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# A strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level

Practice guidance

## Imprint

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## 1. WHY?

### Demographic change and public services – a future challenge?!

We all know the discussions and headlines from local media. The number of schoolchildren is declining. Primary schools in small municipalities are closed and only secondary schools in district towns seem to be spared. Volunteer fire brigades in villages are suffering from a shortage of new recruits. Fire fighters are not available at their brigade's location during the day or even during the entire work week. Comprehensive fire protection can only be ensured with difficulty, if at all. The general practitioner (GP) from around the corner is about to retire, and there is no successor waiting. Neighbouring municipalities are not much better off. Young doctors are reluctant to practice in rural areas. And how is care for the elderly to be organized in the future – considering that opportunities and willingness in terms of home care are decreasing and distances to central residential care facilities are increasing? Speaking of accessibility: In many German villages and municipalities, local public transport services have been reduced to school buses; in consequence, many people find it difficult to access high-quality services such as medical specialists or cultural events.

A gloomy picture is painted in the sparsely populated rural districts of Eastern Germany. However, the impact of demographic change on the provision of public and private services to the population can be felt increasingly also in regions of Western Germany.

And yet it is nothing new that the provision of public services near the place of residence is in danger in rural areas. Since the 1960s, there has been a steady decline of services provided in the villages and small municipalities of Western Germany. Demographic change, along with transformations in the structure of the economy and tight budgets of cities, municipalities and districts, accentuates this problem and presents local authorities with new challenges. A steady decline in the population as well as a shift in the age structure directly impact the range of services in terms of public infrastructure that have been built-up and grown over the years. Fewer children and fewer young people need fewer kindergartens, schools and apprenticeship places. More elderly people need more services tailored particularly to their needs and more long-term care services – also in rural areas. As demographic change is not a short-term phenomenon, the nature and structures of public services provided need to be modified and geared to the new framework conditions.

If cities, municipalities and districts fail to make such modifications, or if they are reluctant about necessary location discussions, this will inevitably have consequences for the attractiveness of municipalities and the quality of life of their citizens. The existence and accessibility of high-quality social infrastructure, in particular in the fields of education and childcare, is increasingly becoming a locational factor that is relevant for decisions. Municipalities and regions have already begun to compete for trained professionals.

As soon as the challenges of demographic change in terms of the provision of a robust and efficient range of public services have been identified, the question of "what to do" arises. This guideline on a "Strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level" would like to help find answers and solutions to this question. It shows how districts, cities, municipalities and public or private providers of public services as well as operators of facilities related to such services, in a constructive dialogue, can take steps to modify and adapt their range of public services and achieve greater clarity and certainty for decision-making on the basis of sound information, forecasts, scenarios and cost estimates.

The provision of public services comprises technical services such as the supply of energy, water, telecommunications, local and long-distance public transport, post, waste and wastewater management as well as

the provision of basic social services, such as cultural offerings, healthcare services, childcare, school education and elderly care or emergency medical service, civil protection and fire protection.

Within the framework of the provision of public services, the districts assume supra-local as well as complementary and balancing functions, for example health-care system, social security, elderly care, youth protection, schools and education, waste management or public transport.

They also assume balancing and complementary functions when the financial or administrative capacities of municipalities are not sufficient. If the performance of municipalities is unsatisfactory, an equitable provision of services to all people living in the district area can only be guaranteed by the districts.

### **What's the purpose of this guideline?**

The idea behind this guideline is to provide a stimulus for taking up the core issue of making the provision of public services fit for the future. Underlying this is the realization that the challenges for the provision of public services at the local and regional level which result from demographic development can only be managed if

- there is well-prepared data on the initial situation,
- the future development and possible consequences of alternative models are assessed thoroughly and
- an open and moderated discussion process takes place.

### **WHAT ACTUALLY IS THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES?**

The federal state and the municipalities are responsible for ensuring the provision of a certain range of goods and services that were deemed vital by policymakers at the national level at generally affordable (i.e. socially acceptable) prices and within reasonable distances and/or for providing such a range.

### **A TASK AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL**

Infrastructural services are provided by districts, cities and municipalities (on a voluntary or mandatory basis); therefore, they have a major responsibility in terms of making adjustments to the challenges presented by demographic change. Moreover, public-sector actors can coordinate, offer incentives for and control relevant activities, i.e. they can manage services that are not part of the immediate responsibility of cities, municipalities or districts.

Not only can an early start and innovative approaches to solutions help cutting costs and avoid planning errors, but they also help to ensure the best possible quality of services provided to the population within a reasonable distance.

### **Who should read this guideline?**

This guideline is primarily intended for politicians and their staff members in cities, municipalities and districts who are responsible for planning and ensuring the provision of public services. However, it also addresses actors of public and private sector institutions related to the provision of public services, for example schools, the panel doctors' associations, care services or voluntary fire brigades.

## What's in this guideline?

The guideline on the provision of public services at the regional level contains recommendations for action and examples of good practice related to a planning of the provision of public services at the district level, in particular, that is fit for the future and extends to all sectors.

The structure of the document is aligned to the key functions and elements of the process towards a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level:

### *Chapter two "What?"*

answers the question of what the "Strategy for the Provision of Public Services at the Regional Level" is about, introduces the underlying philosophy and presents its characteristics, objectives and possibilities.

### *Chapter three "How?"*

is entirely focused on the corresponding process and

- describes the working steps and organizational elements,
- presents methods and criteria for systematically choosing the sector of infrastructure to be addressed and
- explains the five basic methodological elements of the strategy at the regional level: small-scale population forecast, accessibility modelling, qualitative analysis of needs, model calculations and scenarios as well as cost estimates.

### *Chapter four "From schools to fire brigades – sets of topics and examples"*

describes the problems, procedures and possible outcomes in selected areas related to the provision of public services by means of examples.

## How was this guideline developed?

The model of a methodological planning of the provision of public services that is presented here has been trialled, jointly developed with and further refined by the Federal Ministry of Transport and digital Infrastructure and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development in selected regions and districts in different model projects since 2005.

The present guideline is based on experience with the tools and methods of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level that was gathered by 21 model regions of the Programme of Action for the Provision of Public Services at a Regional Level between 2012 and 2015. It constitutes an update of the "Strategy for the Provision of Public Services at the Regional Level. Food for Thought for the Practice" of 2011.

For the present second edition, the guideline was updated. For example, aspects related to methods or instruments, such as public participation or the classification of municipalities, have been introduced, and the number of topics covered is higher. In many places, examples of good practice and further references were added. Many illustrations have been redesigned.

