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## The urban dimension in German Structural Fund programmes

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#### Editing

Brandenburg Technical University (contractor)  
Institute of Urban Development and Landscape  
Chair of Urban Management  
Prof. Silke Weidner  
Jens Gerhardt

Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH (contractor)  
Silvana Rückert (head)  
Luise Ebenbeck

Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, Berlin  
Tilman Buchholz

Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development  
Dr. Maretzke

#### Translated by

Chris Abbey

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## List of abbreviations

BB	Brandenburg
BE	Berlin
BMVBS	Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs
BW	Baden-Württemberg
BY	Bavaria
EIB	European Investment Bank
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EU-12	New EU Member States since 2004
EU-15	EU Member States prior to 2004
FP	Funding period
HB	City of Bremen
HE	Hessen
HH	City of Hamburg
IAP	Integrated action plan
IUPD	Integrated urban development plan
JASPERS	EU initiative 'Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions'
JEREMIE	EU initiative 'Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises'
JESSICA	EU initiative 'Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas'
MV	Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NI	Lower Saxony
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NW	North Rhine-Westphalia
OP	Operational programme
R&D	Research and development
RCE	Regional competitiveness and employment
RP	Rhineland-Palatinate
SH	Schleswig Holstein
SL	Saarland
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SMI	Saxon State Ministry of the Interior
SN	Saxony
ST	Saxony-Anhalt
SUD	Sustainable urban development
TH	Thuringia
UD	Urban Dimension
URBACT	ERDF-financed know-how transfer programme
URBAN	ERDF Community Initiative

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## Summary

In the framework regulations of the European Structural Funds for the 2007–2013 funding period, a change of course is apparent regarding the consideration of urban concerns in structural policy, rated as one of the European Union's most prominent policy areas. Under Article 8 of the EFRE Regulation, all towns and cities may now apply for Structural Funds assistance for sustainable urban development actions as long as the regions have included this offer in their operational programmes.

This study reveals the quality and quantity with which Germany makes use of Article 8 as an offer of financial assistance. It also illustrates the general consideration of urban concerns in Germany's National Strategic Reference Framework and the German Structural Funds programmes as well as the range of the urban dimension at the project level. The findings of this analysis are used to draw up recommendations on ways of establishing 'Acquis URBAN' in the coming funding period which can be considered in the already intensive negotiations concerning the design of the post-2013 Structural Funds.

In its National Strategic Reference Framework, Germany is endeavouring to ensure the correspondence of the EU's joint objectives and Structural Funds assistance, which is coordinated by the federal government and the *Länder* (regions) with the help of operational programmes. Sustainable urban development is enshrined in the NSRF as a horizontal objective. This is explained in the reference framework by for example the role of towns and cities as centres of employment, the economy, education, training and knowledge. In addition, however, this horizontal objective draws attention to the economic, social and environmental problems mostly concentrated in urban areas. Concrete areas of activity specified in the reference framework regarding sustainable urban development include urban development enhancement strategies and strengthening local economies. In addition, the use of actions to remediate the physical environment, the conversion of industrial brownfields, and the preservation and use of the historical and cultural heritage for growth and employment are recommended. The National Strategic Reference Framework supports the use of new types of financing in urban development and the transfer of the JESSICA initiative to the federal and *Länder* level.

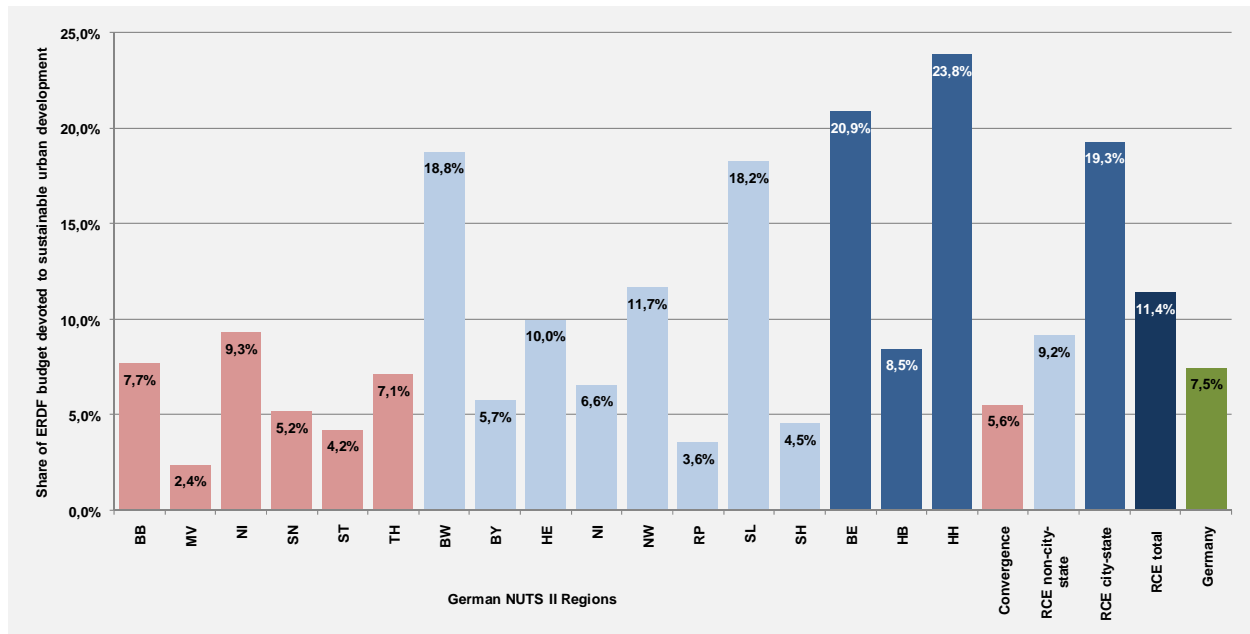
Regarding German ESF programmes, only in isolated cases was a spatial dimension or the thematic establishment of sustainable urban development observed. Merely the federal programme BIWAQ ('Social City – Education, Economy, Working in the Neighbourhood') was identified as an explicit support programme addressing urban districts. Through BIWAQ, the federal government aids projects which improve the training, qualifications and social circumstances of inhabitants – and hence their prospects on the job market

In order to enshrine urban concerns in the German ERDF programmes, the following core statements concerning the current funding period were concluded from the data analysis:

- All *Länder* have included urban development in their ERDF operational programmes, this priority appearing within the systems of objectives in both the priority axes and the fields of action. However, in just four of the 14 ERDF operational programmes of the non-city-states has urban development been devoted its own priority axis. Two of the three city-states have introduced a separate priority for sustainable urban development.
- The Leipzig Charter has been incorporated without exception in the ERDF operational programmes of the *Länder* in the form of the fields of action sustainable urban development and/or brownfield regeneration.



- About €1.09 billion was identified for actions pursuant to Article 8 in the ERDF operational programmes (2007–2013 FP) of the *Länder*. Hence, an average of about 7.4% of the total ERDF budget of the *Länder* was devoted to this field of action (cf. Fig. 1). This is a slight increase compared to the 2000–2006 FP, when approximately 7.1% of the total ERDF budget of the *Länder* was provided for sustainable urban development, corresponding to a total volume of about €982 million – to which the €150 million URBAN II budget for the German *Länder* as a whole should be added.



**Fig. 1: Share of ERDF budgets of fields of action in accordance with the urban dimension in the strict sense within total ERDF budgets for the 2007–2013 FP (Source: Own work, see ‘Data base for the quantification of the urban dimension 2007–2013’ in the bibliography)**

- Sustainable urban development has been incorporated with different degrees of rigorousness regarding the integration of actions into a development plan for a whole city or an individual district as well as the inclusion of a wide range of urban development strategies in accordance with Article 8 ERDF Regulation. For one thing, actions of sustainable urban development have been concentrated in sub-areas in just 10 out of 17 operational programmes. Moreover, only rarely has support for a whole range of actions from Article 8 (the economy, urban development, social infrastructure, technical infrastructure, urban governance) been supported in the fields of action of sustainable urban development in the operational programmes of the *Länder*. In addition, in one case it was not clear whether the actions of the field of action sustainable urban development had to be flanked by an integrated urban development plan or an integrated action plan.
- In the strict interpretation of urban dimension pursuant to Article 8, the involvement of the topics of urban development and architectural heritage, the economy and the social infrastructure needs to be above average at the level of objects of support. Economic themes clearly dominate in the broader interpretation of urban dimension.
- Integrated urban development could only be identified in the fields of action of sustainable urban development and brownfield regeneration. The “simultaneous and fair consideration of the concerns and interests which are relevant to urban development”<sup>1</sup> on the basis of

<sup>1</sup> BMVBS [Leipzig Charta, 2007], p 10.

“integrated urban development programmes for the city as a whole”<sup>2</sup> as recommended in the Leipzig Charter is not demanded in other fields of action or priorities of the ERDF operational programmes.

- The use of innovative instruments for the flexible support and financing of projects (e.g. cross-financing and the JESSICA initiative) still plays a secondary role.
- The co-financing of the ERDF organiser’s own contribution through urban development support provided by the federal government and the *Länder* must also be evaluated as a form of incorporation of the urban dimension in the German operational programmes. However, when European and national financial support is combined, frictional losses occur partly owing to different programme periods and the related financial uncertainties.

Regarding consideration of urban concerns at the project level, the in some cases slow progress made on approving and implementing sustainable urban development projects supported by the Structural Funds should be noted. As this substantially limits the selection of projects, this is a constant challenge when studying the project level. Nevertheless, a few general findings can be put forward:

- ESF projects whose beneficiaries are towns and cities have so far been primarily approved for the areas of social infrastructure and the economy. Regarding ERDF projects of the same type, this also applies to the social infrastructure and to a lesser extent the areas of urban development/architectural heritage and technical infrastructure. Sustainable urban development projects have hitherto only been approved to a very small extent.
- Qualitative evaluation has shown that integrated approaches are not exclusively applied within Article 8 actions but to a small extent in other fields of action, too.
- The coordination of projects in terms of content as well as spatial and temporal aspects with actions in the same neighbourhood in order to benefit from synergy effects is widespread and has taken place in the majority of the projects selected.
- About half the projects selected were developed and/or implemented in an inter-departmental process. In a comparable number (frequently the same projects), the participation of the general public and interest groups in the drafting of the project was also enabled.

Given the importance for German urban development policy of the urban dimension of the European Structural Funds and the related added value supplementing urban development assistance, the BMVBS Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, which commissioned the study, is keen to enter into constructive dialogue about the design of the coming Structural Fund period by contributing experience of the current period. In order to obtain a sound discussion basis, the following recommendations regarding the implementation of the urban dimension within post-2013 Structural Funds assistance have been concluded from the analysis carried out for the study:

- **Agreement on the uniform use of the term ‘urban dimension’**  
In order to translate the strategies of the Leipzig Charter into Structural Funds assistance, it is therefore recommended that it be agreed to use the term ‘urban dimension’ in the strict sense, i.e. to regard the urban dimension exclusively as sustainable urban development and accordingly to be able to discuss it uniformly.
- **Classification of sustainable urban development as ‘Lisbon-compliant’ expenditure**

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<sup>2</sup> Ebd., p 10.

It is recommended that the contribution of sustainable urban development to promoting growth and employment should also be recognised such that actions in this area be granted the status of Lisbon conformity in the coming Structural Fund period. The same applies to recognising the contribution of sustainable urban development to the intelligent, sustainable and integrative economic growth of the EU in the context of the strategy Europe 2020.

- **Relaxing the n+2 rule in the context of urban actions**

Given that the current n+2 rule allows too little time for instance for large-scale, complex urban development projects, its relaxation is recommended in the next funding period. It needs to be discussed whether it could be relaxed exclusively for actions of sustainable urban development to for example n+3.

- **Ensuring ESF and ERDF assistance can be combined**

Regarding the possibilities of combining ESF and ERDF assistance, it is recommended for the next funding period that the option of cross-financing be offered again in the General Structural Funds Regulation. Moreover, this possibility should be area-based, so that for example ESF monies to promote training can be used as required within an ERDF regional scenario irrespective of small object operations.

- **Obligation on all Member States to include sustainable urban development in their operational programmes**

Building on the knowledge that according to studies by the European Commission, just 50% of the RCE regions and 35% of the Convergence regions have implemented sustainable urban development actions in their operational programmes for the 2007–2013 FP, it is recommended that in the next Structural Fund period, consideration of sustainable urban development be obligatorily incorporated in the operational programmes of the regions. This corresponds to the described consensus of all EU Member States to declare their support for sustainable urban development. In order to raise the effectiveness of such a binding rule, it is advised that this be accompanied by corresponding know-how transfer in the strategy area of sustainable urban development. The EU-12 would not be the only ones to profit from this since many cities in the EU-15 are faced by the challenge of high local disparities and have no experience of URBAN yet.

- **Minimum levels for the proportion of sustainable urban development in the total budget**

The possibility of a budgetary cap on funding for sustainable urban development which cannot be exceeded by the regions should be discussed. This recommended minimum amount results from the above-described experience of the current Structural Fund period and the fluctuating amounts of funding provided for sustainable urban development, which cannot necessarily be attributed to regional structural differences.

- **Standards of content regarding the implementation of sustainable urban development**

For the programmes in the coming Structural Fund period, it is recommended reviewing the possibility of introducing an instruction under which all fields of action specified in Article 8 are to be offered to cities in the operational programmes as objects of support. It is hence proposed that the local level should always have the option of being able to make use of assistance for a wide range of areas, allowing it to exercise integrated intervention at local trouble spots.

- **Establishing a central EU programme to promote sustainable urban development**

Since 'Acquis URBAN' is often not part of the Structural Funds strategy of the European regions or only features in a greatly reduced form, an instrument for the focused establishment or continuation of structures of sustainable urban development at the neighbourhood level is recommended which could be applied as a model project in the Member States. The basic condition of such a model project ought to bindingly prescribe the implementation of the strategies of the Leipzig Charter and ensure know-how transfer between the model neighbourhoods. The former includes involving the government departments responsible for urban development at a national and regional level into the design and coordination of such a project. One reason for this vertical integration is to ensure that the approaches practised in the model areas can be transferred to other neighbourhoods facing similar challenges in the Member State concerned.

The obligation to include an action or to impose quotas and standards for the implementation of individual actions would be a novel concept for Structural Funds assistance for the regions. The Structural Fund framework regulations are to be understood as offers. The documents describe the interventions eligible for funding and the mainly technical and organisational conditions attached to claiming and using Structural Funds assistance. This philosophy is joined by the optional nature of Article 8. The regulations only contain a quota rule for the long target range of the Lisbon strategy, which contains a variety of actions (cf. 3.3). The recommendations to introduce obligations for sustainable urban development would accordingly mean a new step in the conditioning of this assistance, although use could be made of the quotas represented by 'Lisbon-compliant' actions.

The proposal put forward also touches on the fact that the EU lacks formal competence on issues of urban policy since the Maastricht Treaty only extends to the regional level. The demand of making the inclusion of an Article 8 compulsory in the regions' operational programmes instead of optional as is currently the case will therefore have to be preceded by a fundamental discussion of the EU's competence.

Both sources of friction signify a challenge for the stronger incorporation of sustainable urban development in the next funding period. Rising to this challenge should be the aim of the Member States, which after all jointly agreed to succeed the Leipzig Charter with a follow-up process.

# 1. Introduction

Spatial structural policy enjoys high priority in the EU, as demonstrated by the fact that some 35% of the 2010 EU budget is devoted to the European Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.<sup>3</sup> These funds are used to promote actions aimed at reducing regional disparities, boosting regional competitiveness and employment, and intensifying European territorial cooperation.<sup>4</sup> The interventions of this European structural policy, which initially appears to be closely related to the scale of the region, are highly relevant for cities solely by virtue of the fact that about 60% of the population of the EU live in medium-sized cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. In addition, the Member States' main economic power is rooted in their urban agglomeration areas – for cities with a population exceeding 1 million have a 40% higher GDP than the average of their respective countries.<sup>5</sup>

The European Union has recognised the importance of cities<sup>6</sup> and placed urban concerns at the focus of Community policy. For example, the Strategic Cohesion Guidelines list a number of political aims in urban areas, such as strengthening cities in their role as engines of regional development and centres of innovation, encouraging more polycentric regional development, and the balanced development of cities and conurbations.<sup>7</sup> Other aspects specifically mentioned include employment and training policy, integration and cultural measures, environmental clean-up of the physical world, the recovery of brownfield land, and the preservation and development of the historical and cultural heritage.<sup>8</sup>

In the previous funding period (FP) 2000–2006, a raft of actions was carried out with the help of the Structural Funds to benefit urban areas. They included the Community Initiative URBAN II, which was directed at the revival of urban problem areas in order to promote social and economic cohesion in cities.<sup>9</sup> Despite relatively limited funding of €700 million, this programme mostly organised by the European Commission managed to provide 70 cities throughout Europe (including 12 in Germany) with financial support from the ERDF. In line with the philosophy behind URBAN, disadvantaged urban districts were developed by the local authorities taking part on the basis of integrated action plans which had to contain coordinated social, environmental and economic actions.

This determination to strengthen European cities is also reflected in the organisation of the Structural Funds in the current 2007–2013 funding period. The areas of intervention with direct urban relevance include:<sup>10</sup>

- The urban environment, the rehabilitation of contaminated land and industrial sites
- Urban transport
- Integrated projects to revive urban areas
- Energy efficiency and renewable energies
- Information and communication technologies for a society free of exclusion

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. EU-COM [General budget of the European Union, 2009] p 5, 19.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Council of the European Union [Treaty on European Union, 2010], Arts. 174, 175, 176, p 127.

<sup>5</sup> EU-COM [European Cities Report, 2007].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g. EU-COM [Cohesion Policy and cities, 2006]: p 4: “*Cities are home to most jobs, firms and institutes of higher education and their action is decisive in bringing about social cohesion. Cities are home to change based on innovation, spirit of enterprise and economic growth.*”

<sup>7</sup> Council of the European Union [Strategic Cohesion Policy Guidelines, 2006], p 34.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, Section 2.

<sup>9</sup> EU-COM [Guide to the urban dimension, 2007], p 6.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. EU-COM [Guide to the urban dimension, 2007], pp 94–95; Council of the European Union [ERDF Regulation 1080, 2006]; Council of the European Union [ESF Regulation 1081, 2006].

- Employment, general and professional training, administrative capacity, social integration, working conditions, gender equality, combating discrimination
- Innovation and SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises)
- Culture
- Public health
- Housing
- The control of migration
- Crime
- Socioeconomic research into urban questions
- Rural development around cities

With the aim of boosting the dissemination of the described stabilisation and enhancement strategy – ‘Acquis URBAN’ – this Community Initiative was incorporated into the mainstream programmes as a result of the efforts of national and European associations of cities. Known as mainstreaming, this process was intended to enable a larger number of towns and cities to access this type of funding and to increase the budget allocated to it. Therefore, in the current FP Member States are recommended to incorporate sustainable urban development actions and measures into their National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRFs) and operational programmes (OPs).<sup>11</sup> The concrete enshrinement of the integrated approach mainly took place by translating Article 8 into the ERDF Framework Regulation, under which a region “may, where appropriate, support the development of participative, integrated and sustainable strategies to tackle the high concentration of economic, environmental and social problems affecting urban areas.”<sup>12</sup> Article 8 recommends drawing up and implementing strategies to strengthen economic growth, rehabilitate the physical environment, redevelop brownfield sites, preserve and develop the natural and cultural heritage, promote entrepreneurship, local employment and community development, and provide services to the population.<sup>13</sup>

Since 2007, federal and the *Länder* have accordingly been exclusively responsible for encouraging and steering the implementation of ‘Acquis URBAN’ in connection with Structural Fund support at the local authority level by setting up suitable programmes augmenting national programmes. In the 2007–2013 FP, a total of €26.3 billion<sup>14</sup> is available to Germany from the Structural Funds which can be partly used for this purpose. One of the aims of the present study is to highlight the quality and quantity in which Germany can make use of Article 8 as an offer of funding. Furthermore, the general consideration of urban concerns in the German Structural Fund programmes and their impact are to be examined at the project level.

The findings of this analysis will finally be used to formulate recommendations for action to establish the urban dimension in the coming 2014–2020 FP, which is currently under intensive negotiation. Fundamental changes to the European funding landscape are being discussed in this process which also concern proven instruments of urban development. This debate includes questioning the objective of regional competitiveness and employment (RCE), the readjustment of the urban dimension within the mainstream programmes, and the possible revival of a Community Initiative approach in the style of URBAN, to mention just a few items.

The results of this analysis will also serve alongside positioning regarding the post-2013 era as the basis for reporting to the EU. Like all the other 26 Member States, Germany pledged in the 2007 Leipzig Charter to incorporate the strategies for integrated sustainable urban development laid down therein into its national, regional and local development policies. Germany reported

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<sup>11</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 27, Art. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Cited from: Council of the European Union [ERDF Regulation 1080, 2006], p 6.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *ibid*, p 6.

<sup>14</sup> BMWi [NSRP, 2007], p 52.

on this follow-up process for the Leipzig Charter in late 2009 in its National Strategy Report<sup>15</sup> entitled 'Sustainable urban and regional development', which included selected findings of the interim report for this study dated 15 October 2009. In addition, it was agreed at the informal meeting of ministers of urban development and territorial cohesion on 24–25 May 2007 under the German European Council presidency to include an interim assessment of the application of integrated urban development strategies in the Fifth Cohesion Report.<sup>16</sup>

To aid understanding of the following account, note that the 'urban dimension' cannot yet be explicitly defined. According to the strictest interpretation, the urban dimension solely applies to urbanly integrated actions and regulations geared to Acquis URBAN and Article 8 of the ERDF Framework Regulation. This category of actions is referred to below as sustainable urban development or the urban dimension in the strict sense. In accordance with this definition, all aspects of structural funding are said to include an urban dimension if they show general urban relevance. This view, which below is referred to as the urban dimension in the broad sense, is used for example in the European Commission's position papers 'Guidelines: the urban dimension of cohesion policy in the programming period 2007–2013' and 'Cohesion policy and the cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions', in which numerous urban areas of responsibility are listed as urban dimensions, although their integrated treatment is not required. Referring to this initial situation, in the present study therefore the urban dimension is examined taking into account general urban concerns and sustainable urban development in the German Structural Fund programmes.

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<sup>15</sup> The Member States were/are to submit 'strategy reports' to the European Commission by 2009 and 2012 as prescribed in the General Structural Funds Regulation 1083/2006, Art. 29, providing information about the national use of Structural Funds assistance.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 31, p 44.

