions. Trends like the predicted decline in the population, worsening regional disparities in development, an ageing society and the problematic state of local public finances in certain areas, or indeed increasing sensitivity to the consequences of climate change, all call for a new approach and for regionally adapted strategies.

In German regional planning, economical use of land is understood as a complex management task which is implemented successfully through the combined and coordinated deployment of instruments within a regional network of planning authorities. The growing amalgamation and integration of regional land management is consistently pursued as an objective, as indeed are improved regional cooperation and the continuation of land monitoring, which provide new impetus for a land policy guided by the principle of reduced use.

Further policy instruments which can be implemented within a regional amalgamation of authorities include regional commercial development site pools and mitigation site pools. In parallel to this, efforts are currently in hand at municipal level to phase in local land management systems.

### *Settlement area management and reduction of land use*

It is the German government's stated objective to preserve open spaces in suburban areas and along major settlement and transport corridors by means of an integrated open space and settlement policy and by restricting further land take for settlement and transport purposes. The objective of economical land use must be weighed against other objectives, such as the economic growth necessary to reduce unemployment or the sustainable provision of housing, and ways must be sought to reconcile the different objectives as far as possible.

Despite the progress achieved so far, the German government plans to optimise existing instruments and to revise or completely renew strategies applied in the past in order to scale back the increase in land use.

The following priorities will be pursued:

- Cross-border responsibility and cooperation for resource-conserving land management needs strengthening at regional and municipal level;
- Priority must be given to development of infill sites within settlements before developing green-field sites;
- Planning instruments must be supplemented with further economic incentives;
- Subsidies, taxes, levies and support programmes must be reviewed for their potential to help reduce land use. Social, economic and financial effects must be taken into account;
- The dialogue between actors involved in the planning and realisation of settlement and transport sites must be pursued and intensified, and then supported with model projects at regional and local level;
- Due to economic structural change and the declining population, there are increasing numbers of vacant sites, e.g. derelict commercial, military and

industrial sites, agricultural fallow areas and vacant sites from the demolition of residential property. The regeneration of such vacant sites, e.g. through further enhancement of functional city centres, must be borne in mind by planners in their designation of development zones.

The new model for a contemporary sustainable regional planning system capable of overcoming land-use conflicts is envisaged as a combination of the 'hard' determinations associated with classic, planning-based spatial policy along with 'soft' management methods. The blend of 'soft' management and 'hard' determinations still acknowledges the classic regional planning tradition, with *Land* and regional tiers of planning as the core operational levels, implementing legally binding determinations. Streamlined and efficient regional plans are deemed especially appropriate to satisfy the spatial planning aim of 'soft' management and 'hard' determinations. In this connection, mention should be made of spatial planning determinations for preventive flood protection, for example, or for the development of river landscapes or for large-scale retail complexes.

### **Cross-sectoral competence-building strategies and visions for cultural landscapes**

Competing interests and demand for land use, particularly in relation to natural landscapes, look likely to become increasingly divergent over time. Future developments harbour uncertain conflict potential, with impacts on landscapes that cannot readily be predicted. Regional planning policy at federal and *Land* levels seeks to further intensify cross-sectoral and public discourse in future, in order to determine more precisely what preferences and possibilities exist for different areas. The concerns of the key industry sectors of tourism, energy, agriculture and forestry should continue to figure prominently in planning considerations. Moreover, there are plans to elaborate, at regional level, models for the way different cultural landscapes can develop.

### ***Riverine landscapes and flood protection***

The severe floods that affected Germany in the recent past dramatically highlighted that preventive, comprehensive flood protection relies on precautionary regional planning measures to limit potential damage and safeguard floodplains. It also calls for national and transnational cooperation on physical and land-use planning, water resources management, agriculture and forestry, the purpose of which is continuous improvement of safety standards and an adapted land-use planning system.

The aim of the German government is therefore to step up support for joint regional planning strategies within the framework of cross-border development, backed by the promise of regional implementation. These efforts will include equitable reconciliation of the interests of upstream and downstream riparian communities. In relation to the use of river landscapes, coordination and balancing of the different interests must always be carried out with a view to ensuring preventive flood protection.