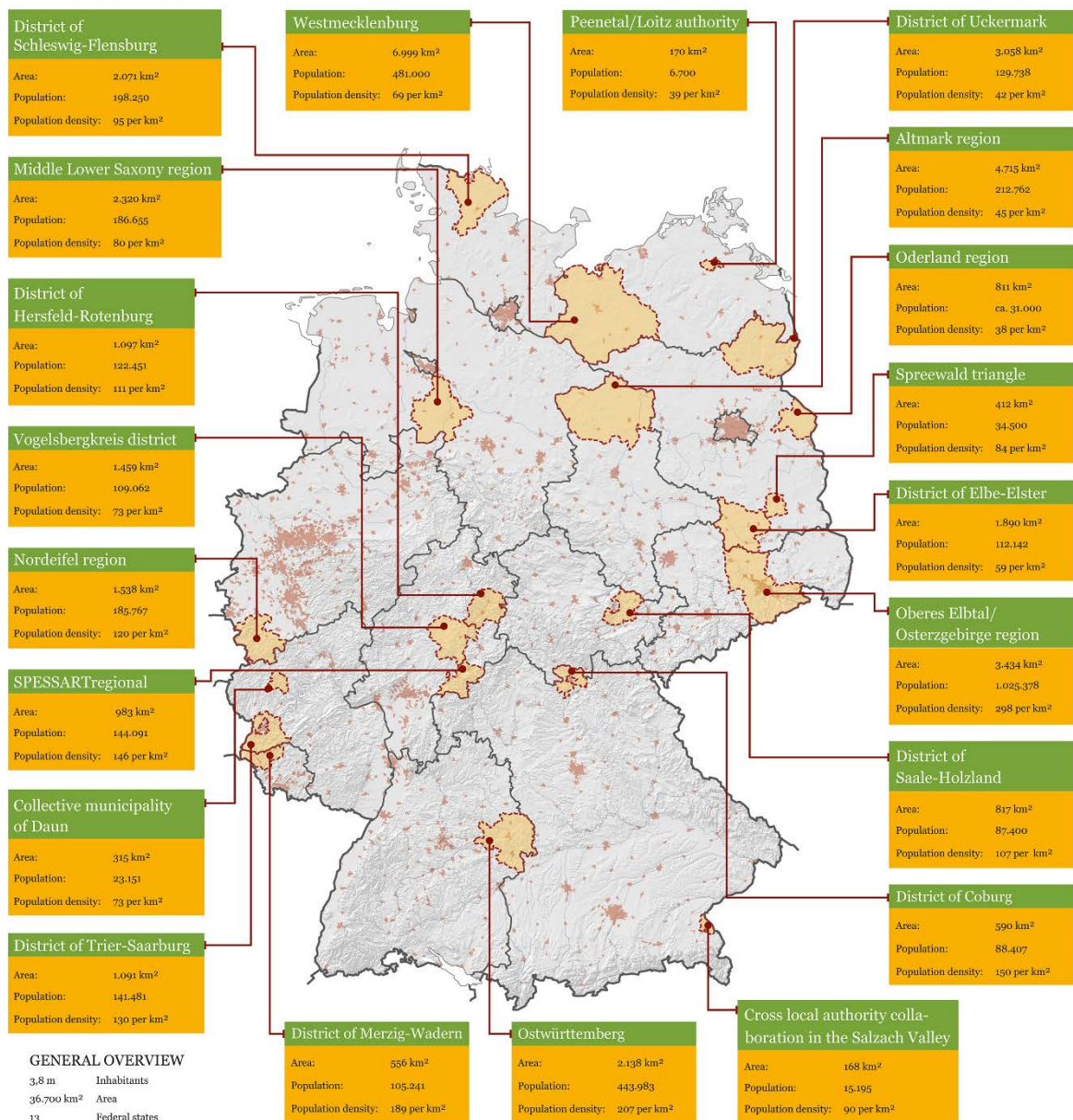


Fig. 1: Model regions of the Programme of action for the provision of public services at the regional level  
 Source: BBSR/Hochschule Neubrandenburg.



## 2. WHAT?

### A strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level – not just a plan!

#### **What is the idea behind the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level?**

Because of the profound and complex impact of demographic change on nearly all areas related to the provision of public services, it is nearly impossible to deal with the resulting challenges as part of standard ministry responsibilities and daily workloads.

This is where the idea of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level comes into play. At the heart of this strategy is a planning and discussion process initiated by cities, municipalities and districts which aims at

- systematically dealing with the impact of demographic change on selected fields of the provision of public services while making use of the synergies and cost saving options inherent to an interdisciplinary provision of data;
- developing adaptation strategies for the individual sectors of infrastructure that do not conflict with one another
- implementing the above strategies at a political and organizational level in a way that makes it possible for people to meet them with acceptance.

The concept of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level integrates the process and the dialogue as well as the corresponding results in a document with strategic recommendations intended to serve as a basis for political decisions. However, it is not necessary to cover all areas related to the planning of the provision of public services at once. Rather, selected sectors of infrastructure are to be dealt with step by step, taking account of the corresponding capacities in terms of funding, personnel and time.

#### **Create room for manoeuvre instead of writing yet another plan**

The primary goal is not to add just another plan to the school development, local transport, long-term care, youth care or the many other plans.

The strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level cannot and is not intended to compete with these sectoral plans. The plans of the responsible ministries are generally required by law, their contents and the poignancy of their statements are strongly regulated and they are often subject to an approval procedure. The strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level, in contrast, is an informal plan and an informal process independent of legal requirements. It is more flexible, able to accommodate new ideas and offers more options in terms of content. Ideally, at the end of the planning process, every objective, every approach to a solution and every decision developed in this context are echoed in the plans for the individual sectors.

Therefore, when compared to the specialized plans, a strategy at the regional level offers a much broader perspective. This perspective is necessary to be able to account for the complex and manifold impacts that demographic change has on the different areas related to the provision of public services.

**Characteristic of the strategy: make plans and take decisions from a broader perspective!**

Often, this broader perspective is only developed step by step in the course of the discussion and planning process. Among other things, it includes the following aspects:

- A planning horizon that extends far beyond most specialized planning. For example, the prognoses, impact assessments and scenarios should have a 20-year perspective.
- Considering interdependencies between infrastructures and, in consequence, also between sectoral planning efforts. For example, if a school is closed in one municipality, questions about the future accessibility of that municipality by local public transport might arise which, in turn, might have consequences with regard to the accessibility of local doctors and businesses for neighbouring municipalities.
- Dialogue and interdisciplinary thinking across the borders of ministries and institutions. If every party only insists on exercising their competence, many discussions very quickly come to an end. This concern, in particular, is to be reflected and overcome. One reason why a strategy at the regional level is so important is that the district as one of its responsible actors also addresses issues that are beyond its actual sphere of competence, but are increasingly noticed by people living in the district, for example the availability of general practitioners or medical specialists. The competent bodies, for example the panel doctors' associations, must be brought together for the purpose of jointly developing solutions and taking decisions.
- Freedom for new, experimental approaches beyond the bases and requirements of law. If, in a status analysis or the extrapolation of a trend, it turns out that the provision of services to the population is significantly obstructed or is expected to be significantly obstructed in one of the sectors of infrastructure, it may well make sense to discuss adaptation strategies and make exemplary calculations even though, as yet, there is no legal basis in terms of individual sector planning. For example, this may be new minimum sizes, deviations from the German Carriage of Passengers Act, a different staff-per-child ratio, re-allocated budget responsibilities, alternative operator models or other adjustments. If the deviating procedure turns out to have significant advantages over the current regulations, this may very well result in a political momentum which makes it hard not to follow the indicated advantages „from the region“. Experience from the model regions shows that, by this means, strategies at the regional level may become driving forces of changes in the legislation. However, there is naturally no guarantee for this to happen.
- Fundamental analysis of the actual needs and standards in the region. When adjustments to the provision of public services are planned, this often necessarily goes along with a reduction of services. For example, locations are to be closed or consolidated, capacities are to be reduced or fewer or less extensive services are to be provided. Occasionally, a fundamental discussion about “what our district really needs” – possibly within a clearly defined time frame – will be inevitable during the planning process. This “straightforward” discussion should result in a consensus in terms of quality and requirement parameters.

**BROADER PERSPECTIVE**

Longer planning horizon (e.g. 20 years)

Interactions are taken into account

Interdisciplinary thinking across ministry borders

Freedom for experimental solutions

Start discussions about quality or requirements

**Make at least one step ahead for every set of topics!**

"We want to make at least one step ahead with regard to each set of topics." This is a pragmatic way to describe the objective of the process in terms of content.

The wording takes account of the fact that, when contents are discussed, the state of play in each of the selected sectors of infrastructure is a different one. While some observations and some adjustments with regard to a set of topics have possibly already been made in one sector of infrastructure, awareness of the fact that demographic change can cause problems might only slowly develop in another sector.