## 2. Urban aspects of the National Strategic Reference Framework

The subject of investigation of the NSRF was the urban concerns taken into account in it. All in all, Germany is to receive around €26.3 billion from the Structural Funds for the 2007–2013 FP.<sup>17</sup> Germany's NSRF meets the requirement specified in Article 27 General Structural Funds Regulation 1083/2006 to claim financial assistance from the Structural Funds since it describes and justifies the Member State's funding strategies. The NSRFs are intended to ensure agreement between the EU's shared aims and the Structural Funds assistance coordinated by federal and *Länder* (regional) government with the help of OPs (operational programmes) as instruments of action. The German NSRF was officially approved by the European Commission in March 2007 and comprises:

- An analysis of the development gap, lag and potential taking into account the anticipated development of the European and global economies
- The strategy selected on the basis of this analysis, including thematic and territorial priorities<sup>18</sup>

Approximately €16.1 billion from the ERDF and around €9.4 billion from the ESF in Objective 1 and Objective 2 funding is available to Germany in the 2007–2013 FP (cf. Tab. 1).<sup>19</sup> The individual German *Länder* (regions) draw up their OPs (which are examined in more detail in Section 1) on the basis of the NSRF. Apart from the OPs of the *Länder* there are programmes which are the responsibility of the federal government such as the Federal Transport Programme (within the framework of the ERDF) and the ESF Federal Programme. Additional OPs have been drawn up for the objective of European Territorial Cooperation.<sup>20</sup> Within the German NSRF, federal and regional (i.e. *Länder*) government have agreed on four strategic aims:

- The promotion of innovation and expansion of the knowledge society as well as strengthening business competitiveness
- Enhancing the appeal of Germany's various regions to investors and inhabitants through sustainable regional development
- Facing new labour market challenges – creating new and better jobs
- Developing regions in regard to equal opportunity and balance

These overarching strategic aims were then broken down into thematic priorities. 'Sustainable urban development' was (alongside 'the environment' and 'gender equality') established in the NSRF as a horizontal objective. This makes 'sustainable urban development' an explicit component of the German strategy for the 2007–2013 FP. As in other official EU documents, the German NSRF highlights the role of cities as centres of employment, the economy, education, training and knowledge in line with the requirements of the Leipzig Charter – yet also draws attention to the economic, social and environmental problems mostly concentrated in urban areas.<sup>21</sup> The importance of cities is explained using the decentral population structure in Germany, where cities play an important role, as well as the function of cities as sources of inspiration for their surrounding areas and other regions.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> BMWi [NSRF, 2007], p 52.

<sup>18</sup> Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales [ESF-Bundes OP, 2007], p 135.

<sup>19</sup> Own calculation based on: EU-COM [Cohesion Policy 2007–13, o.J.], p 2.

<sup>20</sup> BMWi [Broschüre NSRF, 2007], pp 6–7.

<sup>21</sup> BMWi [NSRF, 2007], pp 48–49.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p 48.



Therefore, by using the Structural Funds, an important contribution is to be made to establishing an integrated urban development policy and hence to assisting socially and economically disadvantaged districts. These aims are of course pursued by not only the actions in the ERDF but also the national urban development support programmes. ERDF and German federal actions could hence be combined, e.g. ERDF actions to protect and preserve the cultural heritage could be applied in connection with architectural conservation schemes.<sup>23</sup>

In the NSRF, the urban dimension is defined territorially and thematically, the regions of Germany being categorised in order to ensure the instruments and actions are adequately applied. Three important spheres of action were defined: regions undergoing economic structural transformation, structurally weak rural areas, and regions with conversion problems. Sustainable urban development actions will play a particularly important part in the first sphere.<sup>24</sup> Distinguishing between different territorial patterns of development was a response to the disparities between regions in Germany. The spheres of action defined in the NSRF are to be incorporated by the *Länder* into their respective OPs and provide the basis for spatially concentrated support. Thematic priorities in the field of urban development have also been designed for the objectives Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment. For instance, the priority 'Developing and securing of the infrastructure for sustainable growth' has been included in the objective 'Convergence', which provides for "sustainable urban development actions, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas; as well as [to] ensure the services of public interest within the context of demographic change" as a starting point to achieve the goals.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile the starting point of "reducing disparities between regions and optimising specific regional potential through sustainable regional development" was established as the starting point for regions in the category 'regional competitiveness and employment'. The actions carried out in this connection include tackling aspects of demographic change, revitalising brownfield sites, environmental work and also cooperation between regions.<sup>26</sup>

Concrete areas of activity specified in the NSRF regarding sustainable urban development include urban development enhancement strategies, strengthening local economies, and paying close attention to the needs of children of all ages. They are augmented by actions to remediate the physical environment, the conversion of industrial brownfields, and the preservation and use of the historical and cultural heritage for growth and employment, as well as measures used to react to demographic change.<sup>27</sup>

To sum up, the integration of the areas of activity and actions in the NSRF fully comply with the demands contained in the Leipzig Charter for integrated urban development policy; in other words, urban concerns have been completely reflected. Nevertheless, the NSRF is only the framework for EU funding in Germany – for an important role is played by the *Länder* and their respective operational programmes. Therefore, in some fields the *Länder* are granted extensive scope at the national level. For example, it is emphasised in the NSRF that new types of financing in urban development are required and need to be developed, especially if they are based on the principles of public-private partnerships.<sup>28</sup> The *Länder* are free to apply new forms of financing for urban development under the JESSICA initiative, which is described in the following section.

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<sup>23</sup> Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung [SD Begriffsbestimmung].

<sup>24</sup> BMWi [NSRP, 2007], pp 45–46.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp 62, 70.

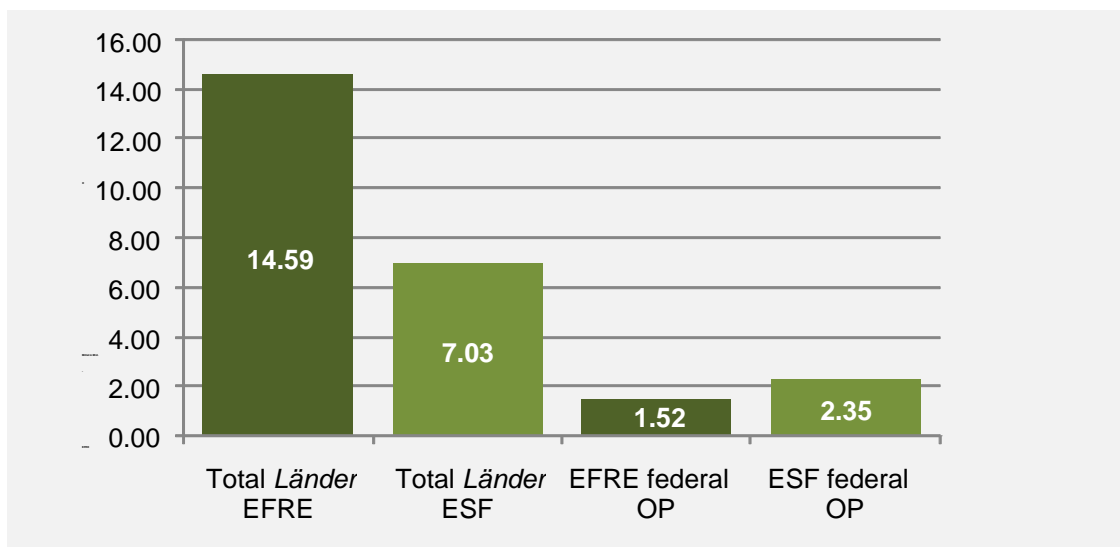
<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p 85.

<sup>27</sup> Lütke Daldrup [Berücksichtigung urbane Dimension, 2006], p 4.

<sup>28</sup> BMWi [NSRP, 2007], pp 48–49.

**Tab. 1: Distribution of Structural Funds assistance for Germany in accordance with the German NSRF (€bn) (Source: Own work, BMWi [NSRP, 2007], p 89.)**

	Convergence	RCE	Total
Total <i>Länder</i> ERDF	9.84	4.75	14.59
Total <i>Länder</i> ESF	4.53	2.50	7.03
Total <i>Länder</i>	14.37	7.25	21.62
ERDF federal OP	1.52	0.00	1.52
ESF federal OP	0.19	2.16	2.35
Total ERDF	11.36	4.75	16.11
Total ESF	4.72	4.66	9.38
Total NSRF 2007–2013	16.08	9.41	25.49



**Fig. 2: Distribution of ERDF and ESF Structural Funds assistance according to the German NSRF (Source: Own work, BMWi [NSRP, 2007], p 89)**

### 3. Consideration of urban interests in the German ERDF OPs

The granting of structural fund support is regulated by federal and regional government<sup>29</sup> in their OPs. Under the Convergence objective, regions are eligible for funding if their GDP is less than 75% of the EU average. Moreover, regions with a GDP between 75% and 82% of the EU average also qualify for funding under the Convergence objective, but will as ‘phasing-out’ regions switch to the category Regional Competitiveness and Employment (RCE) in the coming FP – the objective to which regions with a GDP exceeding 82% of the EU average are assigned (cf. Fig. 3). The own contribution required from a region in order to call EU funding depends on its categorisation, and is 25% for Convergence regions and 50% for RCE regions.

This section deals with the federal and regional government OPs. After evaluating the objective system of ERDF OPs as the basis for programme planning, the treatment of areas relevant to urban development in the OPs such as cross-financing and the JESSICA initiative are addressed. Finally, the concrete funding items are analysed as the lowest level of the OPs’ objective system.



**Fig. 3: Development areas of EU structural policy in Germany (2007–2013 FP) (Source: BBR Bonn 2006 (Landkreise, correct as of 31 December 2003), EU-COM)**

<sup>29</sup> Structural Funds assistance is organised on NUTS level 2, which is territorially below the level of the *Länder* (NUTS level 1). Accordingly, the *Länder* are free to divide their funding structure into NUTS 2 regions. This principle is applied in the current funding period in Lower Saxony, which owing to the development divide in the region developed an Objective 1 OP for its northern area and Objective 2 for the south. (Cf. Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 5, p 37)

### 3.1. Objective system and budgets of the objective levels of the *Länder* ERDF OPs

The ERDF is deployed in the OPs using an objective system. The upper objective level required by the European Commission in this system is the 'priority axes', which reflect the strategic priorities in the programme and comprise "a group of operations which are related and have specific measurable goals".<sup>30</sup> These priority axes are to be given budgets within the OPs in accordance with the Structural Funds Regulation.<sup>31</sup>

Since Convergence regions and RCE regions differ in terms of their structural framework, separate lists of priorities are proposed in the ERDF Framework Regulation<sup>32</sup> to enable the objectives to be achieved for these types of regions. This different prioritisation is reflected in the OPs of the *Länder*. The improvement of the infrastructure is for example regarded in the German OPs of the Convergence regions as an objective on the same level as the priority axes. However, it does not have a similar priority in the RCE regions owing to the different priorities there.

Apart from the priority axes, the subjects of the following examination of the objective system of the OPs are the level of the fields of action and the lowest level of the objective system, on which concrete items to be funded are specified. These objective levels are not uniformly designated in the OPs. Therefore, for the following examination the designations of objective levels are used which are mainly represented in the OPs.

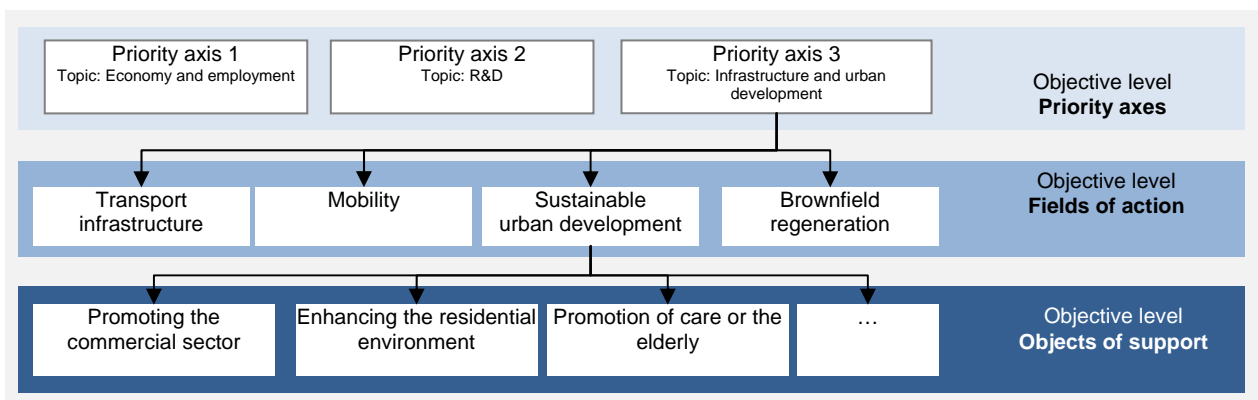


Fig. 4: Example of an OP objective system (Source: Own work)

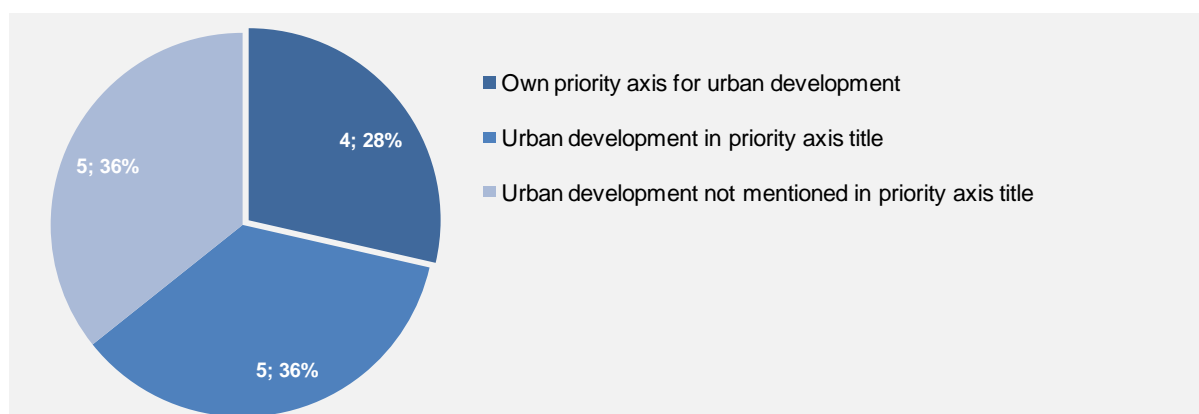
In all the ERDF OPs of the *Länder*, priority axes are partly or completely dedicated to urban development. Priority axes are regarded as being 'partly dedicated to urban development' if they contain other fields of action alongside urban development. For example, priority axes have been identified in which fields of action from urban development and the environment are combined. Without exception, the *Länder* always provide fields of action focusing on sustainable urban development within the described priority axes within their ERDF OPs (cf. Fig. 5).

In four OPs of 14 regions of non-city-states, a separate priority axis has been devoted to urban development. City-states whose priority axes are per se geared to urban development have in two out of three cases given integrated urban development its own priority.

<sup>30</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 2/2.

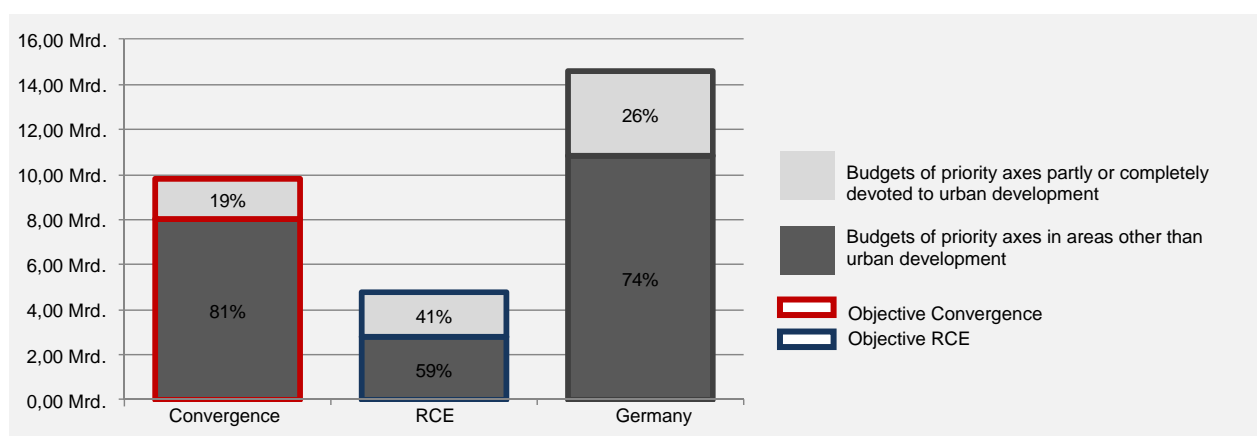
<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Art. 37, e), ii).

<sup>32</sup> Council of the European Union [ERDF-Regulation 1080, 2006], Art. 4, Art. 5.



**Fig. 5: Evaluation of references to urban development in the titles of priority axes in ERDF OPs of non-city-states (Source: Own work, ERDF OPs (2007–2013 FP) of the German *Länder*)**

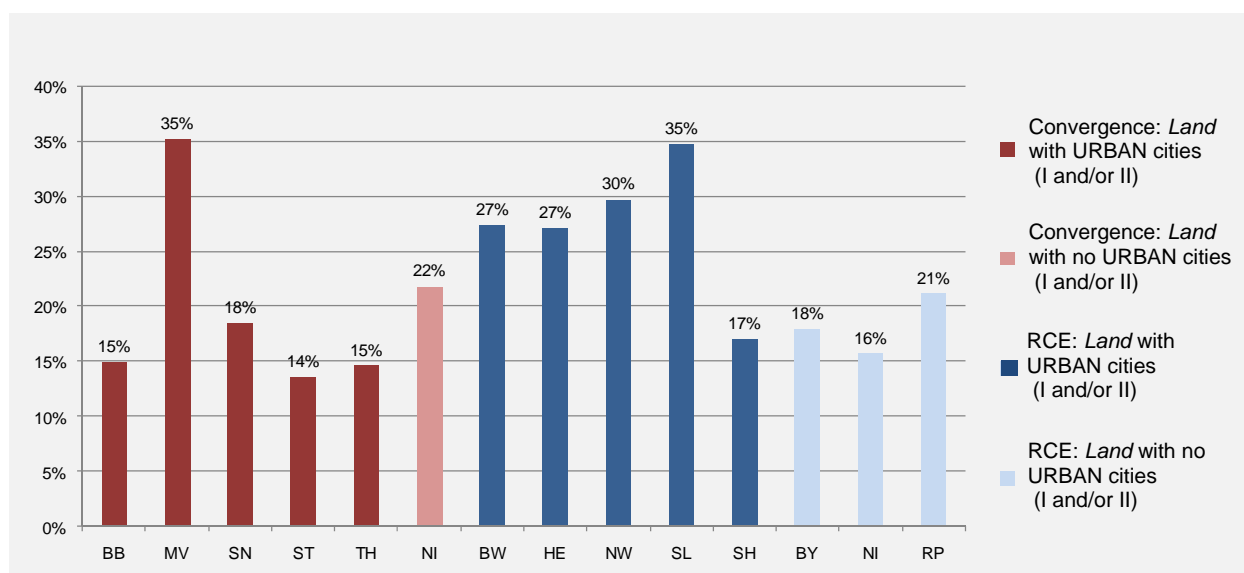
Differences result when comparing the aggregate ERDF budgets of the Convergence OPs and the RCE OPs regarding financing for the priority axes which are partly or completely devoted to urban development (cf. Fig. 7). On average, the RCE regions provide a higher proportion of the total budget for priority axes related to urban development – a trend which can partly be attributed to the objective types to which the city-states belong (cf. Fig. 6).<sup>33</sup>



**Fig. 6: ERDF budgets of the priority axes of the thematic category 'urban development' (Source: Own work, ERDF OPs (2007–2013 FP) of the German non-city-states)**

When evaluating these budgets broken down into *Länder*, this trend is also confirmed when solely non-city-states are considered. The majority of non-city-states in the RCE regions provide the priority axes which are partly or entirely devoted to urban development with over 20% of the entire budget.

<sup>33</sup> Germany's three city-states all have the status of RCE regions whose total budgets were entirely assigned to urban development as they were solely used in urban areas.



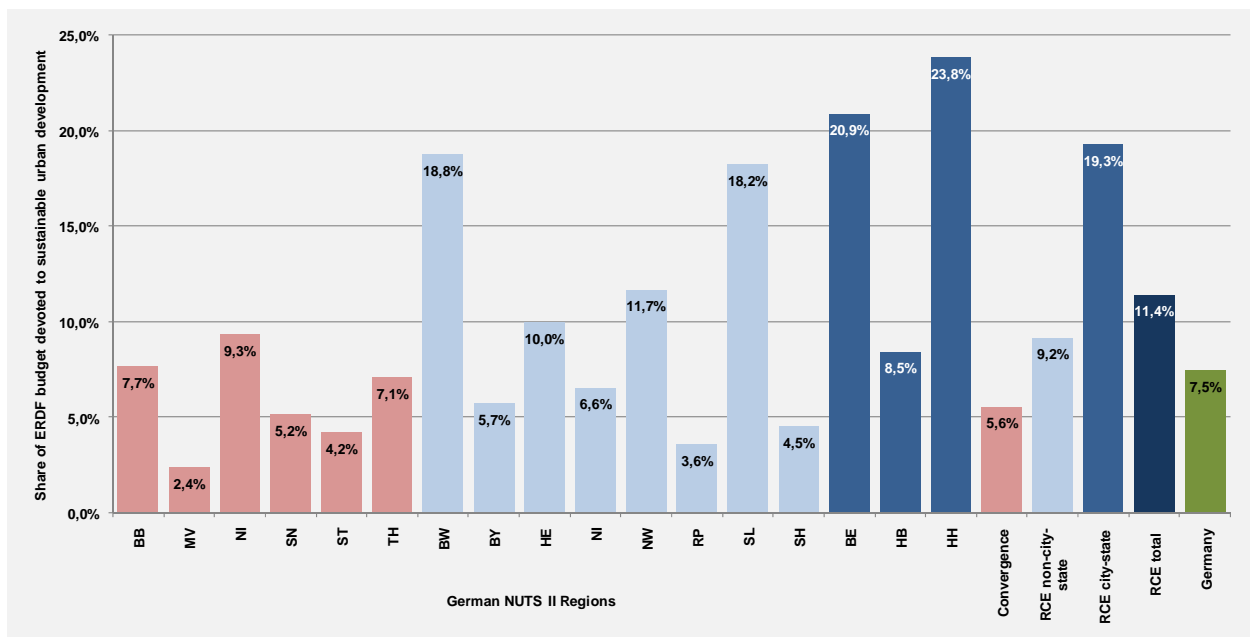
**Fig. 7: Budgets of the priority axes of non-city-states partly or totally devoted to urban development (Source: Own work, ERDF OPs (2007–2013 FP) of the German non-city-states)**

In order to obtain a quantitative impression of the consideration of urban development in accordance with Article 8 ERDF Regulation, those fields of action in the OP objective system which can be ascribed to the urban dimension in the strict sense were assigned budgets by means of OP evaluation, online research and direct enquiries (cf. Fig. 4). The two latter approaches were required since the budgets in the individual fields of action can no longer be shown in the OPs in the current FP as prescribed by the general Structural Funds Regulation and the majority of *Länder* apply this rule, making the performance of programmes more flexible.<sup>34</sup>

According to the very different results of this investigation (cf. Fig. 8), the *Länder* devote between 2.4% and 23.8% of the total ERDF budget to sustainable urban development on the level of fields of action. Comparison of the Convergence and RCE non-city-states is striking, the latter providing far higher funding for sustainable urban development. Let us not forget that the *Länder* are not tied to an URBAN standard in the funding of sustainable urban development. Accordingly, the quantities discussed here do not reflect homogeneous qualities. For example, Bavaria regulates the field of action ‘enhancement of urban districts with particular economic, ecological or social development requirements’ in its ERDF OP exclusively via the existing urban development funding guidelines, from which the necessity of an integrated approach can only partly be derived.

For Germany as a whole, we can calculate that 7.5% of the entire ERDF budget is used for sustainable urban development. Some *Länder*, however, placed sustainable urban development in the OPs of mainstream funding URBAN II at their own initiative in the previous FP. For example, one region included the programme section ‘sustainable urban district development’, which provided funding totalling €65 million for 11 city districts. These actions need to be taken into account to ensure a reliable comparison of the funding provided for sustainable urban development in 2000–2006 and 2007–2013. The funding for sustainable urban development in the previous FP is shown in 3.2.