Regional planning in Germany's territorial seas and Exclusive Economic Zone; integrated coastal zone management

In recent years, traditional uses of Germany's marine waters and coasts, e.g. shipping, fisheries, gas and oil drilling, leisure and tourism or nature conservation, have been joined by additional demands for use for such purposes as offshore wind farms, Natura 2000 conservation areas and various forms of aquaculture. The North Sea and the Baltic Sea are under growing pressure from a myriad of competing state, economic and private interests and conflicting demands for use. Two new projects of the German government are intended to develop a comprehensive and farsighted regional planning system to coordinate conflicts over use and resolve them in keeping with the principle of sustainability.

- The German government's report of 13 March 2006 to the European Commission on the 'National Strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management' represents an important step in utilising the contribution of regional planning to cross-sectoral and supralocal consultation and coordination of the various levels of planning, in order to establish harmony among the divergent demands for use, development potential and conservation interests in the marine and coastal environment.
- The Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs is currently working on a regional plan in the form of a statutory ordinance. It contains targets and principles of regional planning for industrial and scientific use, and addresses how to safeguard the security and ease of marine shipping and to conserve the marine environment in Germany's Exclusive Economic Zone.

## **Enhancement in sustainable tourism development**

### *Background*

The German government devotes great attention to the field of environment and tourism. Its policy measures, from international to subregional level, pay due heed to the fact that environmental problems are not confined to individual regions, they have global impacts.

Tourism is one of the most dynamically expanding sectors worldwide. In Germany, tourism (holidays, business and day trips) contributes around 8% to the gross domestic product, and accounts for around 2.8 million jobs. This makes tourism a significant economic factor, the importance of which will continue to grow in Germany, based on the available forecasts.

Tourism, more than almost any other sector, is reliant on intact natural and environmental resources. Tourists and travellers are becoming increasingly perceptive of environmental problems, which may even influence their choice of destination. By the same token, enjoyment of nature and natural landscapes are among the key motives for taking holidays. An assessment of the environmental problems caused by tourism shows a multifaceted picture: aviation is one of the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions and causes especially high levels of environmental pollution. In contrast,

water consumption, waterway use, waste volumes and noise pollution only generate discernible environmental pressure on a seasonal and localised basis in Germany.

In the light of the fact that aviation, especially long haul flights, is by far the greatest source of tourism-related environmental pollution, every effort to reinforce domestic tourism in Germany contributes to reducing the burden on the environment. Furthermore, such initiatives are associated with positive economic and social impacts for the target regions. Hence the measures supported by the German government are targeted primarily towards structurally weaker rural regions.

In the year 2000, more than two million Germans took cycling holidays. It should be noted that the greater part of a cycling holiday is spent in Germany rather than abroad. Overall, cycle tourism contributes approximately EUR 5 billion to Germany's overall turnover for tourism.

## **Measures to improve sustainable tourism**

### *International level*

At international level, the German government is committed to environmentally sustainable tourism, primarily within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Alpine Convention, and supports the corresponding objectives of the conventions.

### *EU level*

The expected worldwide growth of tourism will play a substantial part in heightening the pressure on land resources, particularly for the regions most richly endowed with natural and cultural assets. In response, the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Conservation Areas was developed. It will contribute to fostering the development of tourism in harmony with issues of nature conservation and environmental protection. The German government has supported initial testing of the European Charter in three pilot nature parks in Germany (Steinhuder Meer, Frankenwald and the Isle of Usedom).

### *National and regional level*

To stem the greenhouse gas emissions caused by aviation, the German government is supporting the 'atmosfair' project, an initiative for climate-conscious air travel. 'Atmosfair' enables any airline passenger to calculate for themselves the quantity of greenhouse gases produced by their flight, and the cost in Euro of offsetting this amount of emissions.

In 2006, the German government launched 'Energiekampagne Gastgewerbe', the energy efficiency campaign for the hospitality industry. The campaign aims to provide hotels and restaurants with guidelines on efficient energy use, and has already attracted approximately 3500 participants in 2 years.

The national environmental umbrella brand 'viabono' introduced by the German government integrates measures relating to the tourism industry and to consumers. In

addition to presenting consumers with guidance, this has significantly increased the proportion of environmentally-focused tourist packages on offer, and consequently boosted demand for such offers.