**MAKE A STEP AHEAD!**

Recognize the problem

Make the problem known

Formulate an opinion

Prioritize locations

Define locations

Articulate powerlessness

Try out taboos

**What the results might look like**

Depending on the initial situation, the discussion and planning process can take very different forms. Of course, the same applies to the results. If the discussion has only just started, it can be considered a success if, at the end of the process, a great number of persons who have a say in the decision-making process has substantial knowledge about the problem. In areas where problems related to demographic change have already been the subject of debate for quite a while, the result of the strategy at the regional level, in contrast, should feature more specific strategies for measures.

*Recognize a problem*

In some areas it can already be considered a great success for such a process if a problem that results from demographic change can be expressed in a way that is very clear and makes it possible for all parties to recognize the problem.

For example, in model regions such as the two districts of Dithmarschen and Steinburg of Schleswig-Holstein, it was possible to clearly illustrate the particular demographic challenges in the long-term care sector. At the same time that the number of people in need of long-term care increases, the number of people willing and able to provide home care decreases. Therefore, the gap between the number of people who are in need of help and the number of people who can provide that help illustrates the upcoming challenges much more accurately than just taking a look at the rising number of people in need of long-term care in the years to come.

*Make a problem known*

Another step of a result can be to once again get back to the heart of a problem together, even though there is already a general awareness of the problem, and then make this problem known to a broader audience. This does not need to be the whole population. Often, the first priority is to make the respective professional association, technical agencies or representatives of municipal or regional politics aware of the need for action in this field. By means of a comprehensive analysis, an illustration of the arrival times of volunteer fire brigades and repeated discussions of the issue, it was possible to make fire protection shortages in rural areas known to a greater number of political players and initiate discussions about a possible solution to the problem. What had previously been attributed to "gut feeling" has now become a scientifically substantiated fact.

*Formulate an opinion*

Whenever possible, a strategy at the regional level should do more than just describe existing problems. Rather, the objective must be to have the region formulate a proper position in the course of the process which then reflects in political decisions. That is the role that is assumed by this document on the provision of public services at the regional level.

*Prioritize locations*

Adapting to demographic change, as unpleasant as it is, often means to plan the decline. Frequently, this requires to make a choice between different locations which, as yet, still provide some sort of public service. Schools or child day care centres are a classic example of this.

The objective must be to plan the remaining services in a way that leaves people with the best possible situation under the circumstances in terms of public services provided. The order of importance of today's locations in terms of the provision of local amenities can generally be deducted from a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of different locational structures. This allows identifying locations where particular efforts should be made with regard to their preservation. The intention behind this is to prevent other influences, for example random fluctuations of demand or political influence, from leading to an "uncoordinated withdrawal of services" which would leave the population in a worse situation than necessary.

*Define locations*

The prioritization of locations, in particular, makes sense when the exact nature of the development is still unclear and important individual factors can neither be defined precisely in terms of geographical area nor with regard to time, for example the actual willingness of doctors to establish a practice at a certain location.

If the municipalities or districts themselves are responsible for the institutions or if they need to take decisions with regard to specific locations as part of sectoral planning efforts, for example with regard to a school development plan, this decision-making competence can also be used in a strategy at the regional level to derive decisions for specific locations.

In doing so, alternative variants of the future school location structure can be developed with specific locations and can be analysed with regard to their advantages (journey times to school, range of subjects offered etc.) and costs.

#### *Articulate powerlessness to initiate something*

If, while working on a topic, it turns out that the region cannot shoulder its responsibility in terms of the provision of public services alone, this incapacity can be expressed very clearly by means of a strategic process.

#### *Why not tryout taboos?*

One result of the analyses may be that the situation that is forecast for some areas, for example with regard to the development of schools or fire protection, is rather hopeless. Therefore, working groups may want to consider also such scenarios where an implementation is not yet possible under current (federal state) law but might lead to better solutions in the area.

### **Proceed with processes**

As has been already mentioned, the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level, above all, is to be understood as a process. The quality of the process has a decisive influence on its result. For this reason, the process should

- create room for considering potential solution approaches in a creative manner;
- include, if possible, all actors in the region/district that are relevant to a set of topics;
- not exceed demands on the initiating organization or regional or local authority (e.g. the district);
- be organized in a way that facilitates decision making on identified solution approaches at the end of the process.

## A strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level – from central places to binding cooperation areas

### What role do central places play?

In rural areas, where the number of inhabitants is decreasing and sustainability as well as funding are causing more problems, it seems inevitable to consolidate and professionally manage schools, health care services, long-term care support centres and cultural programmes. Against this backdrop, the middle- and lower-order centres are very important for stabilizing the provision of public services in the region. It is necessary that they provide what people are looking for, be attractive and coordinate offers and services between them. It is not sufficient that they are centres in the region, but they must also be centres for the region. They must be accessible with reasonable effort, and their core range of services must have an impact on the region and be connected to complementary, decentralized and alternative solutions, for example self-organized transport services, private care, neighbourly help, village shops, school branches or village schools or places for learning outside schools.

Therefore, within the framework of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level, the central places system can and should be further elaborated, and connections with the areas in between should be established. To do so, the responsible persons and entities at the regional and local level need to be involved. The result is a fine tuning of the network of lower-order centres at the municipal level, in particular, which takes up the visions and values of the decentralized concentration.

It represents the implementation of the principle of countervailing influence with regard to the provision of public services. The planning at federal state and sub-regional level sets the direction as it defines what a central place is. In the context of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level, the central places idea is implemented for the region and adapted to the regional and local circumstances and requirements by local actors. They know the conditions, and they are responsible for the provision of public services and the quality of life in the region. Here, it is important to take account of the diversity of the region and opportunities as well as of the importance of commitment, cooperation and coordination.

### Many options for adaptations

Besides and in addition to the concentration of health care services, education, mobility, emergency services or local amenities in selected places, there are additional basic options for rebuilding and adapting the provision of public services at the regional level. Institutions which are not used to capacity may be closed. The bus network, schools or day care centres for children can be scaled down or reorganized. Accessibility may be improved. Instead of centralization, for example, a deliberate decision can be made to build or use small size sewage treatment plants. Temporary and mobile services, such as weekly markets, medical consultation hours or mobile libraries, connect the small villages. Using digital technologies or innovative strategies, traditional services may be restructured or discontinued services may be replaced. Services may be privatized or organized by volunteers. It is the responsibility of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level to find the right ways and interconnect individual solutions.

### Heterogeneous regions

The small-scale analyses of the population as well as the analyses of the local circumstances in terms of the provision of services and of accessibility demonstrate clearly: there are sub-regions and places within the regions

with very different framework conditions and requirements – from municipalities with an excellent service level to villages and small regions where no services are provided and no local public transport exists. For this reason, some regions of the programme of action for the provision of public services at the regional level have undertaken a small-scale differentiation that is based on indicators such as population structure, infrastructure and accessibility. As a result, types of municipalities are grouped by strength, and a distinction is made between adaptation and cooperation strategies. The aim is to strengthen the role of strong places as regional anchors. At the same time, the finding of new solutions is to be facilitated in regions where service structures are less well developed and accessibility is worse. In most cases, these solutions are self-organized, and frequently they involve search processes and experiments which require freedom and backup.

### **Action takes place on the ground**

Villages, small cities or neighbourhoods in middle-order centres are places where the full range of public services can be experienced. Long-term care, healthcare, fire prevention, mobility services as well as work with children and young or elderly people are often geared to the immediate living environment. If there is no local service, transport must be organized, for example in the form of a community bus service, ride or car sharing. While analyses, ideas and strategies are jointly developed at the regional level and, in doing so, directions are set, they must be implemented at the local level, i.e. in the municipalities and communities. Two things are important in this context: Local actors need to be involved in the strategic process, and a differentiated strategic framework is required for action in the villages, small towns and communities.