<sup>34</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], p 28, clause 45.



**Fig. 8:** Share of ERDF budgets of fields of action in accordance with the urban dimension in the strict sense within the total ERDF budgets for the 2007–2013 FP (Source: Own work, see ‘Data base for the quantification of the urban dimension 2007–2013’ in the bibliography)

In the priority axes in which urban development is explicitly dealt with, other thematic categories are also included in some cases. In order to evaluate these, overarching themes were ascribed to the specifically formulated priority axes in accordance with the fields of action contained in them. The following overarching topics for the priority axes were identified:

- Research and development (R&D)
- Infrastructure
- Urban development
- The environment
- The economy and employment
- Technical assistance

The different combinations of overarching topics are shown in Fig. 9 along with their respective shares of the total budget. For the ERDF OPs of the Convergence regions, it emerges that no priority axes of their own were devoted to urban development in their objective systems. In priority axes, fields of action in urban development were combined with the field of action in either the environment or the infrastructure thematic category. By contrast, in the RCE regions, separate priority axes were introduced for urban development in many cases. It is also particularly striking in this evaluation that about half the total budget of the German ERDF OPs<sup>35</sup> is distributed among priority axes which still focus on the traditional areas of the economy and employment as well as R&D.

<sup>35</sup> The city-states are not included here.



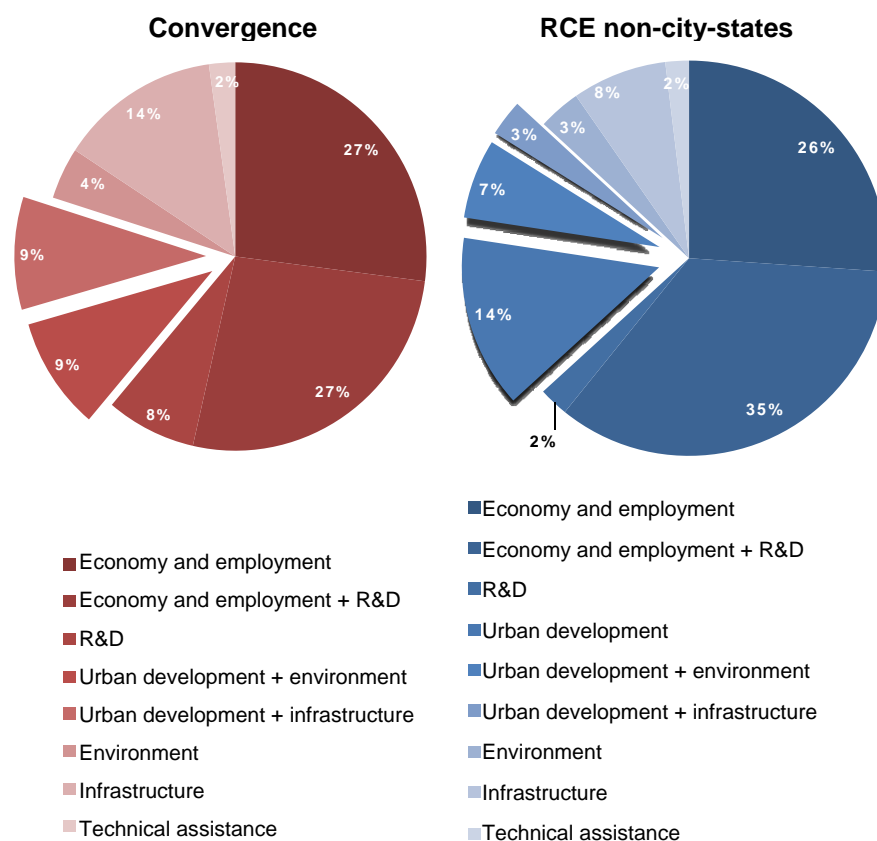


Fig. 9: Average distribution of the total budget of the ERDF OPs among priority axes (Source: Own work, ERDF OPs (2007–2013) of the German *Länder*)

### 3.2. Comparative quantification of the urban dimension in accordance with Article 8 for the 2000–2006 funding period

The funding provided for actions and fields of action of sustainable urban development in the 2000–2006 FP was quantified by evaluating the OPs and the EPPDs (Uniform Programme Planning Documents) of all the *Länder*. They were nearly all characterised by the listing of funding for specific actions; only in a few cases did the targets contained in the implementation reports of the *Länder* have to be used.

In the quantitative assessment of the funding provided, only actions attributable to sustainable urban development were taken into account, i.e. actions had to concern a completely or partly urban context or be integrated into a targeted area. In addition, an integrated approach had to be apparent. Only actions which can either be supported by an integrated action or development plan or for which a clear link with other areas (interdisciplinarity) is required as a basis for funding were included. Actions which can be implemented in both rural areas and in an urban context were not taken into account. One example of this is brownland regeneration, which does not exhibit any clear urban dimension in the programmes of most *Länder*.

All in all, the provision of funding for projects within sustainable urban development actions was recorded in 13 *Länder*. The *Land* of Berlin is a special case since it supported both a programme for the objective of Convergence (Objective 1) and a programme for the objective of RCE (Objective 2) with sustainable urban development projects. It was also found that all *Länder* subject to the Convergence objective made use of this field of action. Only in three *Länder* in the RCE objective area was this not the case. In Bavaria, assignment was only possible by assuming that the ‘urban renewal plans’ specified took an integrated approach.



In addition to financial support from the ERDF, in the *Länder* of North Rhine-Westphalia and Saarland actions of sustainable urban development in the strict sense were also funded from the ESF. They follow on from urban development concepts and combine funding for human resources with improvement in disadvantaged urban districts. Moreover, the federal ESF OP contained the action LOS (Local Capital for Social Purposes), which was funded to the tune of some €111 million and designed to stimulate local social and employment potential. This action was coupled with the Social City programme and hence treated on an integrated basis.

All in all, the proportional provision of funding for the fields of action sustainable urban development and brownfield regeneration was found to vary sharply (cf. Fig. 10). No connection can be derived between the total funding provided by the Structural Funds and the financial assistance provided for the subject of this study. On average, about 7.1% of the total ERDF budgets of the *Länder* were devoted to these fields of action. This corresponds to a total volume of about €982 million, to which the €150 million budget for URBAN II for the German *Länder* from the ERDF can be added. The *Länder* with the Convergence objective devoted on average 6.7% to these fields of action, whereas the *Länder* with the RCE objective provided 8.3% of the ERDF funding for sustainable urban development actions.

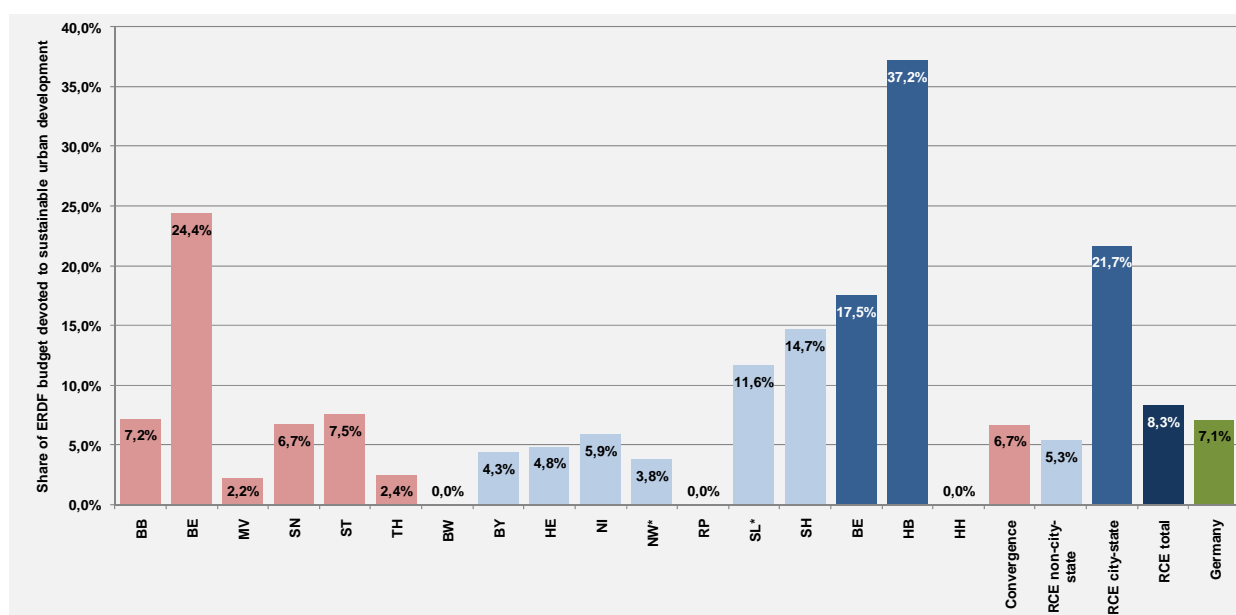


Fig. 10: Share of ERDF budgets of fields of action with an urban dimension in the strict sense within total ERDF budgets for the 2000–2006 FP (Source: Own work, see ‘Data base for the quantification of the urban dimension 2000–2006’ in the bibliography)

### 3.3. Classification of ERDF *Länder* funding by expenditure categories and territory types

According to the General Implementing Regulation,<sup>36</sup> the total budget of an OP is to be broken down for the three dimensions ‘priority axis’, ‘territory type’ and ‘financing form’, which are made up of individual categories to which codes are ascribed. The dimension ‘priority axis’ is to be subdivided by expenditure categories (action themes or codes), the regulations<sup>37</sup> stating which are ‘Lisbon-compliant’. According to the regulation, codes with this property support the EU priorities of promoting competitiveness and creating jobs as well as achieving the aims of the integrated guidelines for growth and employment.

<sup>36</sup> Council of the European Union [Commission Regulation 1828, 2006], Annex II, Part A.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, Art. 9, para. 3, Annex IV.

In its NSRF,<sup>38</sup> Germany is committed to using 71% of the Structural Funds in the Convergence objective and 81% in the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective for 'Lisbon-compliant' actions. These targets exceed the thresholds specified in the regulations.

For the 'priority axis' dimension, the expenditure categories contained in Tab. 2, which in the view of the BBR Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning feature an urban dimension, were evaluated.

**Tab. 2: Overview of the expenditure categories evaluated (Source: Own work, Council of the European Union [Commission Regulation 1828/2006], Annex II, Part A)**

Code*	Priority theme
	<i>Research and technological development (R&amp;TD), innovation and entrepreneurship</i>
23	Regional/local roads
24	Cycle tracks
25	Urban transport
	<i>Environmental protection and risk prevention</i>
44	Management of household and industrial waste
45	Management and distribution of water (drinking water)
46	Water treatment (waste water)
47	Air quality
50	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land
52	Promotion of clean urban transport
	<i>Culture</i>
58	Protection and preservation of the cultural heritage
59	Development of cultural infrastructure
60	Other assistance to improve cultural services
	<i>Urban and rural regeneration</i>
61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration
	<i>Improving the social inclusion of less-favoured persons</i>
71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people; combating discrimination in accessing and progressing in the labour market and promoting acceptance of diversity at the workplace
	<i>Investment in social infrastructure</i>
75	Education infrastructure
76	Health infrastructure
77	Childcare infrastructure
78	Housing infrastructure
79	Other social infrastructure

\* The codes shown against a blue ground are 'Lisbon-compliant' as defined by the Implementing Regulation

<sup>38</sup> BMWi [NSRP, 2007]: p 50.

Study of the selected codes reveals that in the ERDF OPs of the Convergence regions, a higher proportion of the total budget is allocated to these categories. In the state of Lower Saxony, no information can be provided about the proportion of funding awarded to actions with an urban dimension since only ‘Lisbon-compliant’ categories are included in the region’s OPs. The budgets for the codes listed in the table above are aggregated in Fig. 11.

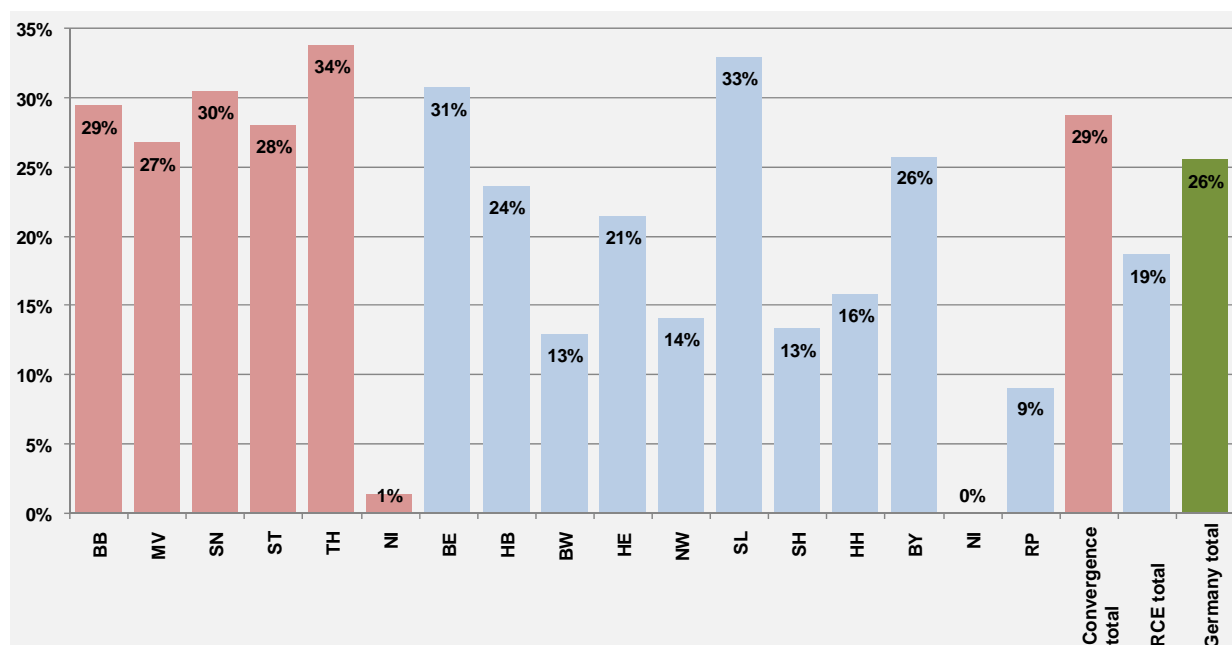


Fig. 11: Share of aggregated budget from the codes in Tab. 2 (dimensions ‘priority axis’) within the total budget (Source: Own work, EFRE OPs (2007–2013) of the German *Länder*)

The classification of budgets by the dimension ‘territory type’ was also examined with respect to code 01 (Urban). As expected, the city-states provide all ERDF funding to promote actions in urban territory. In addition, to a high degree the non-city-states North Rhine-Westphalia and Saarland devote ERDF funding to this territory type. This type of classification was not carried out in Lower Saxony (cf. Fig. 12), which is why this region could not be shown in the graph. Allocating the actions in the OPs which are eligible for funding to different territory types appears to be a challenge for the *Länder*. For example, Saxony writes in its OP that “the dimension ‘type of territory’ [cannot] be shown when the programme is drawn up” and that “precise classification can only take place when the individual operations are carried out.”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Staatsministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit des Freistaats Sachsen [EFRE-OP Sachsen 2007–2013, 2007], p 290.

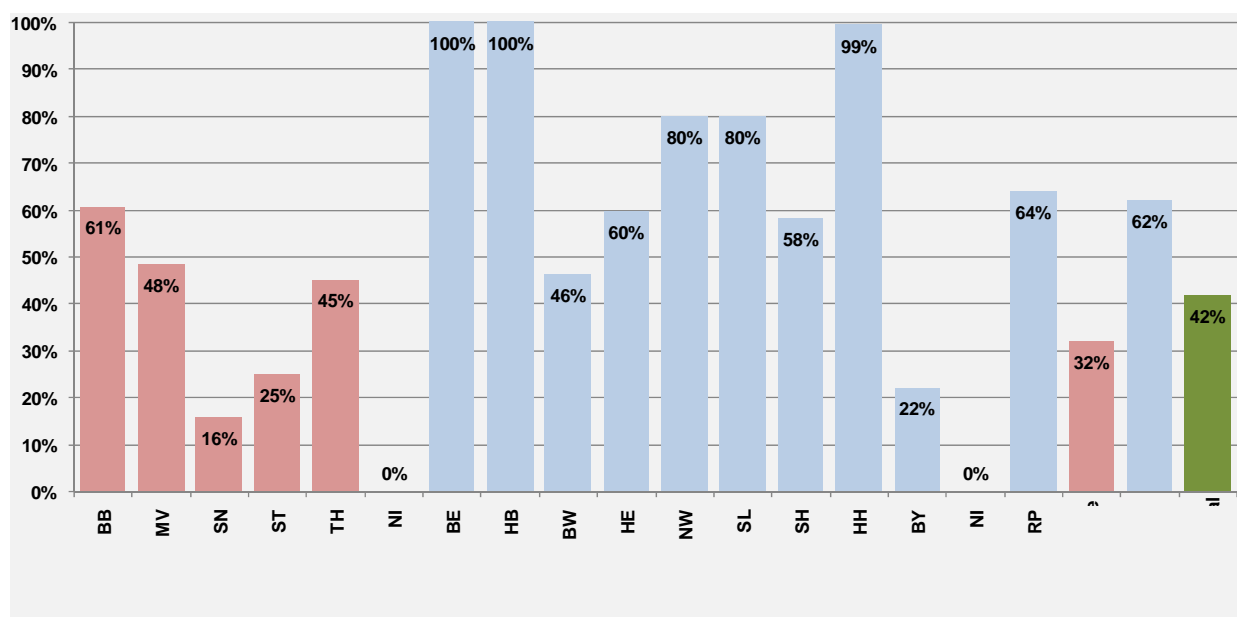


Fig. 12: Share of budgets of code 01 (urban area) of the dimension 'territory type' within total budget (Source: Own work, ERDF OPs (2007–2013) of the German *Länder*)

### 3.4. Inclusion of cross-financing in the OPs of the *Länder*

According to the Leipzig Charter, integrated urban development should also combine actions from different areas such as social affairs and urban development. This demand has been taken into account in structural policy. According to Article 34 of the General Structural Funds Regulation, actions can also be financed by a Structural Fund even if they do not belong to its sphere of intervention. In this way, up to 10% of the total budget of one fund can be switched to another. Moreover, the ERDF Framework Regulation<sup>40</sup> allows this limit to be increased to 15% for actions of sustainable urban development in RCE regions whose OPs contain a separate priority axis devoted to urban development. This cross-financing can be used in *Länder* if provision for this possibility has been provided beforehand in the OP.

Berlin uses the optional provision for its ERDF programme scenarios ZiS ('Zukunft im Stadtteil' – 'Future in the district'). Since too little funding is available from the ESF for the areas, especially for non-investment social actions (e.g. educational measures for the integration of female ethnic minorities), they are funded from the ERDF. This also has the advantage for the areas concerned that funding for actions need not be called from two structural funds, significantly reducing the administrative aspects. The budgetary restructuring does not affect the project organisers<sup>41</sup> and is only reported to the European Commission during the evaluation phase of the FP, which simplifies integrated working (application procedure and action liaison).

In half of Convergence ERDF OPs, the possibility of applying Article 34<sup>42</sup> is allowed, which only goes for 36%<sup>43</sup> of RCE OPs. Just Berlin and Schleswig-Holstein – both *Länder* with experience of URBAN – provide the option of extended cross-financing in accordance with Article 8 (cf. Fig. 13).

<sup>40</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 8.

<sup>41</sup> In the case of Berlin, the ESF projects are shown which are financed from the ERDF.

<sup>42</sup> Cross-financing in accordance with Art. 34 Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 and Art. 8 Regulation (EC) 1080/2006.

<sup>43</sup> Bavaria reserves the right to use Art. 34 and Art. 8 following a subsequent review.

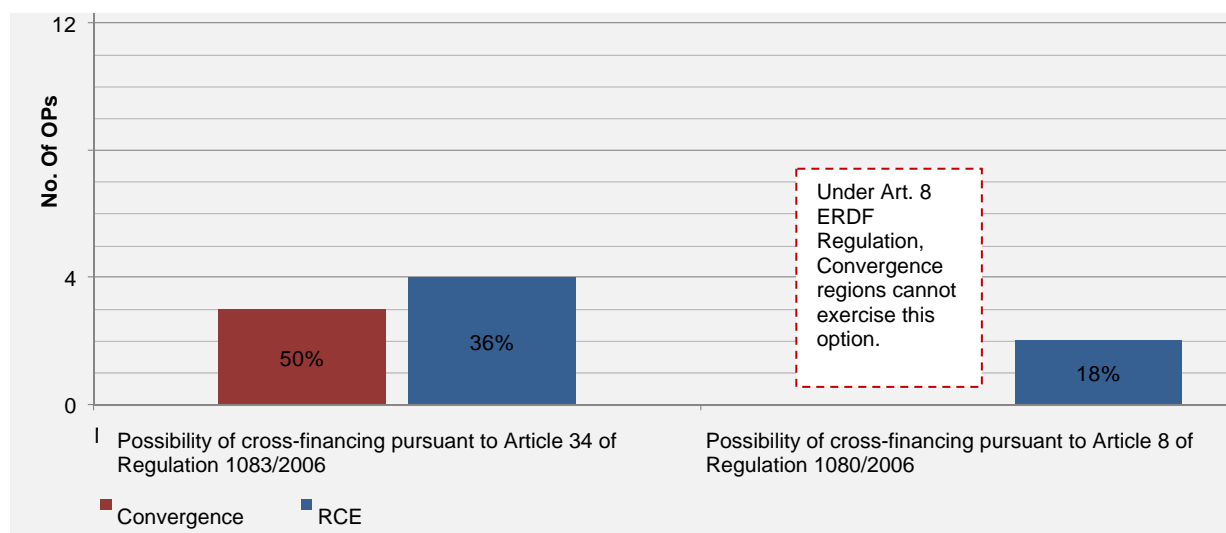


Fig. 13: Consideration of cross-financing and the treatment of Article 8, Regulation 1080 (Source: Own work)

### 3.5. Integration of EU initiatives in the Structural Funds assistance of the *Länder*

Three joint initiatives have been set up by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank in connection with the ERDF. Their involvement in the OPs is dealt with below. Of the three initiatives, JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas)<sup>44</sup> has the closest relevance to sustainable urban development and will therefore be explained in the most detail.

#### 3.5.1. JESSICA

The aim of this initiative is to meet the need for innovative financing possibilities geared to the private sector in urban development by means of a fund model. These urban development funds invest in public-private partnerships and other projects<sup>45</sup> under an integrated plan for sustainable urban development. The fundamental idea of the initiative is the conversion of Structural Funds assistance into for example inexpensive loans, financial participation or guarantees. This is designed to enable projects etc based on a public-private partnership to be financially supported. The funding is paid into revolving urban development funds and supplemented by loans from other banks. The cumulated funding is then awarded in the above-mentioned forms to the project. Funding can only be awarded if the project is part of an integrated plan. At the end of the term, the loans are paid back complete with interest, enabling the funding to be re-awarded. Funding is then no longer tied to objective categories or subsidy rules (e.g. the n+2 rule) and can be used freely. In particular local authorities as providers of services and local companies stand to profit from the PPP structures of urban development funds.

The main advantage of these open development funds is that they safeguard the funding, since they can be 'used' more than once owing to the fund's revolving character, hence enabling more efficient usage. The inclusion of private capital from banks etc also involves the private sector in urban development and enables funding for public-private partnerships. In addition, the

<sup>44</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 44 and 78 (6) a).