### **Commitment counts**

The quality of life in rural areas has always been dependent on voluntary commitment and imaginative self-organization. Clubs, village festivities, mutual assistance and social cohesion form the basis of satisfaction with the place of living. However, professional public services are more and more complemented by voluntary or self-organized activities. Culture, education and mobility are provided collaboratively, in many villages and small towns often exclusively by their inhabitants. Based on the central places concept, this results in more differentiated strategies to ensure the provision of public services at the regional level. Infrastructure, cultural offerings and professional service providers are concentrated in larger centres. The smaller and remoter a place, the greater the need in terms of social cohesion, self-organization and mutual help seems to be. Small country towns – often lower-order centres with a minimum provision in terms of services – range between strong middle-order centres and small villages with voluntary commitment.

### **Cooperation and networks as a factor**

It is not just individual services, but the interaction of the most different actors and institutions that makes up the quality of the provision of public services. Voluntary welfare associations, cooperatives and clubs, but also families, neighbourhoods and social networks are important elements of a historically evolved welfare mix where the public and private sectors as well as members of civil society interact. Cooperation and networks are important at the local and regional levels, within one area related to the provision of public services as well as across several areas. Examples include doctors or healthcare networks, multigenerational houses, multi-purpose village centres which are increasingly organized by several local authorities together. For this reason, the basic responsibility for the design and provision of public services and, in consequence, also for the corresponding management, lies with the federal state and the municipalities.

### Coordinate professional and voluntary work

The design of the interfaces between professional and voluntary services has turned out to be the key task and biggest challenge. This is most clearly apparent from the example of mobility. Public transport is realized by regional concession holders with high-capacity lines and flexible service elements in rural areas. In sparsely populated regions, professional services are complemented by voluntary mobility services such as a community bus service or ride sharing. Depending on the framework conditions on the ground, these services can be organized very differently. With regard to the provision of services at the regional level, it is essential that the different forms of mobility of civil society are connected to one another and to public transport, including the corresponding transport intervals.

Only if these efforts are successful, the provision of services in rural areas can be ensured. The result is a combination of concentration or centralization efforts with decentralized approaches which are often based on voluntary endeavours. Similar challenges to combine and coordinate professional and voluntary efforts can be found in almost any area related to the provision of public services: traditionally with emergency services or fire brigades, but also in the fields of health and long-term care or education (e.g. parents' associations that support schools).



Fig. 2: Adaptation options

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.



## Professional services

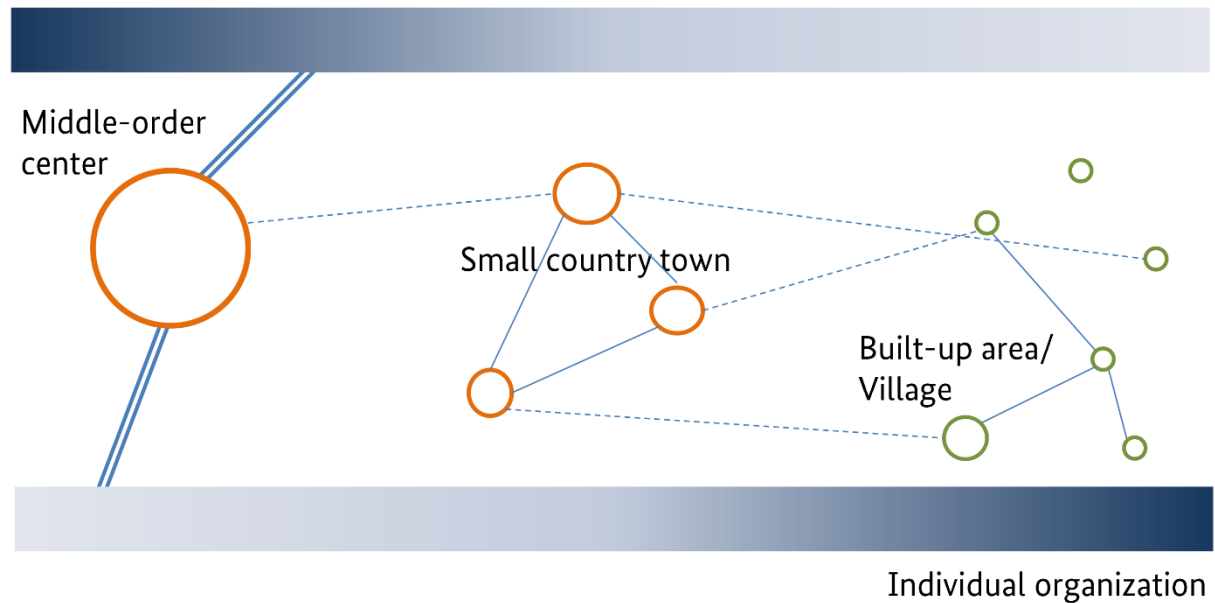


Fig. 3: Continuum of the provision of services from middle-order centres to villages

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.

### How is binding cooperation developed in sub-regions?

This shows how important networking and the division of functions in the region including cooperation between strong middle- and lower-order centres and network-like connections in rural areas are. From this, the Nordfriesland district and other model regions have developed the idea of functional or cooperation areas. They are formed around a lower-order centre, but can also be sub-regions without an existing central place. The objective is to guarantee basic functions and minimum standards of public and private sector infrastructure in the functional and cooperation areas, i.e. childcare, primary schools, local amenities, general practitioners, long-term care services, places for encounters, citizens' offices or sport, leisure or culture facilities, while accounting for their accessibility. The classification and assurance of the provision of basic services in a sub-region is done through cooperation between local authorities. The pattern of cooperation areas and the mobility network in a region are coordinated with each other. Generally, a small-scale differentiation of the framework conditions or a classification of municipalities serves as a basis.

### 3. HOW?

#### It's the process that counts – organization and steps of the dialogue

Establishing a strategy at the regional level is a complex process. Data needs to be collected, prepared and analysed. Many people from different disciplines are to discuss their opinion and work together. The results need to be comprehensible and have an impact on politics. This process is characterized by the constructive interaction of the informal specialized planning group process at the regional level and by the input of experts, such as population forecasts, accessibility modelling, model developments, trend scenarios or qualitative analyses of needs, which serve as a basis of the efforts. The development of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level requires time – experience shows that such a process can take up to two years.

The quality of this process has a major influence on the quality of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. Design and control of the process are therefore key elements for pushing the actors involved to render top performances and for provoking new ideas.

In the following, the work and decision-making structures are explained before the perfect process sequence is presented.

#### Structures of work and decision-making – who is involved and who does what?

Effective organization is key to the success of the development process. Clear process planning, unique control structures and an unambiguous decision-making process are prerequisites which allow for the different parties involved to participate actively and with interest in the process, for the responsibilities and roles to be distributed clearly and for the findings to be accepted by as many people as possible.

An effective organizational structure is ideally inspired by the nature of the cooperation (municipal association, district, regional association) and its regional history. Making use of existing organizational structures and networks which have already been established in the region and having a good connection to the participants at the decision and working levels is a key element to success. However, there are amendments necessary with regard to the issue of the provision of public services. For example, structures from LEADER processes with LEADER action group, LEADER management and working groups can generally also be used to manage a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. However, it is necessary to complement the range of participants, for example with actors who are responsible for the provision of public services in the social domain. District administrations or relevant coordinating bodies in this domain, on the other hand, need to include actors from the field of regional development as well as from the civic sector. The structures of the regional planning association with planning assembly, management board and administrative offices are also well-suited for controlling and managing a strategy at the regional level.

Based on the experience of predecessors, it will sometimes be necessary to build entirely new structures and networks and establish a cross-sectoral composition. This process may require some time, but serves to develop and practice trustful cooperation.

Based on the experience of previous model regions, a good organizational structure of the strategy process at the regional level is characterized by the following levels:

- control level with steering group;
- operational level with a secretariat/regional coordination;
- cooperative working level with topic working groups.