<sup>45</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 44.

funds are intertemporal, i.e. projects with different periods can be funded irrespective of budget years and their restrictions (e.g. budgetary ties and annuity problems).

A third of the *Länder* plan in their ERDF OPs to use JESSICA, with no distinction between Convergence and RCE regions in this respect (cf. Fig. 14). A high proportion of *Länder* reserve the right to use urban development funds since according to their OPs their implementation has not been ruled out or its possibility is being examined. It should be noted that these *Länder*, if they choose to use JESSICA, will not be able to implement the model before halfway through the current 2007–2013 FP owing to the extensive preparatory phase.

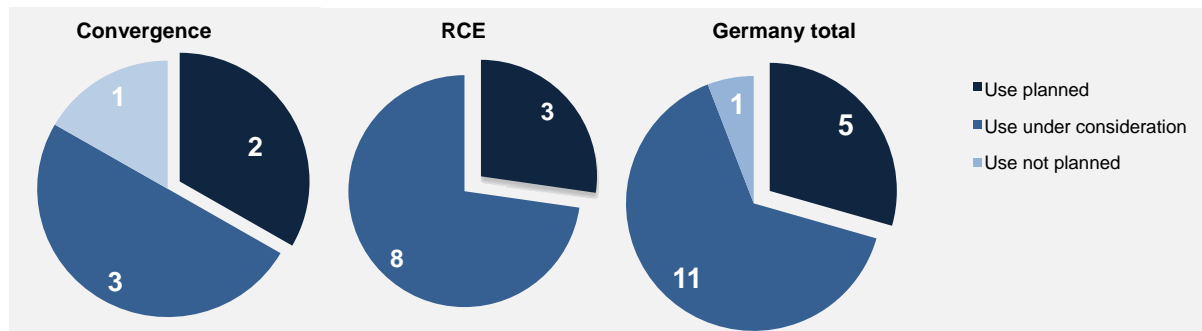


Fig. 14: Use of the JESSICA initiative (figures in the pie charts represent the number of ERDF OPs of the *Länder*) (Source: Own work)

Since 2009, only the Brandenburg Urban Development Fund has been in use in Germany (in its second generation), for which the opening of the fund to local authority companies was decided. The following regional funds are currently in an advanced conceptual phase:

- Berlin Urban Development Fund
- Hamburg-Wilhelmsburg Urban Development Fund
- North Rhine-Westphalia Urban Development Fund
- Rhineland-Palatinate Urban and Structural Development Fund
- Saarland Local Development Fund

Outside Germany, by April 2010 only the funds in Estonia (field of action with KredEx) and the East Midlands (f7) were already in use.

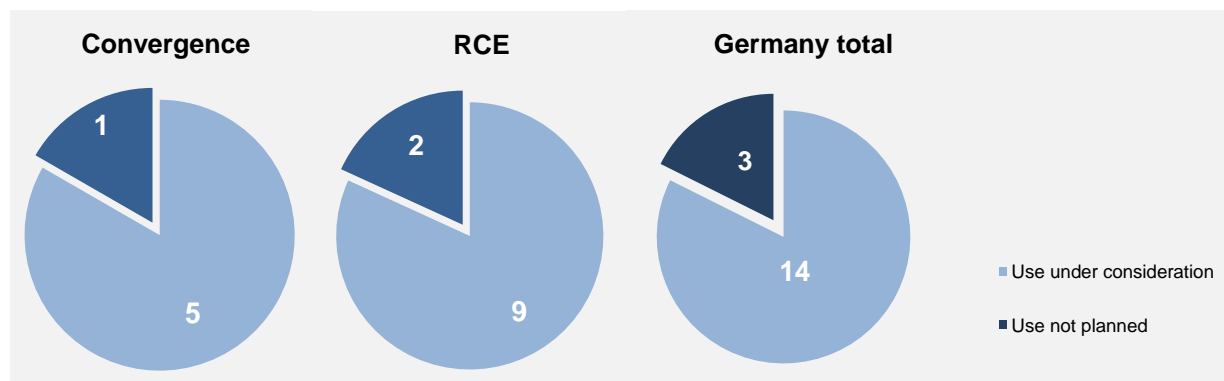
### 3.5.2. JEREMIE and JASPERS

The JEREMIE<sup>46</sup> (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises) initiative is designed to simplify access to financing for newly founded companies, the development of SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) and very small companies. For this purpose, funding from the ERDF is provided in the form of types of financing especially geared to these corporate forms such as small loans and venture capital. The financial resources decided are then managed by a fund manager, who is also responsible for the award of funding. Funding is awarded not directly to SMEs but instead via financial intermediaries such as holding funds. This leads to the creation of micro-credit institutions which then provide direct financial assistance to the company. Investments eligible for funding under JEREMIE include the establishment of new companies, the early phase including start-up capital, and the expansion of companies. Investment is only allowed in commercial activities which are believed to be

<sup>46</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Arts. 44 and 45 (1) c).

potentially profitable by those administering the financial instruments.<sup>47</sup> As in the JESSICA Initiative, the planned use of JEREMIE must be established in the OPs of the *Länder* and a corresponding budget defined.

It should be noted that the use of the instrument is planned in neither Convergence nor RCE OPs, although the overwhelming majority of *Länder* reserve the right to use it (cf. Fig. 15).



**Fig. 15: Use of the JEREMIE initiative (the figures in the pie chart represent the number of ERDF OPs of the *Länder*) (Source: Own work)**

The third initiative, JASPERS<sup>48</sup> (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions), is intended to support regions in the planning and preparation of large-scale projects, the use of funding for urban development projects being conceivable. Support for the project is provided by the expertise and financial knowledge of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the EIB. The financial resources of the initiative come from the Cohesion Fund and the ERDF. The application of the JASPERS initiative, which by focusing on large-scale projects is geared to the needs of new Member States, is not provided for in any of the OPs. Merely Saarland is currently examining the possibility of using the initiative for a large-scale project.

### 3.6. Position of the *Länder* regarding the global grant

Through the global grant – which is dealt with in the General Structural Funds Regulation 1083/2006, Article 42 (1) – the regions have a decentralised instrument which they can use for the delegation of tasks to the local level and the implementation of a place-based policy, including for sustainable urban development. The implementation and management of part of the OP and its budget are taken over by an intermediary office authorised by the region. Possible recipients of the global grant include local public agencies (e.g. town councils), regional development agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This form of the transfer of tasks does not release the managing authority or the Member State from financial responsibility for the way in which the global grant is used. In contrast to the previous FP (cf. General Structural Funds Regulation 1290/1999, Articles 9 and 27), the global grant has been opened up to NGOs since (at present) the intermediary offices need not necessarily carry out tasks which are in the public interest.

<sup>47</sup> Deutscher Verband für Wohnungswesen, Städtebau und Raumordnung e.V. (Hrsg.) [Förderung der integrierten Stadtentwicklung, 2008], p 16.

<sup>48</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Arts. 36 and 45 (1) a).

In the following resolution adopted in 2006 in the upper house of the German Parliament, the Bundesrat,<sup>49</sup> the *Länder* agreed not to use the global grant:

*“The possibility provided by the European Commission of delegating the planning and implementation of funds to the local level, in particular towns and cities, does not appear suitable. It would counteract the approach of a ‘one-stop regional policy’ with which the Länder have the possibility to provide targeted assistance for especially structurally weak regions and cities in order to strengthen their growth and improve employment. Instead, the result would be a rag rug of uncoordinated individual subsidies. The Bundesrat called upon the German federal government to emphatically urge the European Commission to distance itself from this project.”*

In accordance with this position, the global grant is not used in the German ERDF and ESF OPs in the current FP.

By contrast, extensive use is made of this instrument in the Netherlands in the ERDF OP ‘Western Netherlands’. The programme is effective for about 25% of the area of the state. About a third of the total budget of €771 million is intended for the four major cities in the programme area – Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht (G4) – which receives its funding in the form of a global grant.<sup>50</sup> The body administering the grant is the City of Rotterdam.<sup>51</sup>

A modified form of the global grant is provided by lower Saxony in the form of ‘regionalised partial budgets’ in Priority 1 ‘Increasing the operational competitiveness and employment of in particular SMEs’ in its ERDF OPs. Accordingly, the Hanover region as well as administrative districts and towns which are administrative districts in their own right are entitled to draw up subsidy guidelines tailored to the local situation within the financial framework of a partial budget, which are then used as a basis for the approval of applications from SMEs as final beneficiaries. However, before the start of the project, these applications are to be submitted by the local authority to the funding bank of the *Land*. The size of the regionalised partial budget which a regional administrative body can apply for depends on the objective to which it belongs and is €2.5 million in the RCE region and €3.75 million in the Convergence region, in addition to the objective-specific own contribution of 50% or 25% to be paid by the local authority. In the end, the regional administrative bodies listed can dispose of a sub-budget of €5 million, and in their regulations they can themselves decide the minimum amounts and maximum subsidies within the maxima provided for by subsidy legislation.<sup>52</sup>

### **3.7. Integration of the aim of European transnational cooperation by the *Länder***

As shown in Section 2, the implementation of the aim of European territorial cooperation (ETC) is also controlled by OPs. Separate OPs exist for the cooperation areas set up in the strands of cross-border (Strand A) and transnational cooperation (Strand B). The *Länder* situated on German state frontiers were directly involved in the production of OPs for border regions and included their approaches for the achievement of the aim of ETC in this process.

In addition, the ETC aim is dealt with in different ways in four German RCE OPs. For example, the administrative authorities in Baden-Württemberg, Hamburg and North Rhine-Westphalia intend to support transnational know-how transfer between cities in connection with the

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Bundesrat, [Drucksache 507/06, 2006], p 2.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. EU-COM [OP West Netherlands“, 2010].

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Region West Netherlands [OP “West Netherlands”, 2006], p 49.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Verkehr (Hrsg.) [Rahmenregelung für die kommunale Förderung von KMUs, 2007], pp 1ff.

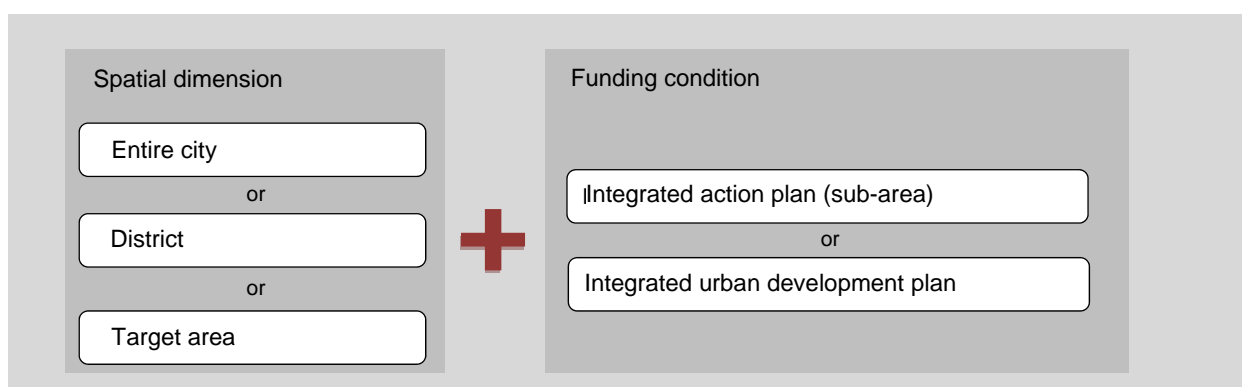


integration of the URBACT II programme. Meanwhile Saarland has declared itself in favour in its ERDF OP of supporting ETC on the basis of the initiative 'Regions for economic transformation'.

### 3.8. Objects of support with urban relevance in the OPs of the *Länder*

Individual objects of support are already mentioned in the OPs which are particularised during the implementation of the OPs in accordance with the subsidy guidelines of the *Länder*. In order to discern the Urban Dimension at this level, all the objects of support in the ERDF OPs of the *Länder* were recorded. This resulted in a Microsoft Access database containing 680 objects of support along with their attributes. This tool can be used to filter out objects of support with an urban dimension and to compare them with the other objects of support.

In order to include all interpretations of the urban dimension (cf. Section 0) in the study, the examination of the urban dimension and the level of objects of support was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, objects of support with an urban dimension in the strict sense were filtered out of the database which represented sub-area and/or whole-city, integrated urban development actions. To be gauged as actions in this sense, the city had to be determinable as the spatial context of the action while the inclusion of the action in an integrated action or urban development plan had to be apparent as the condition for support (cf. Fig. 16).



**Fig. 16: Filter Stage 1 – Article 8 objects of support with an urban dimension in the strict sense (Source: Own work)**

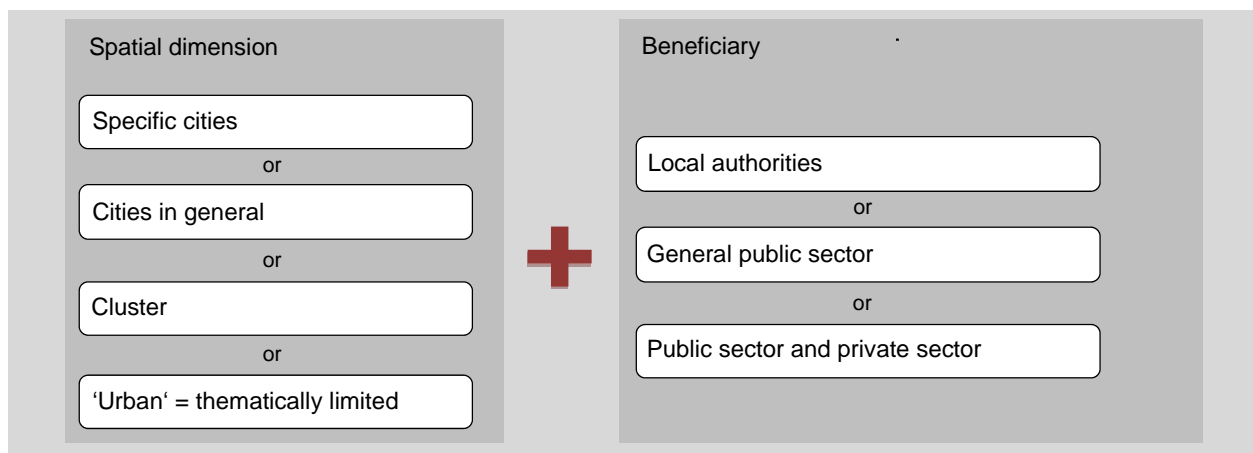
In the second filter operation, objects of support were gauged which can be characterised as potentially urbanly integrated urban development actions. For these objects of support, the public sector had to be named as the beneficiary and the action had to be established in the neighbourhood (cf. Fig. 17). The latter could also be derived from the thematic assignment of the object of support. For example, it was assumed that the enhancement of the higher education landscape was an action which would be carried out almost exclusively in cities.

These objects of support were regarded as potentially integrated as they can be adapted by the city council to the development strategy for the city as a whole. This possibility is available to towns and cities with a population of more than 8,000 in eastern Germany almost without exception since the majority of them are taking part in the urban development support programme *Stadtumbau Ost*.<sup>53</sup> In order to benefit from this programme, the local authorities must demonstrate the possession of an integrated urban development plan. This only applies to a small extent to the 1,867 towns and cities with more than 8,000 inhabitants in western

<sup>53</sup> According to information provided by the Bertelsmann Foundation, all in all there are 368 towns and cities in eastern Germany with a population of more than 8,000. According to *Transferstelle Stadtumbau Ost*, by the end of 2007, 388 towns and villages were participating in the federal-*Land* urban development assistance programme *Stadtumbau Ost*.

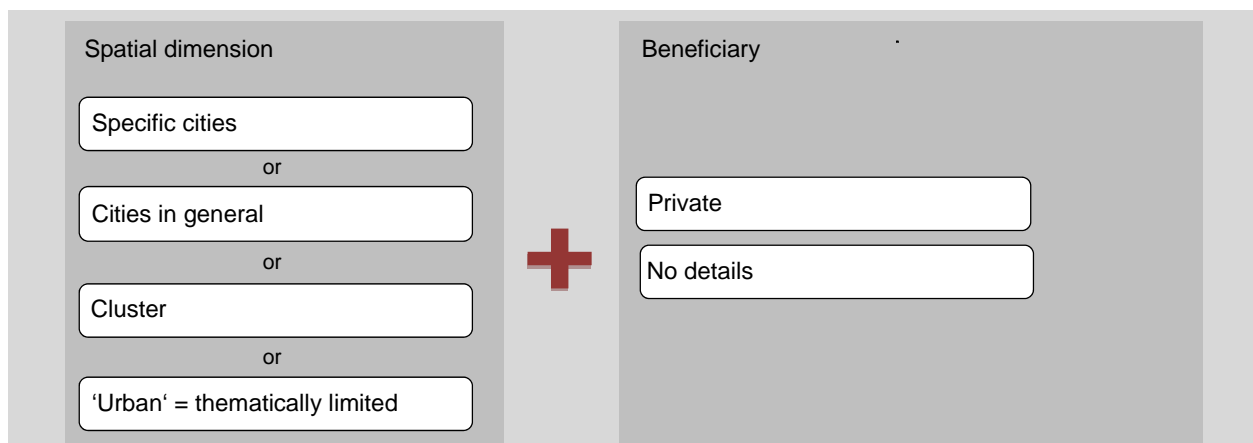
Germany, since by 2007 only 280 local authorities had signed up to the urban development programme Stadtbau West.

The OPs in the RCE regions were examined by dividing them into non-city-states and city-states, since in the city-states it can be assumed that the objects of support are located in the three cities without this having to be explicitly or implicitly (e.g. thematically) indicated. Moreover, according to Bremen and Berlin, objects of support outside the field of action sustainable urban development/brownfield regeneration are dealt with on an integrated basis. For example, in the case of Berlin, the content of the strategic approaches of the OPs is coordinated in connection with an overall strategy for the Structural Funds. Accordingly, for the city-states, Filter Stage 3 was dealt with as Filter Stage 2, so that all the actions not captured by Filter Stage 1 were therefore dealt with as potentially integrated.



**Fig. 17: Filter Stage 2 – potentially integrated urban development actions (Source: Own work)**

The third filter operation (cf. Fig. 18) was designed to identify purely sectoral urban development actions which as general urban actions possess an urban dimension in the broad sense. Similar to the potentially integrated urban development actions, their spatial dimension had to be apparent as 'urban' and the actors of Filter Stage 2 could not be mentioned.



**Fig. 18: Filter Stage 3 – objects of support with a general urban dimension or an urban dimension in a broad sense (Source: Own work)**

### **3.8.1. Objects of support related to Article 8 (Filter Stage 1, urban dimension in the strict sense)**

First of all, the integration/derivation of urban actions into an overall urban strategy (integrated strategies) is only required in the OPs in the fields of action of sustainable urban development and brownfield regeneration (albeit with one exception: Hessen establishes financial support for the local economy in a priority axis for the economy and employment/R&D). These fields of action belong exclusively to priority axes which are solely or partially devoted to urban development. A total of 126 objects of support were filtered out to which these criteria apply.

Furthermore, the study found that the range of strategies for sustainable urban development recommended in Article 8/ERDF Regulation<sup>54</sup> is rarely supported as a whole by the *Länder* in the OPs of the Convergence and RCE territories. In the Convergence regions, highly investment-based themes of urban development and architectural preservation (e.g. the rehabilitation/enhancement of the physical environment and brownfield regeneration) and topics of the social infrastructure (e.g. the integration of the disadvantaged and educational support) come to the fore in these fields of action.

In the OPs of RCE regions/non-city-states, objects of support in the categories of urban development and architectural preservation, the economy (e.g. supporting start-ups, training for women, etc) as well as the social infrastructure dominate by the number of references. In the OPs of the city-states, these topics are joined by urban governance.

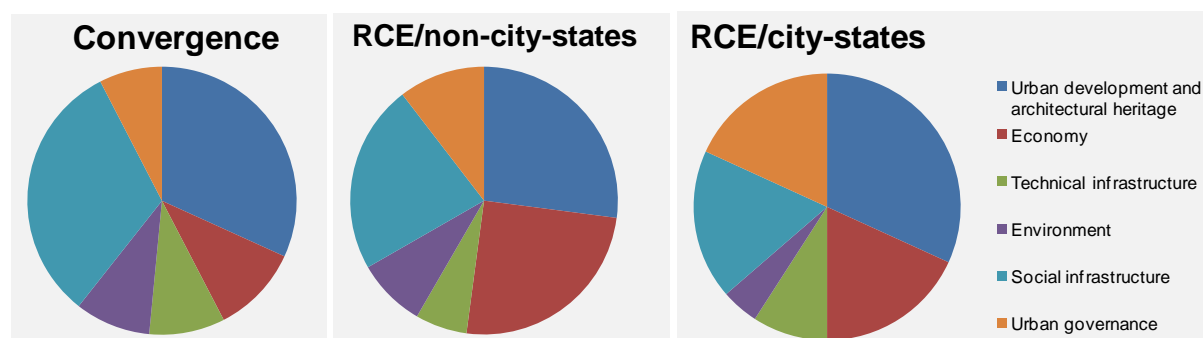
In Annex 1 – Detailed evaluation of the objects of support, all the themes of Filter Stage 1 are sorted by thematic category and the number of references. Although the frequency of references does not provide any indication of the extent to which support themes are quantitatively applied, they do provide an impression of thematic presence. To show this in more detail, the support topics for which more than two references were found in the OPs of the *Länder* are listed in Tab. 3 (cf. also Fig. 19). In these assessments, the topics of urban district economy, the enhancement of public areas and brownfields are especially prevalent.

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<sup>54</sup> The following strategies are listed in the article mentioned: increasing economic growth, rehabilitation of the physical environment, redeveloping brownfields, maintaining and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, promoting entrepreneurial initiative, local employment and local development, and the provision of public services.

**Tab. 3: Support themes of Filter Stage 1 with more than two references (Source: Own work)**

Qty	Theme	Thematic group
15	General economic development aid + district economy + start-up support	Economy
11	Brownfield regeneration	Urban development and architectural heritage
7	Enhancement and rehabilitation of roads, squares, green spaces and other open spaces	
5	Integration: low-income households	Social infrastructure
5	Urban social infrastructure	
4	Enhancement of the surroundings	Urban development and architectural heritage
4	Urban technical infrastructure	Technical infrastructure
4	Pollution control	The environment
4	Neighbourhood management	Urban governance
3	Primary and lower secondary education	Social infrastructure
3	Mixed use	Urban development and architectural heritage
3	Cultural heritage	
3	Urban transport – private motorised transport	Technical infrastructure
3	Energy efficiency	The environment
3	Integrated urban development (plans)	Urban governance

**Fig. 19: Evaluation of references to objects of support of Filter Stage 1 sorted by themes (Source: Own work)**

### 3.8.2. Potentially integrable objects of support (Filter Stage 2)

The evaluation revealed that the cities are only mentioned to a very low extent in the ERDF OPs as sole beneficiaries in fields of action outside sustainable urban development and brownfield regeneration.

In the 23 cases in which objects of support with the above-mentioned restriction on cities in non-city-states are addressed, this concerns predominantly (Convergence regions) or even solely (RCE regions) areas of the economy (e.g. R&D). In the OPs of the city-states, this process identified 88 objects of support, of which nearly two thirds belong to the economy (cf. Fig. 20). The second significant area here is technical infrastructure.

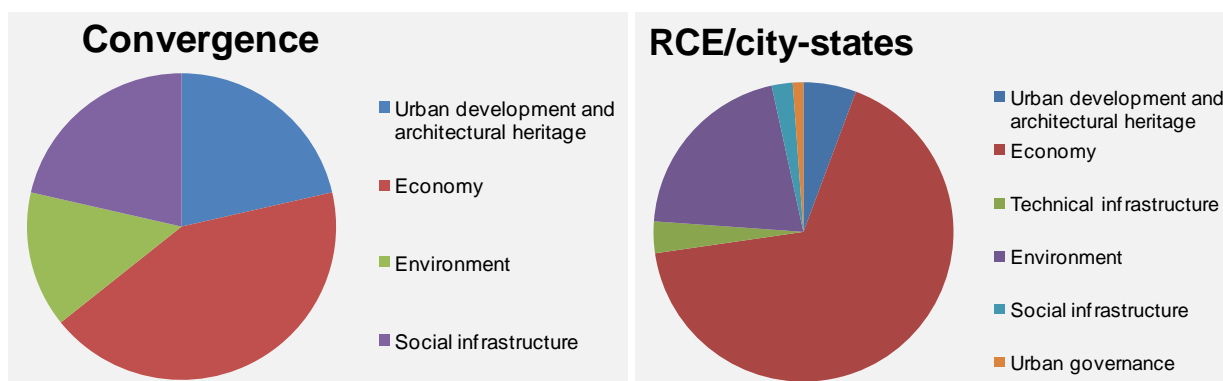


Fig. 20: Evaluation of references of objects of support in Filter Stage 2 sorted thematically (Source: Own work)

### 3.8.3. Urban actions – objects of support with a general urban dimension (Filter Stage 3, urban dimension in the broad sense)

The objects of support not selected by the above filtering operations were then examined to see whether they could be assigned to the purely sectoral urban development actions. Using this filter, 141 objects of support were identified in ERDF non-city-state OPs. City-states were left out of account because, as outlined above, they can be assumed to have an integrating influence on the use of funding. In this case, the managing authority and the initial recipient are largely identical (i.e. the city), albeit with the exception of Bremerhaven.

In the Convergence and RCE regions, the clear predominance of objects of support in the economy emerged judging by the number of references, which in many cases concerned support for R&D companies (cf. Fig. 21). In Convergence regions, second place is taken by topics categorised under social and technical infrastructure.

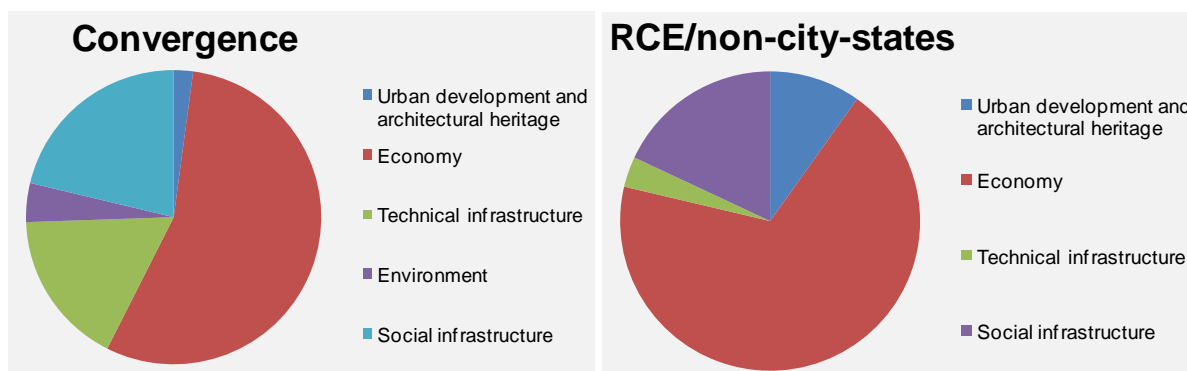


Fig. 21: Evaluation of references of objects of support in Filter Stage 3 sorted thematically (Source: Own work)

### 3.8.4. Comparison of objects of support with an urban dimension in the strict and broad sense and with no urban Dimension

When considering all the objects of support in the ERDF OPs of the non-city-states, there emerges a picture (cf. Fig. 22) of an even distribution of those actions in which no ties to cities are apparent and those actions which can be assumed to be supported in an urban context. In terms of the number of references, the latter group is somewhat dominated by objects of support which tend to be treated on an urban sectoral basis.

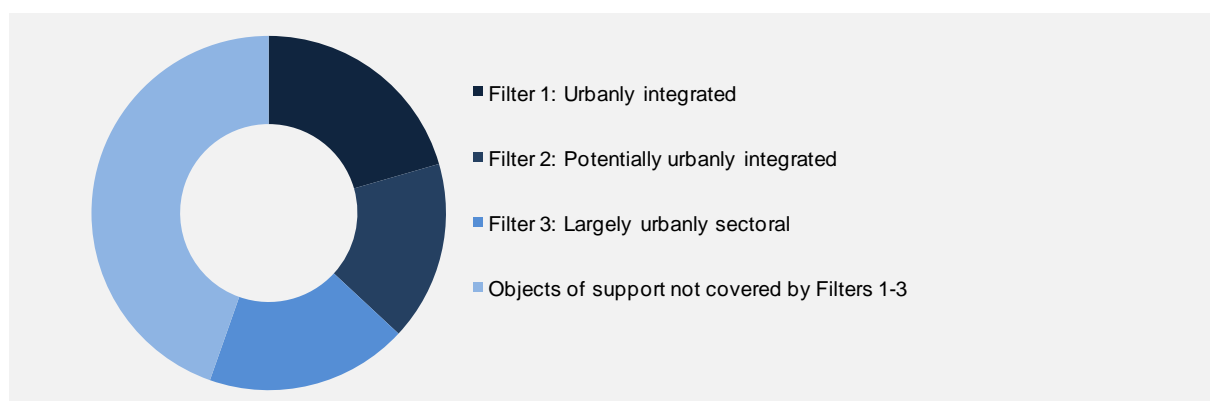


Fig. 22: Evaluation of all the objects of support in the ERDF OPs of the *Länder* (Source: Own work)

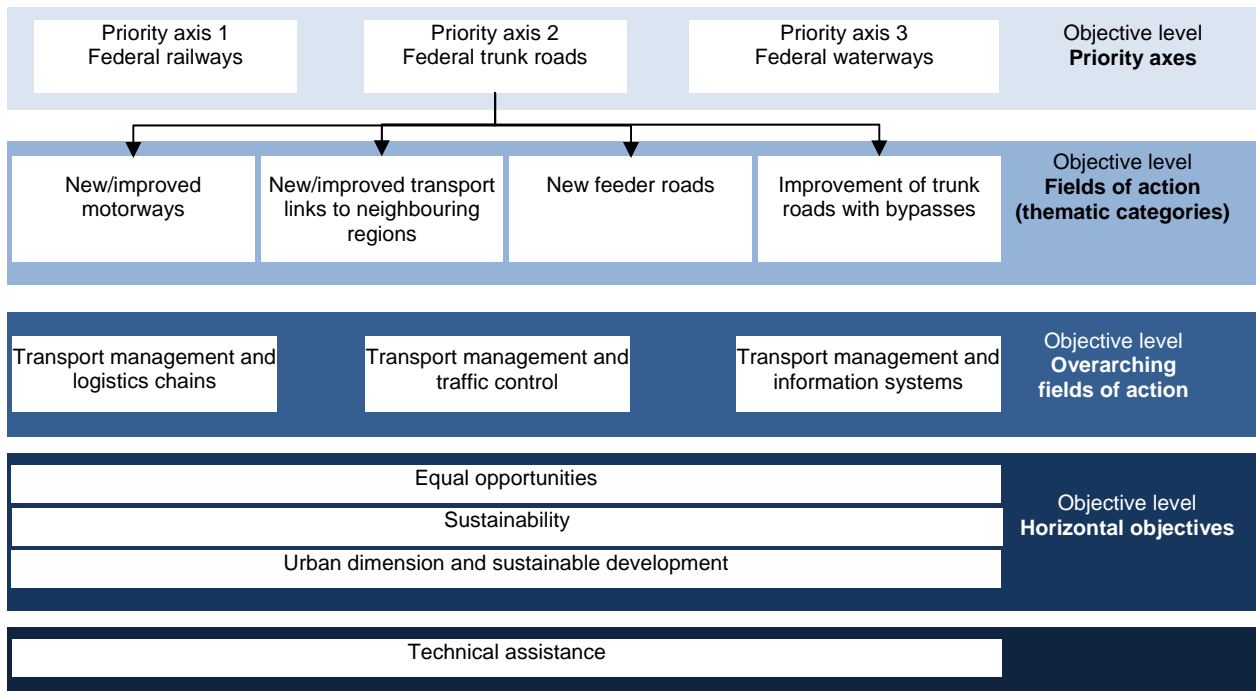
### 3.9. Attention paid to urban questions in the German federal government's ERDF OP 'Transport'

Apart from the 17 OPs of the German *Länder*, European structural fund support is also included in the award of funding by the German federal government. As with the *Länder*, the award of financial support to the German federal level as beneficiary requires an OP. The 'Federal Government ERDF Operational Programme Transport 2007–2013' was compiled for the current FP. The general targeted area given is the Convergence regions in Germany, i.e. the five non-city-states making up eastern Germany and the Objective 1 area Lower Saxony. Starting from the various areas of responsibility in accordance with the application of the principle of subsidiarity at the German federal levels of administration, the focus of the object of support is on overarching transport projects. The division of the targeted areas carried out in the OP is broken down into the priority axes federal railways, trunk roads and waterways (cf. Fig. 23).

The categorisation of the actions planned takes place within the framework of the national large-scale transport projects, which are integrated into the relevant plans and programmes of the German federal government. Federal transport planning coordinated between the federal and *Länder* government provides the main basis for the selection of actions and projects.

In line with the designated level of action of the federal government, considering the urban dimension only plays an indirect role. A direct reference to the urban transport infrastructure cannot be established in the framework of the federal government OP. The corresponding actions are included in the respective *Länder* OPs. Attention is paid to the urban dimension within the horizontal objectives and in the field of action 'Improvement of national roads through bypasses' of Priority Axis 2. The aim is to improve urban living conditions and quality by redirecting traffic in small and medium-sized towns crossed by federal trunk roads. Another direct effect is achieved by improving the accessibility of agglomeration areas, the better transport links having a positive influence on the attractiveness of towns and their development.

Financing large-scale projects under the JASPERS initiative is not at present planned by the federal government. The application of JEREMIE and JESSICA taking into account the above facts and objects of support is not relevant to the sectoral OP Transport. The possibility of cross-financing actions as provided for by Articles 34 and 8 used in the *Länder* is not provided for or mentioned in the federal OP.



**Fig. 23: Objective system of the Federal Government ERDF OP Transport 2007–2013 (Source: Own work, [OP Verkehr EFRE Bund 2007–2013, 2007])**

## 4. Urban dimensions in the ESF programmes

Article 2 of the new ESF Framework Regulation 1081/2006<sup>55</sup> grants the *Länder* the possibility to fix employment-boosting actions more spatially or to connect them to disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. The article states that the ESF supports actions “to reduce national, regional and local employment disparities.”<sup>56</sup> Below, the ESF OPs of the *Länder* are studied in connection with this and other options.

Under the ESF, some €9.3 billion is available to Germany for the 2007–2013 FP. Apart from the OPs of the *Länder*, for the first time there is an interdisciplinary ESF federal programme, to which about 40% of the funding is allocated. The total financial resources are shared approximately equally between the two aims Convergence (around €4.7 billion) and RCE (around €4.6 billion). All in all, ESF funding has hence declined in the current FP compared to the previous one by about a quarter. This decline is shared roughly equally between federal government and the *Länder*.

In the NSRF, the strategic aim formulated for the ESF was to gear the labour market to new challenges, i.e. more and better jobs. The thematic priorities set in both the federal OP and the OPs of the *Länder* were:

- Boosting the adaptability and competitiveness of businesses and employees
- Improving human capital
- Improving access to employment and the social integration of disadvantaged people

Sustainable urban development was included in the system of objectives as a horizontal objective alongside equal opportunities and balance.<sup>57</sup>

### 4.1. System and budgets of objective levels of the ESF OPs

As with the ERDF, when the ESF is deployed, the use of funding is organised in the OPs by means of a system of objectives specified by priority axes, fields of action and objects of support (cf. 3.1). The priority axes were shown in a table in the OPs along with their budgets as prescribed in the Structural Funds Regulation.<sup>58</sup> The thematic priorities are treated as priority axes in the OPs for both Objective 1 and Objective 2 areas (cf. Fig. 24). In some OPs (e.g. Thuringia), transnational and interregional partnerships are formulated as a separate priority axis.

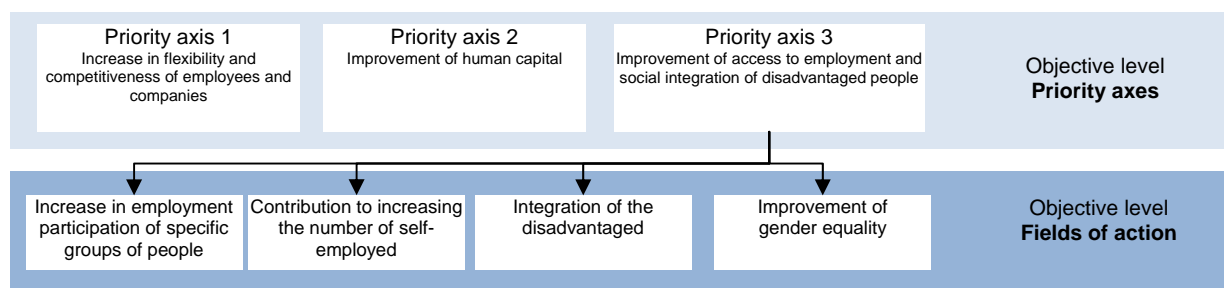


Fig. 24: Example of the ESF objective system (Source: Own work)

<sup>55</sup> Council of the European Union [ESF-Regulation 1081, 2006]: p 14.

<sup>56</sup> Cited from: Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales [ESF-Bundes OP, 2007], p 136.

<sup>58</sup> Council of the European Union [Council Regulation 1083, 2006], Art. 37, e), ii).



Unlike in the ERDF OPs, the ESF OPs of the *Länder* do not list any specific objectives, fields of action or actions with an explicitly urban dimension. However, only a few *Länder* such as Hamburg describe sustainable urban development as a horizontal objective or define the urban dimension as a cross-sectional topic (Saxony-Anhalt). In contrast to the priority axes, these objectives are assigned topics but not budgets, meaning that in contrast to the ERDF, financial appropriation with an urban dimension cannot be quantified. Classification of the budget in terms of territory types is also difficult. Only Saxony-Anhalt and Bavaria carry out the spatial categorisation of funding, both *Länder* using around 42% of their total ESF budget in urban areas.<sup>59</sup>

At the federal level, too, sustainable urban development is only formulated in the ESF federal OP as a horizontal objective. No thematic or spatial allocation of funding with respect to the urban dimension is carried out. Consequently, no direct connection can be derived between the ESF OPs and support for sustainable urban development. Nevertheless it can be assumed that the actions funded by the ESF in social and educationally relevant areas can make an important contribution to integrated urban development as they for instance follow on from existing programmes in the framework of integrated action plans. By way of example, the ESF federal programme ‘Social city – Education, Economy, Working in the Neighbourhood’ is examined below.

## 4.2. The ESF federal programme ‘Social City – Education, Economy, Working in the Neighbourhood’

Since no explicit urban dimension is apparent in the ESF OPs of the *Länder*, at this juncture the ESF federal programme ‘BIWAQ: Education, Economy, Working in the Neighbourhood’ will be examined in more detail because it exhibits a strong neighbourhood dimension by being based on the regional scenario of the urban development support programme ‘Social City’. BIWAQ is designed to support projects which improve the training, qualifications and social circumstances of inhabitants – and hence their prospects on the job market. Its fields of action include education, employment, social integration and residents’ participation as well as value creation in the neighbourhood. Other important aspects are gender equality and the integration of people with an ethnic minority background. Support is primarily granted for new project ideas and approaches. Projects following on from previous interventions can only qualify for funding if their existing strategy is developed further. Moreover, the projects must be incorporated within the integrated action plan of the Social City, meaning for instance that they must be connected to investment in urban development and can be carried out in cooperation with relevant local actors.<sup>60</sup> The programme is financed by the BMVBS Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, the ESF and the project organiser. The *Länder* are not involved, which explains why the programme is not integrated in the OPs of the *Länder*. Funding totalling about €156 million<sup>61</sup> is available for the period 2008–15, around €100 million of which comes from the ESF. BIWAQ is scheduled to take place in two funding rounds. In the first round (2008–2012),<sup>62</sup> the 500 expressions of interest submitted were whittled down to around 140<sup>63</sup> by independent experts using a ranking system. A minimum project volume of €200,000 was specified. Apart

<sup>59</sup> Regarding the three city-states, it is assumed that all the actions to be carried out have an urban dimension.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. BMVBS [Förderrichtlinie BIWAQ, 2008].

<sup>61</sup> Of which 62% for projects in the RCE objective and 38% for the Convergence objective.

<sup>62</sup> A second call for project proposals is planned for 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Of which 26 proposals in the Convergence objective, 61 in the RCE objective and 6 in Phasing-out areas.

from a few exceptions, the projects are now underway. Tab. 4 shows the distribution of funding for the first round of BIWAQ.

**Tab. 4: Distribution of funding for the first round of BI (Source: Own work)**

	Federal funding (€m)	ESF funding (€m)	Total (€m)
RCE	18.7	30.8	49.5
Convergence	2.2	13.8	16.0
Phasing out	0.9	4.5	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>70.9</b>

Funding is provided differently depending on the objective regions. In Convergence regions, 75% of the funding necessary is provided under the ESF, applicants must put forward at least 7% of the costs, and the balance (up to 18%) is paid by the BMVBS. In RCE regions, the ESF subsidy amounts to up to 50%, at least 12% has to be provided by the applicant, and the remaining costs (up to 38%) are shouldered by the BMVBS.

Two example BIWAQ projects (one Convergence and one RCE project) are outlined below.

#### **4.2.1. 'OstWerkStadt' in East Leipzig as a case study for the BIWAQ programme in a Convergence objective area**

In the programme area East Leipzig, the programme 'OstWerkStadt' was initiated under BIWAQ, the application for which was submitted by the City of Leipzig, in this case the Office for Urban Regeneration and Residential Development. East Leipzig was designated in the year 2000 as a development area within the programme financed jointly by the federal government and the *Länder* government ('Districts with a Particular Development Need – the Social City'). It primarily comprises the districts of Neustadt-Neuschönefeld and Volkamsdorf along with parts of Reudnitz and Anger-Crottendorf. The districts are characterised by the dense multi-storey perimeter development commonly used for housing in the late 19th century. Compared to other housing projects in Leipzig dating back to the same era, the focus here was clearly on functionality rather than prestige. Compared to Leipzig as a whole, East Leipzig is beset by far-reaching structural problems. The main reason for this is the concentration of socially weak sections of the population – both Germans and ethnic minorities. The proportion of foreigners as well as the level of unemployment and poverty are much higher here than anywhere else in the city. In recent years, various actions had already been carried out to improve local employment and integration under a variety of programmes (e.g. Social City, Stadtumbau Ost and ERDF). OstWerkStadt was launched as a follow-up project to 'IQ\_Quadrat' in order to compensate for the disadvantages suffered in East Leipzig. Its main activities are support for local economies, attention to ethnic economies, and the tapping and development of the potential for employment. Various measures on for instance employment and further training as well as economic development aid and consulting are carried out within five 'individual workshops' (Business Workshop, Location Workshop, Competency Workshop, Employment Workshop and Conceptual Workshop).



Fig. 25: OstWerkStadt's advice centre and a consulting session (Source: Quartiersmanagement Leipziger Osten)

#### 4.2.2. The MIQUA project as a case study for the BIWAQ programme in an RCE objective area

Under the MIQUA project, a number of towns and cities from the *Länder* of Bavaria, Hessen and North Rhine-Westphalia<sup>64</sup> applied for funding from the BIWAQ programme. The emphasis of MIQUA is on the development of a neighbourhood-based, microfinancing structure between local authorities. The aim is for micro-credits to be awarded by neighbourhood banks to small and very small businesses and start-up individuals who would not receive loans from the regular credit market. The project organiser is KIZ gGmbH from Offenbach. The MIQUA is based on the Ostpol Creative and Start-up Centre, which was set up in the city of Offenbach between the city council, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, a local construction company and the Sparkasse bank under the BMVBS programme ExWoSt ('Experimental Housing Construction and Urban Development') with the aim of providing financing to the self-employed in the eastern inner city. However, problems arose concerning set-up and the costs incurred which could not be solved by an individual neighbourhood. Therefore, under the MIQUA project, initially five neighbourhoods teamed up to grant a total of around 200 loans. The actors are initially in contact with ten other neighbourhoods in order to provide the basis for any advantageous economies of scale. The local authorities and neighbourhoods are responsible for the set-up of local funds and for the integration of the neighbourhood bank into urban development. MIQUA assists the local authorities with for example expertise, experience and contacts as well as the necessary forms and documents.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Bavaria: Augsburg, Erlangen, Forchheim, Hof, Ingolstadt, Munich, Neumarkt; Hessen: Frankfurt am Main, Kassel, Offenbach; North Rhine-Westphalia: Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Oberhausen.

<sup>65</sup> BMVBS [BIWAQ ESF-Bundesprogramm, 2007].

## 5. Urban projects in the context of Structural Fund support

After examining the programme level and the OPs, the project level of Structural Fund support is studied in more detail below.<sup>66</sup> One element of this examination involves dealing with the various award methods applied by the *Länder* for financial resources connected to sustainable urban development. This will be followed by an overview of the urban projects which have already benefited from ERDF funding and a detailed study of a representative selection of these projects.

### 5.1. Procedures applied by the *Länder* for the award of ERDF funding for sustainable urban development actions

The award procedures for ERDF funding used by the *Länder* to support sustainable urban development actions vary depending on the projects' spatial circumstances, their selection and the procedural design of the award process.