An operative steering group could serve as a link between the control and operational level. Some regions have also made good experience with an advisory council consisting of representatives from local government or academia.

#### *Steering group and chair*

The process should be centralized and controlled by a steering group. This group should consist of six to ten persons. A crucial aspect with regard to control structures is the capacity to take decisions. Therefore, the leading politicians and heads of administration (such as mayors, district commissioners or heads of departments) need to be part of and lead the process which, in turn, gives the process the corresponding meaning.

Involving the leading actors from politics and administration is important, in particular, to legitimize and call for cross-sectoral cooperation. Steering groups are generally headed by the district commissioner, a head of department or head of office who has also the main responsibility of the process. The heads of the working groups need to be involved in the group, too. Additional representatives from municipalities, technical authorities and regional initiatives who also deal with the issue of demographic change may also take part. If federal government or federal state funds are involved, representatives of the corresponding ministries should at least have an advisory function in the steering group.

The steering group has the central responsibility in terms of project planning and process control. Its members need to connect the initiatives of the working groups, identify common concerns, conflicts or points of intersection and issue process instructions/work orders. This group makes the key strategic decisions. The steering group keeps an eye on the inclusive overall objective of the strategy at the regional level and exerts influence on the progress of the individual infrastructure working groups through their heads. A meeting of the group takes place at least every three months and as required, for example if important strategic or financial decisions need to be taken.

It can also assume responsibility for connecting the strategy at the regional level to exemplary investment projects related to the implementation of measures. In any case, the steering group assumes the public relations work and organizes transfer events such as regional conferences, demography forums or community workshops. In many model regions, the establishment of an operative steering group of four or five persons that is chaired by the district commissioner has proven its worth. This group, which is supported by regional coordinators, takes care of the day-to-day business and prepares the decisions taken by the steering group.

#### *Regional coordinators/secretariat*

The big challenge with regard to the processes of the strategy at the regional level results from its great complexity. Many different participants of different levels come together to deal with the challenging working steps of the strategy at the regional level in terms of content and methodology. The success of the process is highly dependent on an exact division of labour and a well-functioning communication between the individual participants. It is imperative that clear rules be established at the beginning of the process of a strategy at the regional level. Here, the operative level is of particular importance. At this level, an operative control group and, in particular, regional coordinators, are to manage the process like a secretariat while closely cooperating with each other.

The group, which serves as a communication interface and engine of the process, ensures the flow of information between the different structures at the different levels and controls the process. Therefore, regional coordinators must be well-equipped in terms of resources and have the necessary support of leading actors from politics and administration. They should be part of the administration or closely affiliated with it. The persons employed in the regional coordination need to be very familiar with the structures, processes and points of contact in the district commissioner's office and have a broad network of contact persons in the region.

The secretariat connects the district commissioner's office and the experts' offices. It commissions and coordinates their work orders. Regional coordinators can also moderate working groups or delegate this task for individual working groups or contentious issues to external actors. The work load of this complex process must not be underestimated, in particular if there are requirements for documentation and auditability in connection with the funds received or if an exchange with other regions is to take place. Therefore, care must be taken that the secretariat is provided with sufficient personnel, i.e. at least one full-time position for a qualified expert. In addition, a public service specialist is useful to provide relief from administrative burdens.

### Working Groups

The topic working groups are the key element of the process. Normally, groups are formed for the selected areas related to the provision of public services. One obvious option would be to combine related infrastructures. This promotes inclusive interconnectivity and thinking outside the box. The fact that the working groups include members of different disciplines and levels has been considered unique in the model regions and has provided a real added value to the participants involved.

Usually, the working groups meet every eight to ten weeks or at least once during each working step of the working group phase. All in all, six to eight sessions per working group took place over the course of the entire work process in the model regions.

For the working groups, a size of 15 to 20 persons has proven successful and still allows for in-depth discussions on the individual sets of topics. The composition and activity of the working groups should ensure that expert planners from administrations do not overemphasize their competency but take voluntary and private actors seriously and give them a chance to have a say in the decision-making process. The aim is to have consensual decisions in the working groups.

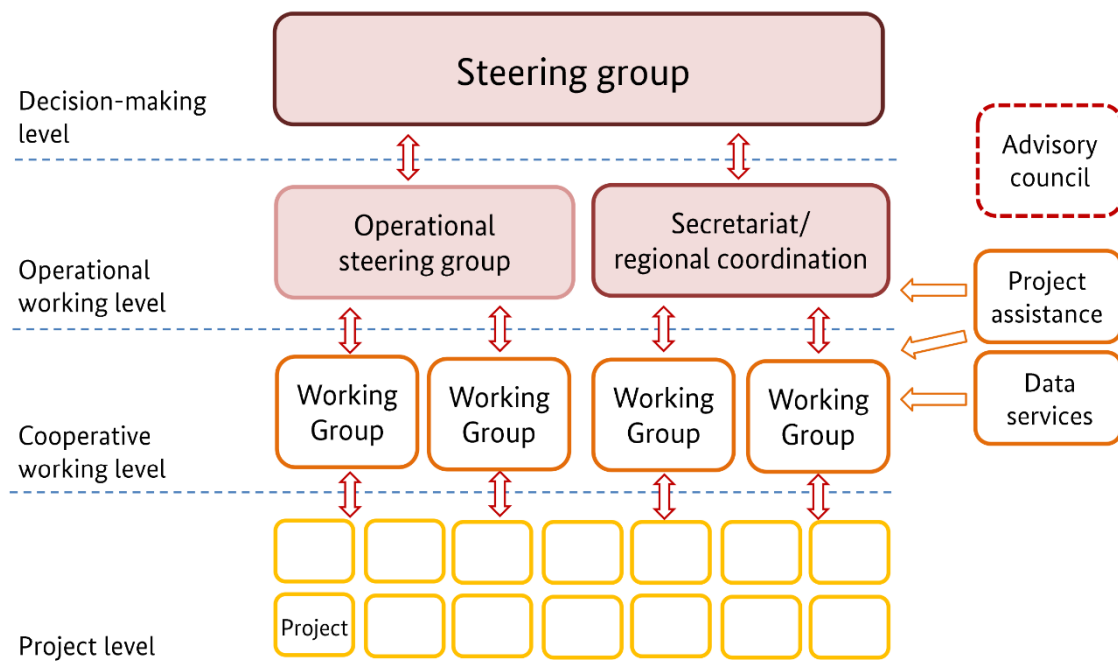


Fig. 4: Perfect organizational structure for the process of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.

**TIPS**

- The working structures should already be established prior to the start of the project. It may be necessary to make adjustments in the initial phase.
- Working together across disciplines is a new experience for many regions, which is why it may take some time to complete the identification process and build up mutual trust.
- The planning and structures should be so flexible as to allow for reactions and adaptations depending on the course of the process.
- The sooner key persons of the implementation process are integrated in the working groups, the easier it is to keep them informed about the objective and work progress of the groups on a continuous basis and the better the chances are that the process will not grind to a halt between the working groups and the political and practical implementation. Therefore, preparing the implementation as well as the political and administrative decisions which are required for that purpose must become more and more important in the second half of the working groups' activity.

In the working groups, the corresponding sectoral planning, external (public and private) infrastructure operators and additional partners are represented. A broad-based and open participation of interested social partners has proved to be successful. Representatives of the municipalities from administration and politics should also be involved. The integration of local government officials has been handled differently in the model regions. A crucial aspect is that the professional and open character of the discussions in the topic working groups is maintained and early politicization avoided. In some cases, local government officials are involved in the steering group and/or the advisory council. However, in several model regions it has proven quite successful to actively and responsibly involve mayors, for example in the chair of working groups.

For the purpose of a broad exchange across disciplines, working groups should regularly come together, for example at events where interim results are established or in workshops.