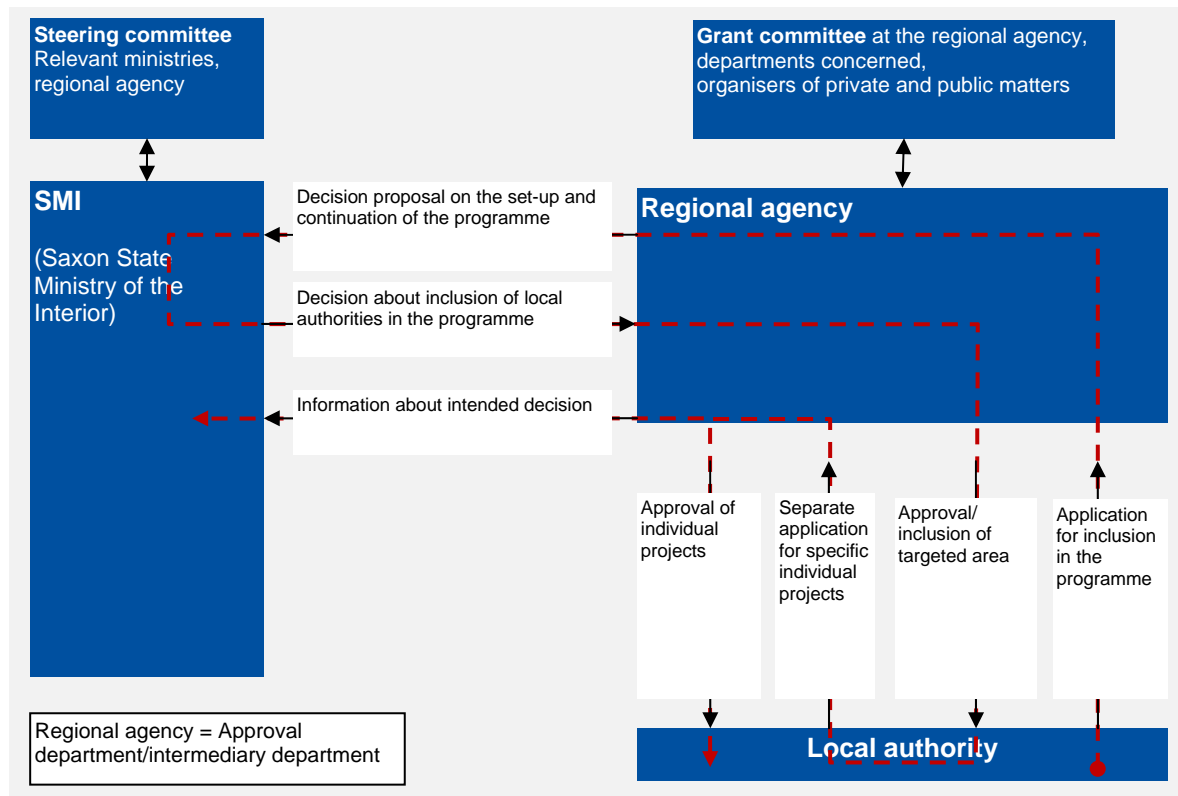
In the OPs, the *Länder* specify two different approaches concerning the spatial boundaries within which sustainable urban development projects must be located in order to qualify for funding. On the one hand there is the concrete instruction that local authorities must set up district-sized targeted areas which have been demonstrated to be disadvantaged within the city as a whole. The ERDF subsidy scenarios are applied to these areas and may benefit locally based projects, which must be included in an integrated action plan. Alternatively, this funding need not be tied to specific districts and can be applied by local authorities throughout the entire city. Although there are no designated targeted areas for sustainable urban development actions, they must be compliant with an integrated urban development plan (IUPD).

Two approaches are applied in the *Länder* in the procedures used to select projects. Firstly, competitive procedures are used in which local authorities and/or project organisers can take part with project ideas or integrated action plans comprising groups of actions. Steering committees, grant committees or similar bodies set up by the *Land* play a deciding and/or advisory role. Secondly, ERDF funding may be decided on the basis of an appraisal of individual project applications, which are to be based by the applicants on partly already existing subsidy guidelines and administrative regulations. Compared to individual reviews and decisions, competitive procedures are usually more transparent for applicants.

These two project selection procedures may be used one after the other, as is for example the case in Saxony (cf. Fig. 26). In Saxony, programme areas with integrated action plans are chosen during a competitive procedure, after which individual projects are applied for by the local authorities and decided at the level of the *Land*. The local authority is free to decide whether to carry out the actions itself or to pass on the funding to third-party projects on the basis of its own subsidy guidelines. In the latter case, private bodies and NGOs etc submit project applications to the council, which may then approve support for the project with public funding but will still ultimately have to obtain the assent of the *Land*.

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<sup>66</sup> The examination of the OPs for the ESF regarding their urban dimension is deferred as research continues owing to the described lack of both the establishment of spatial dimensions and explicit concerns relevant to urban development.

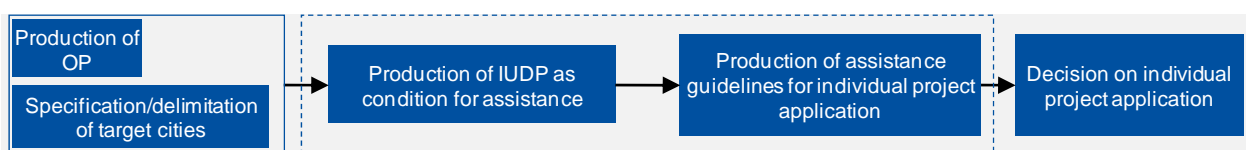


**Fig. 26: Application procedure in the Free State of Saxony (Source: Own work, Sächsisches Staatsministerium des Innern (SMI) [VwV Stadtentwicklung SN, 2007–2013, 2009])**

The different scheduling of the award processes used by the *Länder* is the final aspect that needs to be dwelt on. The steps of producing the OP, determining the beneficiary cities, preparing the application process (production of subsidy guidelines) and the decisions on individual project applications are taken in the *Länder* either one after the other or in parallel. The latter is the case if the beneficiary cities (or a small short list) are stated in the OP, competitions to choose beneficiary cities are held during the phase when the OP is compiled, or if the necessary subsidy guidelines are updated or drafted during the production of the OP.

By evaluating OPs, telephone interviews and online research on the websites of the construction ministries, the following different methods of awarding ERDF funding to support sustainable urban development projects were identified:

- ERDF programme beneficiary cities (or a small short list) are already specified in the OP. In order to qualify for funding, in some cases these cities must draw up integrated urban development plans (IUDPs) from which individual projects are to be derived. Applications for these projects can then be submitted to the managing authority, which decides whether to approve them on the basis of its own subsidy guidelines (cf. Fig. 27). This procedure is exercised in four *Länder*.

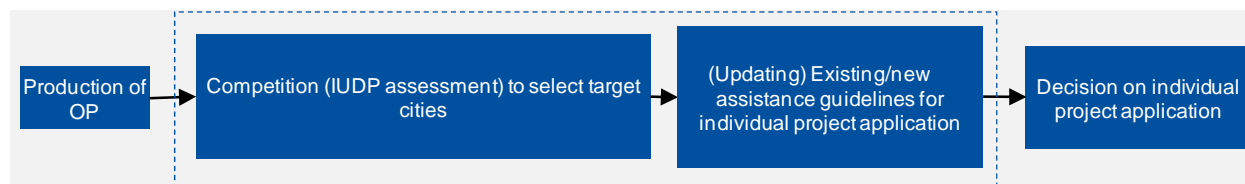


**Fig. 27: Method 1 – preliminary determination of targeted cities (Source: Own work)**

- Following the production and approval of the OP, the managing authority holds a competition. The cities are called upon to apply to join the support programme as entire

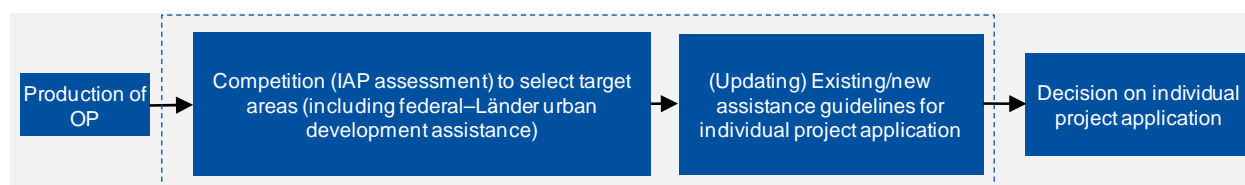
cities each with its own IUDP, in which groups of concrete actions are specified. *Land* subsidy guidelines (updated or specially drawn up for this purpose) regulate how the cities chosen can apply for projects (cf. Fig. 28). This procedure is exercised in three *Länder*.

*nder.*



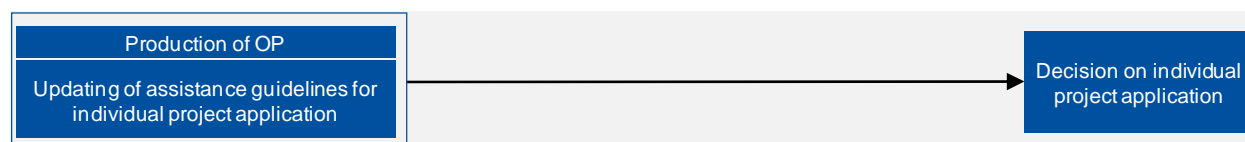
**Fig. 28: Method 2a – competition for the selection of targeted cities (Source: Own work)**

- In contrast to the above situation, in this case the cities are each invited to apply to be included as programme areas each with their own integrated sub-area action plan (SAAP) designed to enhance/stabilise a disadvantaged neighbourhood (cf. Fig. 29). This procedure is exercised in four *Länder*.



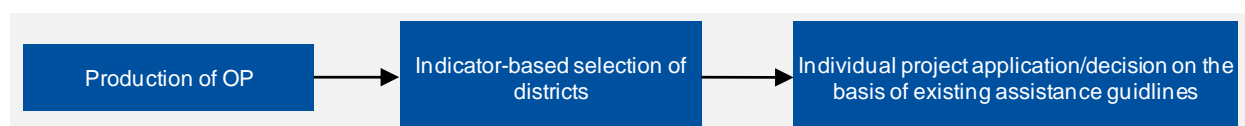
**Fig. 29: Method 2b – competition for the selection of targeted areas (Source: Own work)**

- In the direct individual decision of projects, nearly all towns and cities (with the exception of a city region) can apply to the managing authority with individual projects which must be included in (or derived from) an IUDP. The necessary subsidy guidelines were updated when the OP was drafted (cf. Fig. 30). A project was first approved in this manner in Q1 2007.



**Fig. 30: Method 3 – direct decisions over individual projects (Source: Own work)**

- In the city-states, following the approval of the OP, disadvantaged urban districts are selected with the help of indicators which can apply for individual projects on the basis of integrated action plans and existing guidelines (cf. Fig. 31). A project was first approved using this procedure in Q1 2009.



**Fig. 31: Method 4 – non-competitive, indicator-based selection of urban areas (Source: Own work)**

Conclusions about the dynamics of the award of funding from the methods used can only be drawn to a certain extent. The fastest procedure following the approval of an OP by the European Commission (Q1 2007) involved individual sustainable urban development projects

being agreed by a *Land* using Method 3. Then again, this method is the least complex and is only applied in one *Land*. The assumption that the method involving the preliminary determination of targeted cities allows the more dynamic award of individual project approval (since the selection process is anticipated by the cities and takes place when the OP is being drawn up) was not confirmed. Although in one *Land* projects were already approved in Q4 2008, in others this was still not the case by Q2 2009 (when the survey was carried out).

## 5.2. Quantitative evaluation of the project level

The projects for which funding was applied for from the Structural Fund and approved by the *Länder* are recorded in lists of beneficiaries. The General Structural Funds Regulation specifies that each *Land* must update its list of beneficiaries by 30 June each year – although not all *Länder* comply with this demand. From contact with the *Länder* it is known that funding from the sustainable urban development/brownfield regeneration field of action have partly only been approved since Q3 2009 – and as of January 2010 these projects were not contained in the current lists of beneficiaries.

In order to gain an initial quantitative impression of the implementation of the Urban Dimension at the project level, those projects whose beneficiaries were cities were filtered out of the lists of beneficiaries dated 30 June 2009. Evaluation involved breaking down projects by *Land* and the thematic categories established during the course of the research project. In addition, the ratio between the approved total funding and the funding awarded to cities was calculated for three cases.

As already emphasised, the evaluation of the beneficiary lists merely represents a snapshot, as shown for the examples North Rhine-Westphalia, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Berlin in Tab. 5. In some cases here, only about 30% of the total ERDF budget and 10% of the total ESF budget of the *Länder* has been used. The percentage of funding awarded directly to cities is in the range of 9–25% in the case of the ERDF and negligible for the ESF.

Classifying the distribution of approved funding or city ERDF projects among thematic categories does not result in a consistent picture for the *Länder*. Regular trends are only to be observed when considering the aggregate of Convergence regions, RCE regions and Germany. Projects predominate which have been approved for the social infrastructure thematic area. They are followed by the two almost equally ranking categories urban development with architectural heritage and technical infrastructure. Integrated projects comprising a collection of actions from all the thematic categories listed were only identified in RCE regions.

The area comprising the economy so important for the study (since the impact of the urban dimension in the German Structural Fund programme on the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy is to be examined in this document) is not adequately gauged by the study method performed here. As shown in Fig. 32, economic actions were only approved to a minor extent. This can hardly be attributed to the fact that in this case usually private actors receive subsidies for economic investments directly from the *Länder*. However, whether this group of actors is active in an urban or rural area cannot usually be discerned from the list of beneficiaries.

As far as the ESF is concerned, significant agreement is apparent in the topics addressed by the projects in the *Länder*. Projects where the beneficiaries are cities are to be found significantly more frequently in the areas of social infrastructure and economy – which corresponds to the thematic priorities of the ESF (cf. Fig. 33).

**Tab. 5: Evaluation of the case studies for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (MV), North Rhine-Westphalia (NW) and Berlin (BE) (Source: Own work)**

		MV	NW	BE
ERDF	Total ERDF budget	€1,252.42m	€1,283.43m	€875.59m
	ERDF funding awarded generally	€371.35m	€373.34m	€536.88m
	ERDF funding awarded generally within total budget (%)	30%	29%	61%
	ERDF funding awarded to cities	€31.91m	€92.23m	€80.98m
	ERDF funding awarded to cities within ERDF funding awarded generally (%)	9%	25%	15%
ESF	Total ESF budget	€417.47m	€684.00m	€335.98m
	ESF funding awarded generally	€61.90m	€55.84m	€2.56m
	ESF funding awarded generally within total budget (%)	15%	8%	1%
	ESF funding awarded to cities	€0	€0.19m	€0
	ESF funding awarded to cities within ESF funding awarded generally (%)	0.00%	0.35%	0.00%



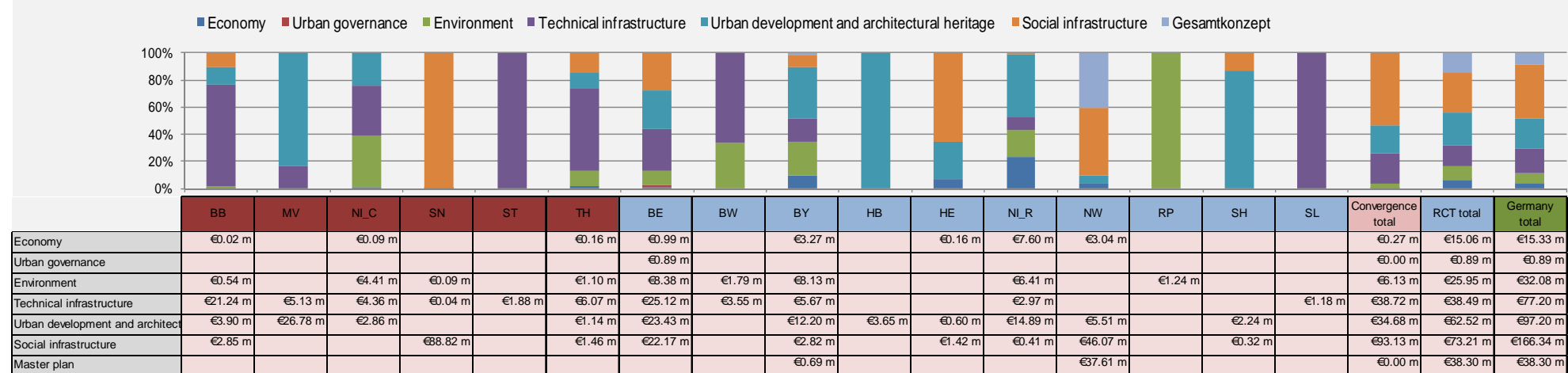


Fig. 32: Evaluation of ERDF projects awarded to cities by 30 June 2009 (Source: Own work, ERDF/ESF lists of beneficiaries of the Länder)

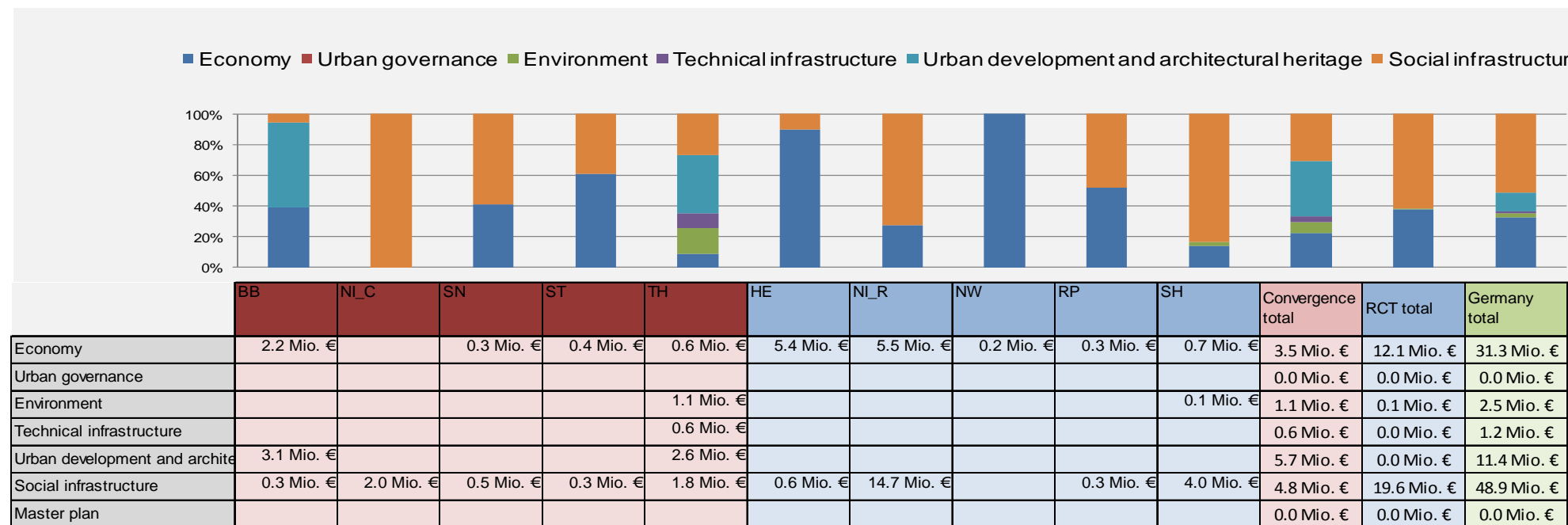


Fig. 33: Evaluation of ESF projects awarded to cities by 30 June 2009 (Source: Own work, ERDF/ESF lists of beneficiaries of the Länder)

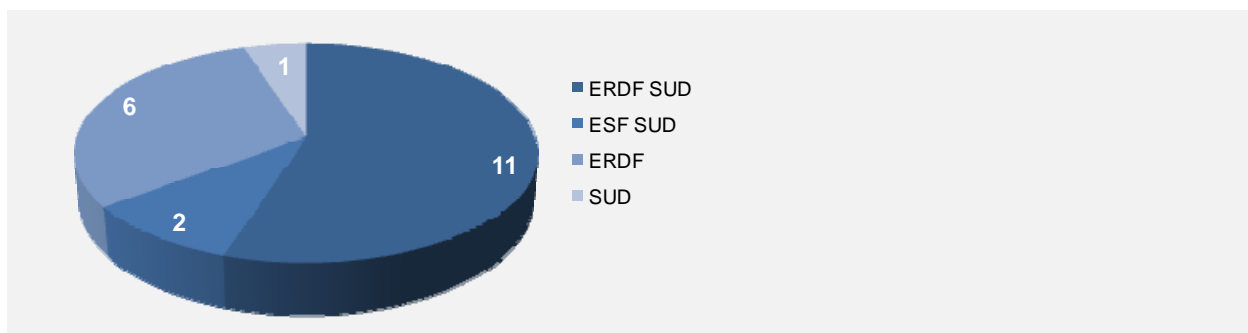
### 5.3. Overview of the projects in the profiles

In order to identify projects which are supported by the ERDF or ESF and have an urban dimension, the first step involved examining the lists of beneficiaries. The next step was to telephone all the construction ministries of the *Länder* in order to enquire about projects already approved in the period between 19 March and 22 April 2009 (the cut-off date of the survey) not yet contained in the then current lists of beneficiaries. Moreover, all official ERDF/ESF project websites of the *Länder* were examined between 15 and 20 April in order to obtain the latest project information.

When selecting projects from the lists of beneficiaries and websites, the following filter criteria were applied:

- The project beneficiary had to be one of the following:
  - City
  - Municipal company
  - Special-purpose association
  - Public educational establishment
  - Regional development company
- Each project had to be based in an urban area.

Together with the client, 20 projects were selected from the resulting pool of 354 projects and outlined in detail in profiles (cf. Annex 3 – Project profiles). This selection process was based on the strategy that the projects were to represent the *Länder* as well as different Structural Funds and thematic categories. Moreover, the intention was to include projects with an Urban Dimension in both the strict sense and the broad sense. (cf. Fig. 34 and Tab. 6).



**Fig. 34: Breakdown of the projects in the profiles (Source: Own work, details from project managers)**

As the approval process in the individual *Länder* proceeded at different speeds, the number of projects with a clear urban dimension examined from the lists of beneficiaries and through direct contact with the ministries was in some cases very low. Furthermore, the lists of beneficiaries frequently included projects which at the time of this examination were still at an early stage of implementation. Despite these limitations, at least one project was chosen from each *Land*. The broad range of topics is also reflected by the selection of projects. As Tab. 6 shows, they belong to different thematic priorities of the Structural Funds, mainly urban development, the economy, the technical infrastructure, the social infrastructure, urban governance and the environment.

**Tab. 6: List of projects explained in the profiles (Source: Own work, details from project managers)**

Land Local authority	Project	Category	Structural Fund/OP	Field of action sustainable urban development/ brownfield
<b>Baden-Württemberg</b>				
Ravensstein	Wastewater actions in Ravensstein (shutdown of sewage treatment plant, upgrading of rainwater overflow basin, removal of external water)	Technical infrastructure	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Bavaria</b>				
Mitterteich	Porcelain factory	Urban development and architectural heritage	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
Waldmünchen	Energy city	The environment	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
<b>Berlin</b>				
Berlin	Ku2Q arts projects in 2 Berlin neighbourhoods	Social infrastructure	ESF, BIWAQ	NO
Berlin/Jugendwohnen im Kiez e.V. (organiser)	Local strategy in 2007 to active civic engagement in the QM Mariannenplatz area (Neighbourhood Fund 1)	Urban governance	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
<b>Brandenburg</b>				
Spremberg	Refurbishment of outdoor theatre	Social infrastructure	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
<b>Bremen</b>				
Bremen	Robinsbalje neighbourhood education centre	Social infrastructure	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
Bremen	Conversion of Wartburgstrasse	Urban development and architectural heritage	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
Bremerhaven	Consulting and district development by AFZ Bremerhaven employment promotion centre	Economy	ESF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Hamburg</b>				
Hamburg	Micro-project 'Fashion from the Veddel' (improved integration, creation of jobs and regeneration of the district)	Social infrastructure/economy	ESF programme 'Local Strengths'	NO
<b>Hessen</b>				
Maintal	Establishment of the start-up centre 'Do-it-yourself-Büro' in Maintal	Economy	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania</b>				
Rostock	Transport links for the southern section of the east port business park in Rostock	Technical infrastructure	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Lower Saxony</b>				
Celle	Women and the economy coordination office	Economy	ERDF <i>Land OP</i> (Convergence)	NO
<b>North Rhine-Westphalia</b>				
Remscheid	Regeneration of West Remscheid	Overall concept	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
<b>Rhineland Palatinate</b>				
Kaiserslautern University of Technology	Establishment of a joint start-up office	Economy (R&D, spin-off)	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Saarland</b>				
Saarbrücken	Riverside city centre	Large-scale project	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES
<b>Saxony</b>				
Dresden Education Authority	Dresden-Bühlau Grammar School – refurbishment and expansion of the building of the former '60. Mittelschule' secondary school	Social infrastructure	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Saxony-Anhalt</b>				
Halle	Improvement of Delitzscher Strasse in Halle	Urban development and architectural heritage	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Schleswig-Holstein</b>				
Norderstedt	Production of an IUDP for Norderstedt	Urban governance	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	NO
<b>Thuringia</b>				
Bad-Langensalza	Historical old town	Urban development and architectural heritage	ERDF <i>Land OP</i>	YES

The profiles developed to characterise the selected projects contain information on the support provided (including co-financing) as well as the objectives, planned actions and results. The

information was partly obtained through internet research and above all active support from the project managers.

Although some projects were still at the early stages of implementation, a number of good practice examples have been identified which have already produced substantial added value for the cities concerned. Good Practice Example 1: Robinsbalje neighbourhood education centre in Bremen is a successful project from the area of social infrastructure (cf. Tab. 7).

**Tab. 7: Good Practice Example 1: Robinsbalje neighbourhood education centre (Source: Own work, details from project managers)**

<b>Project profile</b>	Development and construction of Robinsbalje neighbourhood education centre: network based around Robinsbalje primary school, development of 'learning neighbourhoods' to bolster housing districts and localities
<b>Land</b>	Bremen
<b>City</b>	Bremen
<b>Period</b>	Early 2007 – summer 2010
<b>Funding</b>	Total budget: €3,675,000 ERDF funding: €1,200,000 Co-financing: €1,200,000 through public funds
<b>Background</b>	Urban development and social problems in the neighbourhood around Robinsbalje Strasse, a lack of premises and facilities suitable for the social problems
<b>Project aims</b>	District-based networking of schools with childcare centres, using the aid and other advisory and support facilities to improve the circumstances and boost the educational opportunities for children of all ages and adults, especially from socially weak families
<b>Actions</b>	Conversion of a primary school into a neighbourhood education centre; various organisers are brought together, their needs coordinated, and activities offered in shared buildings, resulting in support and advisory facilities in the following fields of action: Language, Development, Health Care, Family and Social Affairs
<b>Results</b>	Improvement of problematic district structures by the establishment of neighbourhood networks and strengthening of social cohesion based on a set of inter-departmental actions

The Robinsbalje neighbourhood education centre project is part of the Sustainable Urban Development field of action. However, other good practice examples are to be found among projects from fields of action. Tab. 8 shows the project Maintal start-up centre, which belongs to the Economy and Employment field of action but is anchored in Urban Development Strategy. By supporting business start-ups and creating jobs, it contributes to improving the competitiveness of Maintal.

**Tab. 8: Good Practice Example 2: Maintal start-up centre (Source: Own work, details from project managers)**

<b>Project profile</b>	Establishment of Maintal start-up centre
<b>Land</b>	Hessen
<b>City</b>	Maintal
<b>Period</b>	April–September 2008
<b>Funding</b>	Total budget: €114,442.89 ERDF funding: €57,200
<b>Background</b>	Support for business start-ups
<b>Project aims</b>	To make it easier for entrepreneurs to set themselves up in business and to provide assistance during the start-up phase
<b>Actions</b>	Letting of commercial premises to freelancers at very inexpensive rates for up to 5 years. Free consulting for employers on topics such as company structure, product development, marketing, finance, controlling, IT and personnel management.
<b>Results</b>	There is great demand for premises. Currently about 15 young companies and freelancers are based at the start-up centre.

#### 5.4. Qualitative evaluation of project selection

The discussions held during the project workshop in June 2009 showed that the basic content of the projects listed in the profiles were not sufficient in order to be able to assess the contribution of each individual project to European sustainability and integration objectives. Therefore, a checklist was developed in order to gauge the criteria in more detail as another instrument of evaluation (cf. Annex 2 – Project checklist). The aim was to obtain an impression of the impact of the 20 projects with respect to the three sustainability dimensions the economy, the environment and social affairs, and also to examine how the aims of the Leipzig Charter are taken into account in the projects.

Since many of the projects selected were still at the early stages of implementation when the survey was carried out, quantitative criteria were not requested (e.g. the number of jobs created or the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> saved by environmental protection actions). Instead, the checklist contained a raft of qualitative criteria.

For instance, in order to assess the effect on the economic dimension of sustainability, it was asked whether the project created permanent jobs, contributed to the establishment of new businesses, involved cooperation with the private sector and public sector, and whether a feasibility study had been carried out. Fig. 35 and Fig. 36 show the distribution of the applicable criteria for the economic dimension in both absolute figures for all the fields of action and as percentages for the field of action sustainable urban development.

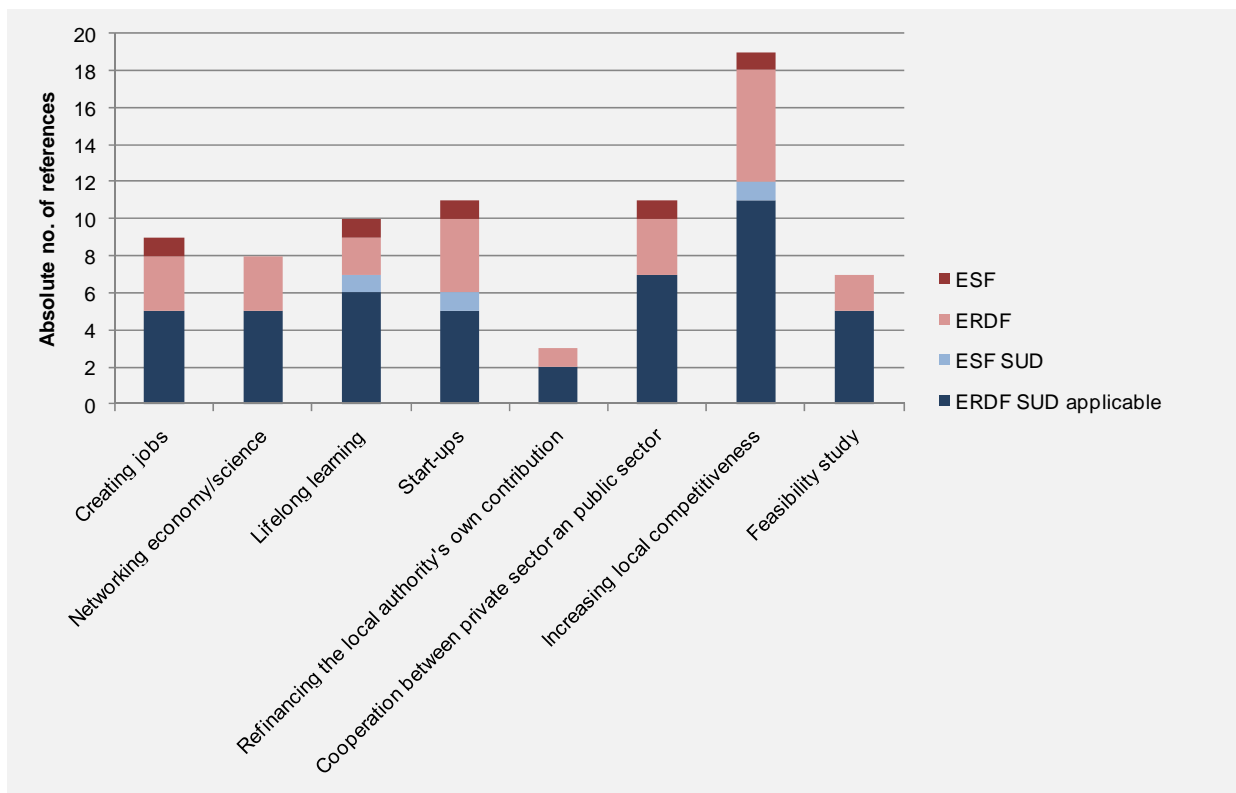


Fig. 35: Evaluation of Lisbon objectives for ESF and ERDF projects (Source: Own work, details from project managers)

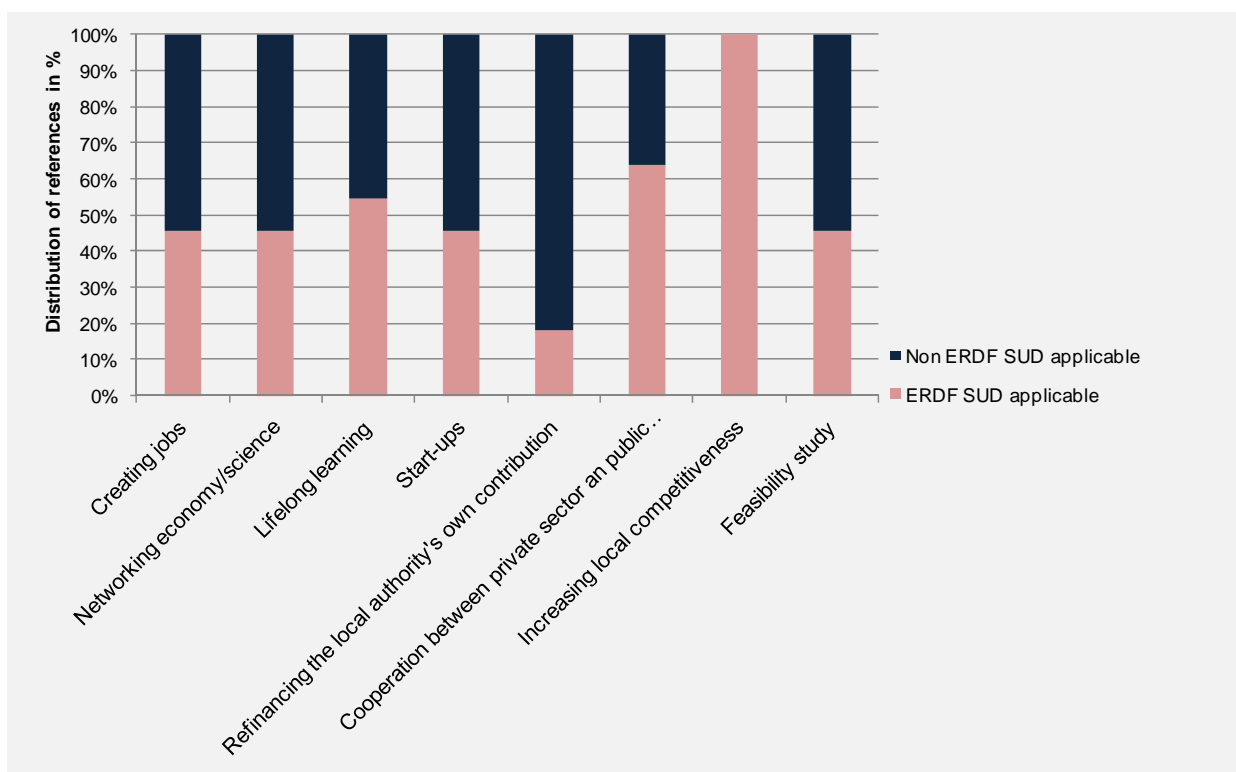


Fig. 36: Evaluation of Lisbon objectives for ERDF projects (Source: Own work, details from project managers)

It turned out that increasing competitiveness is the most important factor among economic sustainability criteria and plays a part in nearly all the projects selected, with other criteria such

as job creation and encouraging business start-ups being cited in about half the projects. Only a few of the projects selected are able to refinance the municipal own contribution in the long term. A comparable list of criteria was developed for the social and ecological dimension of sustainability and corresponding evaluation was carried out.

The criteria for social sustainability (which include for example supporting voluntary activity, improving the circumstances of people with an ethnic minority background, improving the arts scene, etc) are distributed evenly, each applying to 8–12 of the selected projects.

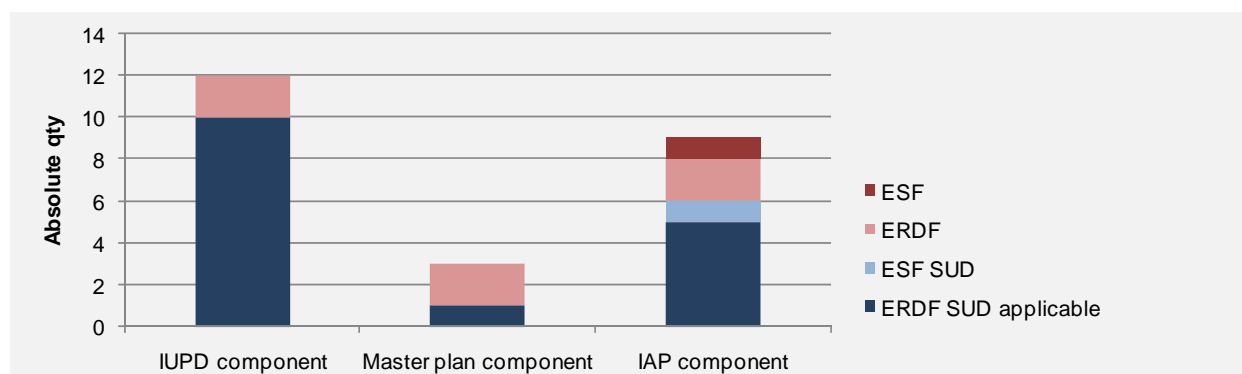
Regarding the ecological sustainability criteria, reducing pollution in the form of harmful emissions and improving the cycle track network were cited the most frequently. However, other environmental criteria which play a role in the urban context such as lower noise pollution and the greater use of public transport applied to a number of the projects. Actions for the renaturation of lakes and rivers were cited less frequently, and only one project contained actions to reduce the accumulation of refuse.

The selection of the criteria used was geared to already developed sustainability indicators, especially the 'Guidelines for Indicators within the Framework of a Local Agenda 21'<sup>67</sup> (developed by the Baden-Württemberg Regional Institute for the Environment, Measurement and Conservation) and the document 'Structural Indicators – Measuring Progress in the Framework of the Lisbon Strategy' published by the Federal Department of Statistics.<sup>68</sup> In addition, importance was attached to being able to assess the criteria easily and non-quantitatively.

The projects were appraised regarding the sustainability criteria by the project managers themselves, who were requested to indicate in the checklist provided as a Microsoft Excel file which criteria applied to each project.

In addition to the sustainability criteria, a set of criteria was developed in order to enable the assessment of the integrated approach of the selected projects. This survey dwelt on three key topics: integration into an urban development strategy, coordination with other actions in the objective area, and the level of coordination in the administration.

Concerning integration into an urban development strategy, it was asked whether the projects were part of an IUDP, a master plan or an SAAP, or whether they belonged to one of their fields of action, and whether they were being implemented in a disadvantaged district. Fig. 37 shows the evaluation for part of these criteria.



**Fig. 37: Evaluation of integration into urban development strategies (Source: Own work, details from project managers)**

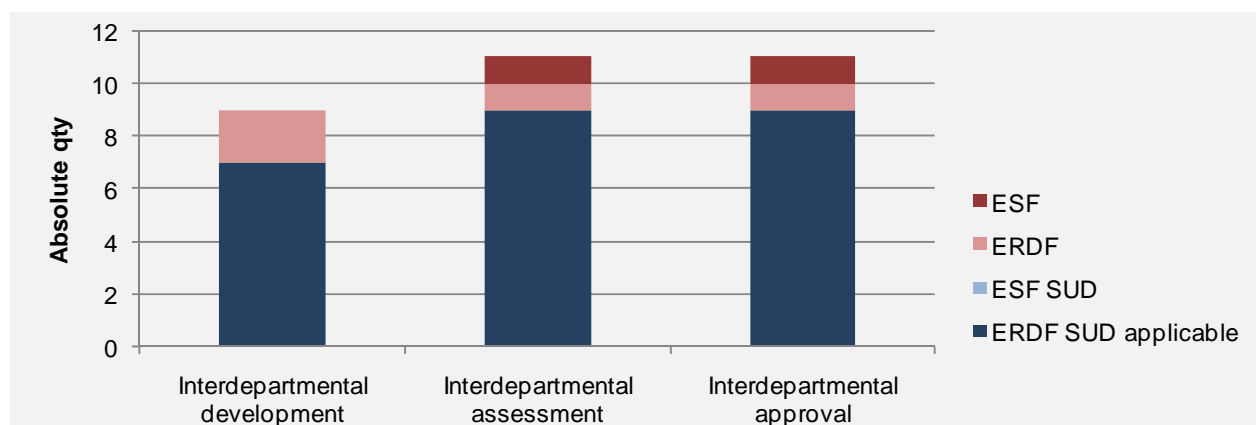
<sup>67</sup> Cf. Wilhelmy u.a. [Indikatoren im Rahmen einer Lokalen Agenda 21, 2003], p 25.

<sup>68</sup> Jörgen, Nicola [Strukturindikatoren, 2004], p 1086.

It turned out that over half the projects were part of an IUDP while almost as many projects belonged to an SAAP. By contrast, just three of the 20 projects are part of a master plan. Although the majority of projects integrated into such concepts can be assigned to the field of action sustainable urban development, as can be seen from Fig. 37, individual projects from other fields of action were also integrated.

Criteria taken into account for the integration dimension were spatial and temporal coordination as well as content liaison with other actions and possible synergy effects. This coordination was found to have been carried out for the vast majority of the projects selected. The criteria for the coordination level reflect on the one hand the various interest groups involved in the discussion about each project as it was being drawn up (e.g. local politicians, representatives of business and NGOs, and the general public) and on the other the inter-departmental development, assessment, approval and control of the project within the administration.

As can be seen in Fig. 38, these steps were carried out for about half the projects selected in inter-departmental cooperation, with inter-departmental development being practised somewhat less frequently than the inter-departmental assessment and approval of projects. The number of projects developed through prior discussion with various interest groups is comparable. In nearly all projects, local politicians were involved in discussion, while business representatives, the general public and other administrative departments were only involved in just over half the projects. NGOs took part in the discussion of nine projects.



**Fig. 38:** Evaluation of inter-departmental project development (Source: Own work, details from project managers)



## 6. Summary of the examination of the project and programme level

Only in isolated cases in the ESF OPs was a spatial dimension or the thematic establishment of sustainable urban development to be observed, and only the federal programme BIWAQ was identified as an explicit support programme addressing urban districts. Owing to the ESF programme's usually indirect reference to urban concerns, the continuation of this work will focus primarily on the ERDF. In the first stage of work, the corresponding thematic establishment of the urban dimension and the integration of sustainable urban development were demonstrated in the OPs of the *Länder* and the federal government.

The information that can be gleaned at the level of the *Länder* by analysing the OPs and related guidelines on the support for cities under ERDF Structural Fund support is relatively hazy. Assessing the allocation of funding based on the OPs' priority axes is insufficiently informative since by no means do priority axes contain only actions with an urban or urban development dimension; instead, usually a number of thematic areas are integrated within support. Furthermore, judging by first impressions of the current project phase, the calling of funds for urban development actions in the current FP is still sluggish owing to the delayed competition and application procedure. Consequently, concrete findings from the experience of implementation are lacking.

Despite these limitations, the following core statements are valid regarding the establishment of urban concerns in the German Structural Fund programmes of the current FP:

- All *Länder* have included urban development in their ERDF OPs, this priority appearing within the systems of objectives in both the priority axes and the fields of action. However, in just four of the 14 ERDF OPs of the non-city-states has urban development been devoted its own priority axis. Two of the three city-states have introduced a separate priority for sustainable urban development.
- The Leipzig Charter has been incorporated without exception in the ERDF OPs of the *Länder* in the form of the fields of action sustainable urban development and/or brownfield regeneration.
- About €1.09 billion was identified for actions pursuant to Article 8 in the ERDF OPs (2007–2013 FP) of the *Länder*. Hence, an average of about 7.4% of the total ERDF budget of the *Länder* was devoted to this field of action. This is a slight increase compared to the 2000–2006 FP, when approximately 7.1% of the total ERDF budget of the *Länder* was provided for sustainable urban development, corresponding to a total volume of about €982 million – to which the €150 million URBAN II budget for the German *Länder* as a whole should be added.
- Sustainable urban development has been incorporated with different degrees of rigorousness regarding the integration of actions into a development plan for a whole city or an individual district as well as the inclusion of a wide range of urban development strategies in accordance with Article 8 ERDF Regulation. For one thing, actions of sustainable urban development have been concentrated in sub-areas in just 10 out of 17 OPs. Moreover, only rarely has support for a whole range of actions from Article 8 (the economy, urban development, social infrastructure, technical infrastructure, urban governance) been supported in the fields of action of sustainable urban development in the

OPs of the *Länder*. In addition, in one case it was not clear whether the actions of the field of action sustainable urban development had to be flanked by an IUDP or an SAAP.

- In the strict interpretation of urban dimension pursuant to Article 8, the involvement of the topics of urban development and architectural heritage, the economy and the social infrastructure needs to be above average at the level of objects of support. Economic themes clearly dominate in the broader interpretation of urban dimension.
- Integrated urban development could only be identified in the field of action of sustainable urban development and brownfield regeneration. The “simultaneous and fair consideration of the concerns and interests which are relevant to urban development”<sup>69</sup> on the basis of “integrated urban development programmes for the city as a whole”<sup>70</sup> is not demanded in other fields of action of the ERDF OPs.
- The use of innovative instruments for the flexible support and financing of projects (e.g. cross-financing and the JESSICA initiative) still plays a secondary role.
- The co-financing of the ERDF organiser’s own contribution through urban development support provided by the federal government and the *Länder* must also be evaluated as a form of incorporation of the urban dimension in the German OPs. However, when European and national financial support is combined, frictional losses occur partly owing to different programme periods and the related financial uncertainties.

Regarding consideration of urban concerns at the project level, the in some cases slow progress made on approving and implementing sustainable urban development projects supported by the Structural Funds should be noted. As this substantially limits the selection of projects, this is a constant challenge when studying the project level. Nevertheless, a few general findings can be put forward:

- ESF projects whose beneficiaries are cities have so far been primarily approved for the areas of social infrastructure and the economy. Regarding ERDF projects of the same type, this also applies to the social infrastructure and to a lesser extent the areas of urban development/architectural heritage and technical infrastructure. Sustainable urban development projects have hitherto only been approved to a very small extent.
- Qualitative evaluation has shown that integrated approaches are not exclusively applied within Article 8 actions but to a small extent in other fields of action, too.
- The coordination of projects in terms of content as well as spatial and temporal aspects with actions in the same neighbourhood in order to benefit from synergy effects is widespread and has taken place in the majority of the projects selected.
- About half the projects selected were developed and/or implemented in an inter-departmental process. In a comparable number (frequently the same projects), the participation of the general public and interest groups in the drafting of the project was also enabled.

<sup>69</sup> BMVBS [Leipzig Charta, 2007], p 10.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p 10.

## **7. Recommendations for incorporating the urban dimension in the 2014–2020 funding period**

This section delivers the recommendations for incorporating the urban dimension in two steps in the 2014–2020 FP. In the first part, proposals by umbrella organisations as well as *Länder* representatives and local politicians concerning the design of Structural Fund support after 2013 obtained within the participation process of the research project are put forward. The following section concentrates on the recommendations directly derived by the authors from the analysis carried out. These conclusions are to be seen as a summary of the study, the results of which are fleshed out in the final section.

### **7.1. Proposals by umbrella associations, *Länder* und local authority representatives**

Central elements of the examination of the urban dimension included the project workshop attended by 25 experts on 10 June 2009 and the final conference held on 29 April 2010 under the title ‘The Urban Dimension in the German Structural Fund Programmes’ involving nearly 200 participants. Both these events held in Berlin were attended by numerous representatives of federal, regional and local government as well as umbrella organisations.