*Advisory council and public participation*

The incorporation of local government officials and the transfer of results to other decision makers in the area that belongs to the district in administrative terms is an important element for the success of the process. This task can be assumed by a steering group that is complemented by political and social partner representatives from outside the administration.

In some regions, an advisory council was created as an organizational unit in its own right. The council is informed by the management and the head of the steering group; it meets every three months. Its members should be very much interested in a planning process with a participative approach and they should be well connected in the region. If external programmes can be tapped to fund the process, a representative from the (federal state, federal government) authority that has launched the programme could also be involved in the steering group.

A separate chapter informs about experience with public participation.

*External support – accompanying research and process management*

Establishing forecasts, models, model calculations and requirement analyses related to aspects of quality and costs is generally beyond the possibilities of administration in terms of time. It has proven sensible to outsource such tasks, because

- previous experience makes the planning process more efficient,
- models, software and databases that already exist can be used,
- there are sufficient capacities which are not tied up by other regular duties, and
- the discussion is enriched by additional input.

The question which sector of infrastructure can be dealt with by municipal administrations and which are to be outsourced to external service providers is ultimately a question of personnel and financial resources.

Spending money on external assistance can also make sense with regard to process management. The tasks involved here can be quite diverse and their primary objective is to provide assistance to regional coordinators and complement their efforts. The following tasks are required to support the process:

- providing advice to and coach regional coordinators;
- moderating and documenting working group sessions and other events;
- providing advice related to the acquisition of funds;
- collecting and preparing data;
- reporting on and managing funding applications.

These tasks can be assigned to different service providers.

Providing advice to the secretariat is especially important in the initial phase. Amongst other things, it involves coordinating the content of the upcoming working steps of the overall process and, as a result, proposals for adapting the process. In the course of the process, this can be done in larger time intervals by means of coaching the responsible persons. Moreover, it seems to make sense to commission a professional service provider with a moderation role. As an outsider, this service provider can lead working groups and technical discussions in a neutral manner. Besides expertise in discursive planning processes, the corresponding agency should also have a certain amount of technical experience related to the provision of public services. In order to avoid that the project be viewed as a mere “expert project”, regular consultations must take place between external moderators, regional coordinators and the control group.

### **Overview of the content process related to the establishment of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level**

The actual development of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level can be subdivided into three phases of altogether seven steps. Prior to this, the process is initiated; subsequently efforts are undertaken to make it sustainable.

*Initiation*

First, it must be the declared aim of the administration to actively shape demographic change and initiate proactive planning for mandatory and/or voluntary areas related to the provision of public services that are to be defined. Next, organizational structures are determined, a control body (steering group) and a strong playmaker (district commissioner) are established, and a coordinating body is set up.

A basic concept to integrate the different actors should be established, and external management should be commissioned (moderation, model calculations, analysis of needs).

Once the process has been initiated, a strategy at the regional level is just seven steps away.

#### *Initial phase of the process*

During the initial phase of the process, the infrastructures that are to be dealt with get chosen in a structured process depending on the need and opportunity to act (see chapter on the setting of priorities). As soon as the infrastructures that are to be dealt with have been established, corresponding topic working groups are established. If possible, the representatives of all relevant technical agencies, institutions and parties concerned should be represented here. What is more, the process needs to be organized along the lines of initial regional conditions in this phase, and detailed schedules need to be established. The parties involved as well as the members of the public receive information on the project and its objectives.

Now, the working group phase begins; it is comprised of five working steps. Each step involves at least one meeting of the working groups.

#### *Identify problems*

In a first step, the working groups define and substantiate the issue or the problems for their sectors of infrastructure and a corridor where a solution is to be found. Next, a common mandate is established.

The key question which data is available and what their quality is must be discussed and clarified. In addition, the allocation of roles and the responsibilities in the process need to be clarified.

#### *Record and assess status quo*

In this working step, the locations, services and costs of the infrastructures are recorded. The small-scale population forecast is established and the underlying assumptions of experts are validated together with local experts. The issues and the corresponding methodological instruments of the qualitative analyses of needs are also discussed, determined and commenced in this step (see also chapter on basic methodological elements).

The working groups define quantitative and qualitative assessment criteria related to the provision of public services in the respective sector of infrastructure.

#### *Outline the future and continue the development trend*

The development trends in the respective infrastructure are continued on the basis of an inventory of locations and services as well as of small-scale population forecast: To what extent is and will the capacity at the individual locations be used? Where are closures imminent?

Sometimes, interesting but previously unnoticed information can already be deduced from a cartographic representation of the current situation in terms of the provision of public services as well as from a comparison of accessibilities. This also facilitates the understanding of specialized planning by lay persons. The interdisciplinary set-up of the working groups with representatives of the authorities, external experts and independent/private operators makes it necessary to reach a common and unambiguous understanding with regard to, for example, images, maps and diagrams. In most cases, the first step forward in terms of common planning is to continue the existing service range and the present supply situation. This trend scenario shows what happens if nothing happens. It is a provocation aimed at fostering the development of awareness for problems. In addition, this is a starting point for the formulation of alternative scenarios.

Parallel to these group discussions, demand that was not met and aspects of quality related to (potential) demanders are registered; this is also referred to as qualitative analysis of needs. To this end, infrastructure users are asked to rate the current range of services as well as the deficits and give their opinion on future needs.

#### *Develop scenarios – shape the future/simulate alternative future scenarios*

Based on the trend scenario as well as the discussion of standards related to the current and future provision of services, and enriched by the results of the analysis of needs, alternative scenarios for the future are developed and assessed in the working groups in a step-by-step process. These scenarios should deliberately question the current minimum standards (related to the public services provided, accessibility etc.), and priorities should be set based on the subjective view of the participants in the discussion. In this phase, the creativity and imagination of all the parties involved are required in order to contemplate new solutions and forms of public services. Limits (on financing) are to be exceeded and what (to date) has been conceived impossible is to be imagined, whenever possible with the aim of maintaining or improving the quality of life of the local population.

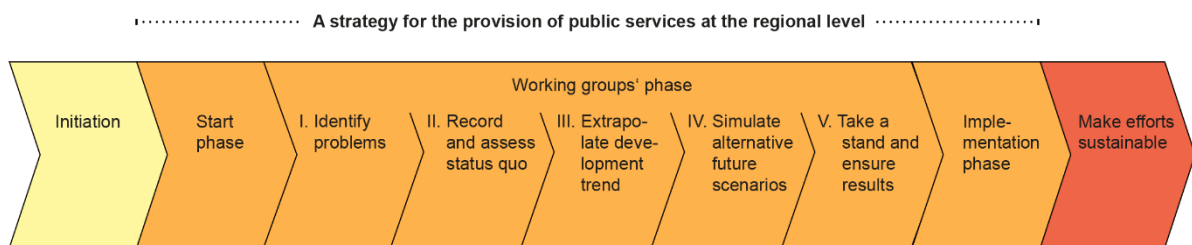


Fig. 5: Working steps in the process of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level  
Source: Gertz Gutsche Rügenapp (GGR).

The dealing with different infrastructure services provides an opportunity to examine new forms of services and take an informed decision to follow other than the traditional paths where specific services are concentrated at central places. Efficiency and stable costs are other decisive parameters for the assessment and selection of a preferred scenario or priority location.

During this phase of the discussion, interests can collide. Strategic considerations may be made and questions of (political) support may be raised which, in turn, may lead to conflicts. Therefore, enough time should be allowed for the discussions, and a neutral moderator should be involved to support the constructive and goal-oriented nature of the talks.

#### *Take a stand and ensure results*

As a result of these discussions, each working group opts for a preferred adaptation scenario (preferential scenario), prioritizes locations or solution approaches as well as measures and gives reasons for its decision. It should be formulated clear and understandable and set out in writing. Specialist recommendations are developed and the corresponding process is documented, i.e. the work process, the analyses and the model calculations are described. Moreover, the working groups and the steering group should already develop implementation strategies for the proposed measures. As soon as the specialist recommendations of the different infrastructure working groups are available, they will be discussed in the steering group and summed up in a cross-sectoral document entitled "A strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level" (see also chapter on ensuring results).



*Decisions, agreements, work orders*

Now, it is time for the implementation phase. The objective of the implementation phase is to create a broad basis for the working results and achieve a long-term and binding effect. For example, this may be achieved in the form of decisions of local governance bodies or by means of inclusion in formal planning documents. As a general rule, a very diverse range of communication and participation instruments should be used to inform the representatives of the municipalities, citizens and media as well as actors from regional and federal politics about the results.

It is necessary to provide information on the strategy at the regional level early on at these levels and have the key players on a technical and political level (district commissioner, heads of department etc.) promote the results.

**EXPERIENCE WITH THE PROCESS – THINGS THAT MATTER**

There is some regularly recurring experience that can be taken from previous processes.

*Districts and regions as suitable scales*

- Districts, regions and collaborative schemes crossing local authority boundaries are a good spatial scale for a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. Of course, such a strategy would also be conceivable for individual municipalities. However, this involves the danger of looking for solutions only within the boundaries of one municipality and disregard the multiplicity of interdependencies. For districts, this is sometimes easier than for regions because their structures are more streamlined, they have more internal resources as well as a greater control potential, and, in some areas, they operate infrastructures themselves.

*External support makes sense*

- Setting up a strategy at the regional level involves a lot of work. Therefore, it makes sense to seek external support. External agencies can bring a great deal of know-how into areas such as “scenarios and model calculations”, “requirement analyses” or “moderation and process design”. However, they cannot remove the responsibility from the district for the process as a whole (initiation, carrying out, political significance, implementation of results).

*A strategy at the regional level is a top-level issue*

- The development of a strategy at the regional level must be addressed at the top level. The political responsible figures should make it clear that the experiment of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level is desired, that the results are taken seriously and, for this reason, the additional workload of all the participants is accepted.

*Involve expert planners at an early stage*

- Expert planners are often important key players – because of their technical knowledge and because of their function. It is important to convince them of the process early on by making it clear that the strategy at the regional level gives them room for strategic considerations. In no case must the impression be created that the strategy at the regional level would take care of their core set of topics because they have done everything wrong in the past.

*Plan sufficient resources for data compilation*

- The time and personnel required to compile the data within an institution is repeatedly underestimated. The more detailed data on present facilities (locations, buildings, services, cost structure etc.) as well as on demand for their services (number of users, age structure etc.) can be provided to the experts involved, the better and more convincing the scenarios in the working groups are.

*Exact schedules*

- In order to successfully complete the process of a strategy at the regional level, it is very important to establish and coordinate a timetable with all relevant stakeholders. Special regard must be paid to the accompanying research activities which are to provide the bases for discussions in the form of model calculations and scenarios. As the methodological requirements are relatively high and there is a network spanning across different disciplines and levels, the coordination effort is relatively high and may impact the time schedule. At the same time, the time schedule must be handled in a flexible manner in order to be able to react in time to delays and avoid vacancy periods as this would have an impact on the motivation to make a contribution. Corresponding measures include the advancement of individual elements, discussions about quality or possible adaptations or the shortening of working phases to have the working group sessions take place more often. Think about implementation early on
- However, the process must not end here. Therefore, it is necessary to think about follow-up activities very early on in the ongoing process. How can the results be brought into politics? How can the discussion on the contents be continued? How will the planning be implemented, updated at a later date and readjusted? In addition, it is important to keep up the tension also during the working group process. To keep the interest in the project high and prevent speculation, interim results may be presented, or special events for key players in administration and politics may be held.

*A governance tool for local politics*

- Even with a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level in place, the adaptation of facilities related to the provision of public services to demographic change remains a difficult matter with many unpopular decisions. A strategy at the regional level can serve as a governance tool for local politics in order to face the challenges with sound scientific decision-making bases in a way that allows for political relevance to emerge from it.

## Setting priorities – what matters is making the right choice

Generally, in the first phase of a strategy at the regional level it is not possible to address all fields of public services at the same time. There will also probably not be a great need for action in every field. Initially, the strategy at the regional level should address singular fields with a great need for adaptation and action where the availability of data and the framework conditions can be considered comparatively well. Fast and conclusive results help to raise the motivation of the parties involved and create a higher level of acceptance for the process.

### **What are suitable infrastructures?**

As a general rule, all infrastructures can be dealt with in the framework of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. In previous spatial planning model projects, the methodology of the strategy at the regional level has already been applied to a large number of infrastructures. The most frequently dealt with issues were medical care, education/school development and long-term care/senior citizens/living in later life.

### **Consider the differences!**

When making a choice, it is necessary to consider the basic differences of infrastructures. They exert a direct influence on the methodological approach and the scope of options. A distinction can be made between

- social infrastructures,
- technical infrastructures,
- accessibility infrastructures and
- point, line and network infrastructures.

**Characteristics of infrastructures**

	Social infrastructures	Technical infrastructures	Accessibility infrastructures
Starting points for a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level	Optimizing services in the region	Settlement planning (new construction), demolition and remodelling (existing infrastructure), balancing & financing	Accessibility planning
Methodology	Locational structure scenarios, accessibility modelling, cost-benefit-assessments	Analysis and assessment of consequential costs and corresponding dependencies	Determining accessibility requirements (cross reference to social infrastructures), basic network planning
Adaptability of infrastructures	Comparatively high	Comparatively low	High (local public transport) to rather low (road network)
Scale	Municipal (child day care centre) to regional (hospital)	Mainly municipal	Regional
Public funding share	High	Average (roads) to low (public utilities), citizens (= customers) as major cost bearers	High
Possible forms of results	Locational structures („maps“) with assessments (costs and benefits)	Formulating goals for settlement development, strategic considerations with regard to existing infrastructure	Basic concept for the network development (e.g. preliminary stage of a local transport plan)

Tab. 1: Characteristics of infrastructures.

Source: Gertz Gutsche Rügenapp (GGR).

Additional characteristics which have an influence on the needs and possibilities for action, in particular, are related to the distinction between voluntary and mandatory responsibilities of municipalities and public and private operators.

Generally, there is a physical link between technical infrastructures which correlate to a specific line and the users of that infrastructure. Social infrastructures are independent of a specific user location and usually correlate to specific points. However, they must be located within a reasonable distance for a sufficient number of users to be able to access them. It is easier to adapt social infrastructures to a change in demand in terms of quantity or settlement patterns than it is to adapt a technical service based on specific lines. In simple terms, the individual lines of public utility networks need to be maintained “until the last citizen in a street has moved or passed away”. Switching from a central provision of public utilities to more flexible, decentralized structures is generally not possible before the existing installations and networks have not been written off. Social infrastructures, in contrast, rather require organizational solutions, e.g. cooperation or networks.

Accessibility infrastructures play a special role. They have a cross-cutting function and a service function for the majority of public services provided in the social sector. While it is quite possible to adapt local public transport to changes in framework conditions, this applies only to a limited extent to the network of roads and routes.

### Joint decisions – the selection process

To select the infrastructures that are to be examined, a multi-stage procedure which is based on discourse and, where possible, includes all departments, has proven its worth. This involves a mixture of an integrated and a sectoral content-based approach which is being coordinated by the district council that organizes the process.

Initially, awareness of the function and methodology of the selection process is to be raised among regional control bodies, responsible ministries and policymakers as well as the general public. Preliminary talks are then held, and an initial professional assessment of the possibilities and requirements is carried out by the responsible ministries. It has proven efficient to perform the initial professional assessment on the basis of an infrastructure matrix. The matrix features possible infrastructures and their operators as well as select assessment criteria including explanatory notes.