The discussions in the expert workshop as well as the speakers’ papers and the panel debate at the conference provided important proposals and positions for the formulation of the recommendations contained in 7.2. In addition, they also provided useful ideas for the analysis of the OPs. The core results of this dialogue are thematically summarised below.

#### **a. National urban development support as a component of the urban dimension**

The urban dimension within European structural policy is described as a firm component of German development strategy (cf. Section 1). The urban dimension in the activities of the federal government can for example be identified in the supporting function of national assistance, which provides local authorities with not insubstantial aid when calling ERDF funds. The national system of support for urban development by federal and regional government plays an important role in its supplementary function, especially in RCE regions, where ERDF funding has to be matched with organisers’ own contribution of 50%. In local authorities with tight financial resources (some of which have had their spending capped and therefore can no longer make their own financial contribution), the two funding strands can only be combined by means of the integrated development of disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods – which they can no longer achieve under their own steam.

#### **b. Compatibility of Structural Fund support and national support**

The dovetailing of national and European support is, as mentioned above, regarded as an important source of acceleration for sustainable urban development, which nevertheless harbours potential for optimisation. Judging by the know-how transfer, the combination of programmes entails not inconsiderable frictional losses resulting from for instance different durations, financial periods, reporting obligations and restrictions on the way financial support is used. As a result, this creates in some cases continual financial uncertainty and dependencies which in municipal day-to-day business are viewed by not only the administration but also active citizens and district actors as obstructive. Accordingly, combination in this way is not automatically advantageous and needs to be critically reviewed and improved. For this purpose, the following are suggested:

- Synchronising European and national assistance more closely<sup>71</sup>
- Expanding the good cooperation between ERDF and ESF to include EAFRD (the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) since demographic change calls for improved cooperation between cities and their surrounding areas with the objective of polycentric urban and regional development
- Raising planning certainty for the municipal level and actors by ensuring reliable, long-term financial frameworks extending beyond support and legislative periods for the European and national urban development programmes
- Making more intensive use of the Urban Development Fund with its possibility of employing funding in a more flexible manner (time and content)
- Reducing the density of programmes, which would not be at the cost of reducing their funding but rather as a result enable the programmes to be used more widely
- Developing and mutually coordinating the (usually national) programmes of different political areas and types of departments which can be applied in an urban district in a more integrated fashion. In particular, business support programmes aiding SMEs make an important contribution to district development in this respect.

One good example of combination is that of the federal-ESF programme BIWAQ and the programme 'Social City' financed jointly by the federal government and the *Länder*.

In connection with the practicability of support programmes, *Länder* and local authorities believe that calling EU funding currently ties up considerable personnel resources and that the procedures need to be simplified.

### **c. Suitability of ERDF funding/sustainable urban development for the local level**

The use of the ERDF is fixed in the OPs of the *Länder* and following the recommendations should be closely geared to local needs. The suitability of this approach is reflected by the quality of the dialogue between *Länder* and local authorities required for the programming phase by the European Commission and about which a report has to be submitted.

Some local politicians note that excessively regulated instructions from the *Land* governing the use of the ERDF to support sustainable urban development are not appropriate for the very different needs for action of towns and cities in a region owing to the differences in population and population density, previous urban development strategies (investment-based/non-investment-based), social structures (proportion of the population with an ethnic minority background, economic situation, etc). In order to avoid this, Brandenburg for example allows local authorities to decide the weighting given to certain areas of actions prescribed by the *Land* regarding the field of action of sustainable urban development. In addition, the local authority level emphasises that frequently the special feature of URBAN as a useful addition to national funding is lost with mainstreaming and it is believed that there is no national system of funding which is comparable with the 'specialist' URBAN.

The view that the ERDF funding offered ought to be geared to local challenges was also put forward by the representatives of the construction ministries of the *Länder* during the panel discussion at the final conference. According to this stance, the success of sustainable urban development largely depends on whether it proves possible locally to unite the interventions of

<sup>71</sup> One concrete proposal mentioned here was the use of just one financial accounting system in connection with the co-financing of sustainable urban development programmes from the ERDF and ESF.

the local labour market, civic engagement, the social infrastructure and the public spaces. As the basis for this, first of all the local potential has to be identified and assigned concrete projects.

Regarding the dialogue between *Länder* and local authorities during the production of the OPs, the *Länder* are interested in being informed of coordinated local needs for action (e.g. coordinated by local authority umbrella organisations and their regional structures) in order to take account of them in the OPs. Then again, many local authorities regard the inclusion of the local level into the programming phase of the NSRF and the OPs as an area in need of substantial improvement. In connection with the governance of Structural Fund support, the umbrella organisations called for the *Länder* to open themselves up to a greater extent to the introduction of regionalised sub-budgets and the provision of global grants.

#### **d. Contribution of the urban dimension at the programme and project level to achieving the aims of Lisbon and European sustainability objectives**

The positive effect of the urban dimension within ERDF funding on the European sustainability objectives and the Lisbon Strategy is underlined – but it must be emphasised that it does not receive the recognition it deserves.

There is general agreement that the aims of Lisbon are safeguarded in the structure of the OPs, differentiation depending on how much of the regional ERDF budget is used for actions which are rated by the European Commission as ‘Lisbon-compliant’. A similar situation applies to sustainability, whose component ecology is analysed by the European Commission in connection with the environmental testing of OPs. The third component of the sustainability triangle is the social sphere – which, however, is largely left out of account when assessing OPs.

‘Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration’<sup>72</sup> are not considered by the European Commission to belong to those actions which contribute to achieving the aims of Lisbon. This in effect artificially reduces the funding available for the urban dimension. However, judging by the opinions received from the *Länder*, a different picture emerges at the project level. It turns out that disadvantaged neighbourhoods have an important function within the urban structure owing to their high contribution to integration and that strengthening them aids the economic improvement of the overall situation. This is typically expressed in the area of sustainable urban development, which is designed to boost the local economy. In order to pay tribute to this contribution, code 61 should in future be rated as ‘Lisbon-compliant’. The problem is that in ERDF projects it sometimes takes a long time to demonstrate sustainable urban development’s beneficial impact on employment – which partly only transpires with some delay as other local factors improve.

#### **e. Integrated approach**

Participants use the term ‘integrated approach’ to refer to bringing together different points of view, levels of consideration as regards content, and actors. The integrated strategies to be developed and implemented as a result (integrated in terms of spatial and financial aspects, content and scheduling) should be applied alongside coordinated administrative, participatory and decision-making structures extended to integrated action which increase planning certainty and procedural transparency for local actors.

The integrated approach is emphasised by those directly involved at the workshop and conference as added value which should be transferred to the next funding period with the aim

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<sup>72</sup> Council of the European Union [Commission Regulation 1828, 2006], p 51 (Annex II, Tab. 1, Code 61).

of using it as an instrument to strengthen the sustainable and economically successful development of European cities and hence the EU and increasing its use. The proposed introduction of a quota for sustainable urban development in ERDF funding together with binding rules and standards for the integrated approach of 'Acquis URBAN' was discussed by the representatives of the *Länder* and umbrella organisations. The latter called for more funding for the urban dimension in future.

## 7.2. Recommendations as a result of the research project

Given the importance of the urban dimension of the European Structural Funds for German urban development policy as described in the introduction, the BMVBS Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, which commissioned the study, is keen to enter into constructive dialogue about the design of the coming Structural Fund period by contributing experience of the current period. In order to obtain a sound discussion basis, recommendations regarding the implementation of the urban dimension within post-2013 Structural Funds assistance are concluded below from the above analysis.

### a. Agreement on the uniform use of the term 'urban dimension'

In order to be able to conduct a precise discussion on the implementation of the urban dimension, this term needs to be uniformly defined within dialogue. During research, two interpretations of an urban dimension were identified in the strict sense and in the broad sense (cf. Section 1). Regarding Structural Funds assistance, it can be assumed to be mainly applied in urban areas, which can be attributed to the high degree of urbanisation in the EU described above. This hypothesis is confirmed by the results of the study. It can therefore be largely assumed that Structural Funds assistance has an urban dimension in the broad sense owing to the structural framework conditions in the EU.

In the Leipzig Charter, the 27 EU Member States undertook to treat urban development policies in a coordinated, integrated fashion. This framework is not secured by an urban dimension in the broad sense, for which the integrated approach is not binding. The higher aim of an integrated approach is however regarded as the decisive criterion for making urban actions sustainable.

*In order to translate the strategies of the Leipzig Charter into Structural Funds assistance, it is therefore recommended that it be agreed to use the term 'urban dimension' in the strict sense, i.e. to regard the urban dimension exclusively as sustainable urban development and accordingly to be able to discuss it uniformly.*

### b. Classification of sustainable urban development as 'Lisbon-compliant' expenditure

As described in 3.3, the total budget of the OPs of the federal government and the *Länder* is to be broken down into for example thematic categories to which codes are assigned. The regulations<sup>73</sup> specify which of these codes are 'Lisbon-compliant' expenditure and accordingly support the EU priorities of promoting competitiveness and creating jobs as well as achieving the objectives of the integrated guidelines for growth and employment.

For example, themes important for sustainable urban development such as 'Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration' (code 61) and 'Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land' (code 50) are not classified by the EU as 'Lisbon-compliant'. Yet supporting

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<sup>73</sup> Council of the European Union [Commission Regulation 1828, 2006], Art. 9, para. 3 and Annex IV.

these challenges makes a direct contribution to strengthening the economic strength of cities. For example, it can be assumed that brownfield regeneration (reflected by codes 50 and 61) are usually connected to commercial investment on the improved land and that investment would not be possible otherwise. This impression is underpinned by the ERDF and ESF funded case studies examined by way of example (cf. 5.4). The overwhelming majority of these projects contribute to achieving the above-mentioned priorities.

In its NSRF, Germany commits itself to using a total of 71% of Structural Fund financial resources in the Convergence objective and 81% in the RCE objective on 'Lisbon-compliant' actions (cf. 3.3). The targets exceed the thresholds specified in the regulations.<sup>74</sup> In order to achieve these targets of the EU and the German NSRF, after reporting to the regional level, actions of sustainable urban development which as shown are not coded as 'Lisbon-compliant' can in many cases not be given budgets commensurate with the needs in the cities concerned.

*Given this, it is recommended that the contribution of sustainable urban development to promoting growth and employment should also be recognised such that actions in this area be granted the status of Lisbon conformity in the coming Structural Fund period. The same applies to recognising the contribution of sustainable urban development to the intelligent, sustainable and integrative economic growth of the EU in the context of the strategy Europe 2020.*

### **c. Relaxing the n+2 rule in the context of urban actions**

The n+2 rule applies in the current funding period described in Article 93(1) of the General Structural Funds Regulation 1083/2006, according to which ERDF starting in the year n for which it was made available to the region must be used up within the following two years (+2). In other words, the funding ("budget commitment") remains available to the region for this period of time. Within the n+2 period, the ERDF budget commitment in the annual tranche concerned must be approved for third parties, paid out and received by the managing authorities of the Member States in the form of payment applications. The payment applications contain the sum of financial assistance paid out in the region concerned.

If the monies have not been called after a period of n+2 years, they will be decommitted by the European Commission, which de facto means that they have expired for the region. This means that financial resources committed by the European Commission in Year 1 must have been used on assistance projects by the end of Year 3. This problem concerns the managing authorities and the useful budgeting/commitment of funding, which needs to be geared to the intervention type.

Urban development projects are an intervention type with an extended time horizon if they are to feature integrated, participated planning and implementation. This means that in this type of project development, a large number of actors need to be activated and coordinated whose risks must be buffered by additional financial instruments or for whom the necessary investment requirements (e.g. establishing ownership and the condition of land) need to be created.

Once an ERDF-financed support programme for sustainable urban development is launched, the projects are normally not ready to go but first have to be developed to a stage at which the necessary applications can be drawn up and submitted. The evaluation of the calling of funds (cf. 5.2) shows that the sustainable urban development programme scenarios applied for in the regions were only approved in late 2009, this step having to be followed by the application phase for concrete projects. Accordingly, funding has to be committed for these interventions by the OP managing authorities for these interventions for a long time to prevent it from expiring. In

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<sup>74</sup> The European rules prescribe in this respect that Convergence region OPs should contain 60% Lisbon-compliant expenditure and RCE region OPs 75%.

addition, all the funding must definitely be implemented by 2015 in the form of payment applications and the projects concerned must be completed. Projects not completed by 31 December 2015 can subsequently only continue to be financed from national funding, as long as a suitable basis for this exists in the regions.

After reporting back by the local level in the case of the above project (approval of programme scenario at the end of 2009), too little time (at most six years depending on when planning starts) is left for the adequate implementation of large-format, complex urban development projects. This pressure on implementation may impair the level of the projects supported in the context of sustainable urban development.

*Given this, it is recommended that the current n+2 rule be relaxed in the next funding period. It needs to be discussed whether it could be relaxed exclusively for actions of sustainable urban development to for example n+3.*

#### **d. Ensuring ESF and ERDF assistance can be combined**

Article 34 of the General Structural Funds Regulation 1083/2006 allows ESF and ERDF funding to be combined with shares of one budget being used for actions within the scope of assistance from the other fund. The actions assigned to the other fund are also financed by it, which can considerably simplify the administration of actions. In other words, actions from the ESF could be incorporated into an ERDF regional scenario of sustainable urban development with financial clearing taking place via the ERDF.

However, there remains a problem in the inexact formulation of Article 34, which states that if an ESF action is financed from the ERDF, it must be directly linked to an ERDF operation. It is unclear whether 'operation' is to be interpreted as related to an object or an area. The object-based view would not be conducive for sustainable urban development, according to which an ERDF-financed ESF action would have to be directly bound to an individual ERDF project. Given this, it would not be possible to use ESF funding flexibly in the programme area. This uncertainty surrounding the interpretation of the word 'operation' has in some practical cases resulted in the possibility of cross-financing in the OP not being allowed.

*It is therefore recommended for the next funding period that the option of cross-financing be offered again in the General Structural Funds Regulation. Moreover, this possibility should be area-based, so that for example ESF monies to promote training can be used as required within an ERDF regional scenario irrespective of small object operations.*

#### **e. Obligation on all Member States to include sustainable urban development in their OPs**

Sustainable urban development is recognised by the EU Member States as an important component of a successful cohesion policy (cf. Section 1). This is expressed for example in the Leipzig Charter, in which the economic development of the EU is directly linked to the success of the stable development of cities. Agreement was first reached at the European level on the exact components of sustainable urban development in 1998 in 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action'.<sup>75</sup> Based on the sustainability triangle of the Report of the Brundtland Commission,<sup>76</sup> the necessary fields of action of this strategy were fixed as follows:

- Strengthening economic prosperity and employment in towns and cities

<sup>75</sup> EU-COM [Sustainable Urban Development, 1998].

<sup>76</sup> Brundtland-Bericht: Bericht der Weltkommission für Umwelt und Entwicklung, 1987.



- Promoting equality, social inclusion and regeneration in urban areas
- Protecting and improving the urban environment: towards local and global sustainability
- Contributing to good urban governance and local empowerment

In the ERDF mainstream programmes, the approach of sustainable urban development was first adopted in the current Structural Fund period with the concentration on urban problem areas. Nevertheless, Article 8 was only installed here as an optional object of support of the OPs.

The described broad recognition by all EU Member States of sustainable urban development is not reflected by the OPs of the region. As shown by a study carried out by the European Commission,<sup>77</sup> just 50% of RCE regions and 35% of Convergence regions have fixed actions in their programmes which are geared to Article 8 ERDF Regulation. And within the Convergence regions, the same can be said of just 10% of the EU-12.

It should be remembered that the EU-12 could not participate in the Community Initiative URBAN and therefore have only limited experience regarding the application of an integrated approach in urban development (especially in connection with EU assistance). This point is supported by the observation made in the above-mentioned study that only very few EU-12 Member States had experience of national strategies for urban development or a national urban policy – an assessment which returns in a similar evaluation of the NSRFs,<sup>78</sup> in which only some NSRFs were found to have a clear urban development strategy.

*Building on this level of knowledge, it is recommended that in the next Structural Fund period, consideration of sustainable urban development be obligatorily incorporated in the OPs of the regions. This corresponds to the described consensus of all EU Member States to declare their support for sustainable urban development. In order to raise the effectiveness of such a binding rule, it is advised that this be accompanied by corresponding know-how transfer in the strategy area of sustainable urban development. The EU-12 would not be the only ones to profit from this since many cities in the EU-15 are faced by the challenge of high local disparities and have no experience of URBAN yet.*

#### **f. Minimum levels for the proportion of sustainable urban development in the total budget**

It emerged from the evaluation of the German ERDF OPs that all RCE and Convergence regions provided funding for actions which fell into the scope of Article 8 ERDF Regulation, albeit in very different amounts (cf. 3.1). A heterogeneous picture of the Structural Funds assistance is also indicated by the fact that RCE non-city regions on average devoted 9.2% of their ERDF OP total budget to sustainable urban development, compared to just 5.6% by Convergence regions.

Comparable results were achieved by the study by the European Commission at the level of priority axes. The average share of the ERDF budgets determined for priority axes of urban development was identified as 8.9% for the RCE objective compared to 3.2%<sup>79</sup> for the Convergence objective. Within the Convergence regions, this amount varies sharply, being on average 3.9% of the total budget in the EU-15 and 2.7% in the EU-12.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> EU-COM [Analysis of the Operational Programmes, 2008], p 5.

<sup>78</sup> EU-COM [Einschätzung Städtischen Dimension in OPs, 2007], p 6.

<sup>79</sup> EU-COM [Analysis of the Operational Programmes, 2008], p 4.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p 21.

Since it must be assumed that all European cities face the challenge of social polarisation combined with the concentration of problem areas in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods,<sup>81</sup> the need for sustainable urban development in line with Article 8 can be forecast for all regions in the EU. The size of this need is directly correlated to the specific structural characteristics of each region, which is why applying 'one size fit all' is ruled out.

*The possibility of a budgetary cap on funding for sustainable urban development which cannot be exceeded by the regions should be discussed. This recommended minimum amount results from the above-described experience of the current Structural Fund period and the fluctuating amounts of funding provided for sustainable urban development, which cannot necessarily be attributed to regional structural differences.*

#### **g. Standards of content regarding the implementation of sustainable urban development**

Article 8 ERDF Regulation recommends a broad range of interventions for sustainable urban development. Depending on the specific local conditions, the weighting of these strategies in cities needs to be carried out differently. In the regions of the EU-15, for example, the challenges facing sustainable urban development are very different from those in the EU-12. The Convergence regions in the EU-12 still have a high demand for investment in neglected infrastructure and the building stock, which ought not to be encountered to the same level of intensity in the regions of the EU-15.

According to the results of the study, the *Länder* rarely provide assistance for the entire range of actions of Article 8. The same conclusion was drawn by a comparative study of all the ERDF OPs of the European Member States by the European Commission, which noted in some cases one-sided support for urban development refurbishment and infrastructure actions for the OPs in the EU-12 not accompanied by for instance economic or educational actions.

Brandenburg can be cited as an example of a *Land* which supports a wide range of actions within the ERDF OP. The local authorities are called upon to include urban development projects on topics of economic development aid, the elimination of urban blights, traffic improvement, maintaining and increasing the efficiency of the social infrastructure, and supporting neighbourhood management in their integrated urban development plans, which are a fundamental condition for obtaining ERDF funding for the area of sustainable urban development.

*For the programmes in the coming Structural Fund period, it is recommended reviewing the possibility of introducing an instruction under which all fields of action specified in Article 8 are to be offered to cities in the OPs as objects of support. It is hence proposed that the local level should always have the option of being able to make use of assistance for a wide range of areas, allowing it to exercise integrated intervention at local trouble spots.*

#### **h. Establishing a central EU programme to promote sustainable urban development**

The evaluation of the Community Initiative URBAN was completed in Q2 2010<sup>82</sup> and confirmed structural funding's important task of know-how transfer and capacity in the field of sustainable urban development. The Community Initiative hence created a strategic foundation in the EU-15 for the implementation of urban development policies in line with the Leipzig Charter and the dissemination of the integrated approach. As described, this basis and this assistance in dealing

<sup>81</sup> EU-COM [Promoting sustainable urban development in Europe, 2009], p 19.

<sup>82</sup> Regarding the evaluation mentioned, at the time of writing the authors only had informal details available as this study had not yet been published by the European Commission.

with initial difficulties when establishing sustainable urban development and the related structures necessary are lacking in the EU-12.

Given this, it would have been expected that the current funding period would not contain a two-track approach to aspects of sustainable urban development. For one thing, Article 8 could have been understood as an offer of mainstream programmes, especially for the EU-15, which already had experience of URBAN. Moreover, this would have created the possibility of setting up an expanded model operation for sustainable urban development to include the EU-12, one of the aims being to forge the structures for an integrated approach and paving the way for the establishment of mainstream programmes at a later stage. The content and duration of a mission of this nature would have been clear, and with its specific aim of augmenting mainstream programmes it would have complied with the character of a Community Initiative. The question concerning an urban dimension based on two tiers remains unchanged for the coming funding period.

*Given the starting situation as described, an instrument for the focused establishment or continuation of structures of sustainable urban development at the neighbourhood level is recommended which could be applied as a model project in the Member States. The basic condition of such a model project ought to bindingly prescribe the implementation of the strategies of the Leipzig Charter and ensure know-how transfer between the model neighbourhoods. The former includes involving the government departments responsible for urban development at a national and regional level into the design and coordination of such a project. One reason for this vertical integration is to ensure that the approaches practised in the model areas can be transferred to other neighbourhoods facing similar challenges in the Member State concerned.*

## 8. Outlook

The obligation to include an action or to impose quotas and standards for the implementation of individual actions would be a novel concept for Structural Funds assistance for the regions. The Structural Fund framework regulations are to be understood as offers. The documents describe the interventions eligible for funding and the mainly technical and organisational conditions attached to claiming and using Structural Funds assistance. This philosophy is joined by the optional nature of Article 8. The regulations only contain a quota rule for the long target range of the Lisbon strategy, which contains a variety of actions (cf. 3.3). The recommendations described in 7.2 to introduce obligations for sustainable urban development would accordingly mean a new step in the conditioning of this assistance, although use could be made of the quotas represented by 'Lisbon-compliant' actions.

The proposal put forward also touches on the fact that the EU lacks formal competence on issues of urban policy since the Maastricht Treaty only extends to the regional level. The demand of making the inclusion of an Article 8 compulsory in the regions' OPs instead of optional as is currently the case will therefore have to be preceded by a fundamental discussion of the EU's competence.

Both sources of friction signify a challenge for the stronger incorporation of sustainable urban development in the next funding period. Rising to this challenge should be the aim of the Member States, which after all jointly agreed to succeed the Leipzig Charter with a follow-up process. An alternative to adapting Article 8 would therefore, as mentioned above, be to return to the idea of realising the 'Acquis URBAN' as a model project in the Member States in selected neighbourhoods, as was done during the Community Initiative URBAN II.

In order to conduct this debate successfully, it is estimated that such an approach should be discussed outside the confines of the departments responsible for urban and regional development in the current negotiation process for post-2013 Structural Funds assistance. At a national level there exists for example the seemingly effective approach of setting up an interdisciplinary study group focusing on the horizontal objective of the NSRF and also reaching agreement regarding the recommendations and suggestions put forward by umbrella associations as well as representatives of regional and local government. This would underline the idea of Structural Funds assistance, by means of which complex, inter-sectoral challenges are to be dealt with through networked action.

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