The internal assessment of the ministries involved should be realized in the form of guideline-based interviews. This makes it possible to raise executive officers' awareness and gain important additional information. Of course, enquiries in writing are also possible. In any case, the ministries should be directly contacted by the district commissioners in order to guarantee their active involvement. The mayors, too, should be involved in the selection process by means of talks and participation in the selection workshop.

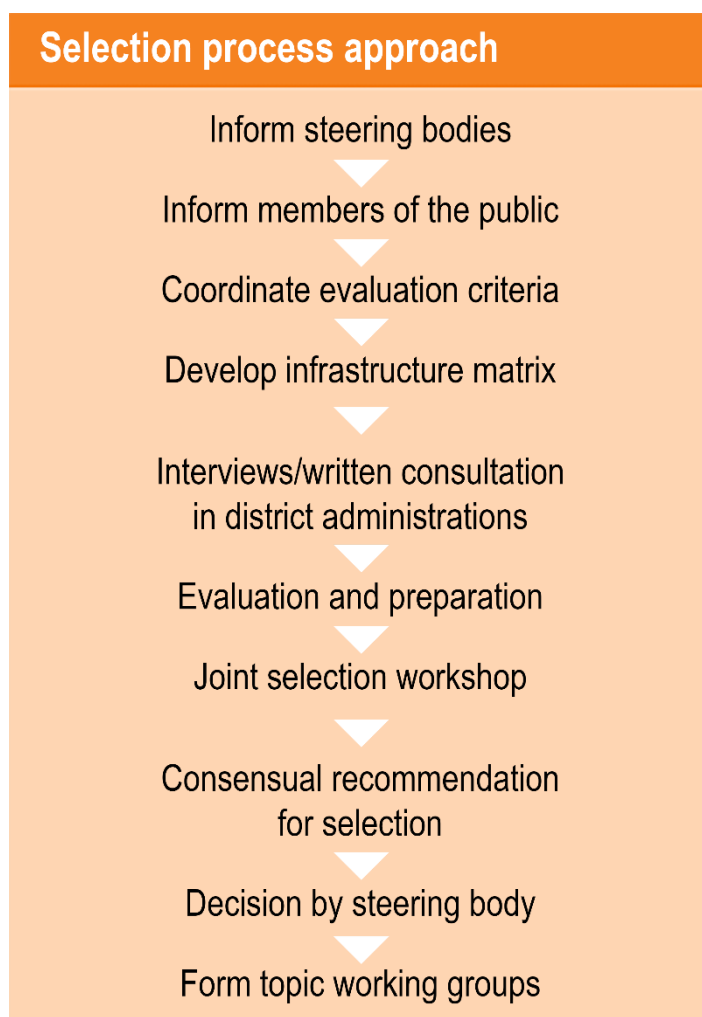


Fig. 6: Selection process approach

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.

The evaluation tables and the results of the talks serve as a basis for a moderated selection workshop. In the workshop, the pros and cons of the different infrastructures are discussed, and a recommendation for selection is developed. The mayor and other experts should take part in this workshop. Ideally, the individual infrastructures are discussed, evaluated and jointly structured in a hierarchical manner based on the criteria that are listed in the following. In this respect, the criteria of need to act and opportunities to act as well as the availability of data are of particular relevance.

The outcome of the selection process is a professional recommendation to the steering body and the district politicians indicating the first priority infrastructures that should be dealt with in the strategy at the regional level. Second priority infrastructures can be integrated in the process with a delay of one or two years.

#### *Possible evaluation criteria*

The selection process can be based on a number of criteria. The six evaluation criteria below were already used in former model regions.

#### **POSSIBLE EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- Infrastructure operator(s)
- Need for action
- Scope for action
- Structure of results
- Availability of data
- Existing materials

When it comes to the implementation of results, the question of who is responsible for the infrastructure is an important one. Districts can act as operators themselves or assume a coordinating role. If the district is not responsible for an infrastructure in question, it is also necessary to consider the extent to which other operators can be persuaded of constructive collaboration within the context of a project.

#### *Need for action*

In view of demographic change, some areas related to the provision of public services may currently face great pressure to continue their activities at a viable level. Other infrastructures may experience the structural changes that result in a modification only in the medium term. The relevance of the problem and the financial volume as well as the current political dimension are evaluated, in particular, by district politicians or by cities and municipalities.

#### *Scope for action*

In view of limited capacities, in particular, it is important to consider the prospects of success as well as the options for action and control in an infrastructure sphere when making a selection. How much scope for action is there actually when the legal requirements or adaptations that have already been made are taken into account?

As a rule, the scope for action of voluntary tasks is much greater than that of mandatory tasks which must be implemented within a narrow legal frame (e.g. providing school education). Services for which the district is not responsible can only be controlled by providing information, holding consultations and undertaking coordination efforts. However, even if the possibilities to exert influence seem limited this does not mean that there is no scope for action. Therefore, this criterion should not immediately be considered an exclusion criterion.

*Structure of results*

For the participants in the process as well as for the policy makers it is important to be able to imagine the possible outcomes of the strategy at the regional level for a sector of infrastructure as well as to have an idea of the way forward. For this reason, the extent to which ideas or “images” for the possible structure of results exist and how they might be dealt with in the future should be discussed during the selection workshop.

*Availability of data*

A basic requirement for the dealing with most infrastructures is generally a sound data basis. Therefore, it should be clarified in advance if differentiated data for the respective infrastructure is available. With regard to facilities, such data comprises the exact number of locations, information on how they are used, capacity utilization figures, operational cost data, information on the physical state of buildings as well as data related to user groups and intensity of use.

*Existing materials*

The strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level does not start from scratch but develops further existing considerations and ideas. For this reason, corresponding material should not only be sought at district level, but also at the planning region and municipal level. The work that is done in a sector of infrastructure can be much alleviated and speeded-up by means of thorough research, analysis and action concepts. However, it is also possible that everything has already been “said” and it is no longer necessary to deal with an aspect in the strategy at the regional level or that action is only required to a limited extent.

## Forecasts, accessibilities, analyses and scenarios – basic methodological elements

Combining sound scientific data analysis and well-made, understandable visualization in the topic working groups, in particular, is an essential characteristic of the discursive approach of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. This relates primarily to the future development of the population in general, but also to the development differentiated by age group and small-scale unit, as well as to accessibility and cost aspects. On this basis, demand changes in various social and technical infrastructure sectors can be detected and consequences of adaptation alternatives can be analysed by means of trend and alternative scenarios. In addition, there are optional complementary requirement analyses on part of the infrastructure demanders and providers which are also incorporated in the envisaged quality standards for the provision of services. Examples are reasonable accessibilities or envisaged service provision degrees.

Experience in the model regions shows that it is very helpful for the discussions in the topic working groups to develop and compare alternative scenarios. The advantage of scenarios is that they allow participants in the working groups to formulate their ideas very freely. New ideas can always be transferred to an additional scenario. With the model calculations and scenarios, participants in the working groups have a kind of “playing field” at their disposal that stimulates their creative powers and lets them act as “players”. However, when working with scenarios, participants also need to “think through” the scenarios that are introduced in the discussion and substantiate them from a spatial and structural point of view. Consequently, the method portfolio of the strategy at the regional level contains a number of different basic methodological elements which can be shaped and combined for a specific infrastructure. This means, that each time a new “playing field” is assembled from the basic elements.

Experience in the model regions of the action programme has shown that the methodological elements can be divided into mandatory and complementary ones. When you use the images of “playing field” and “play”, the small-scale population forecast, in combination with the population distribution model, and the basic accessibility model form the “playing field” where the other elements are put together and “played with”, depending on the thematic and infrastructural context.

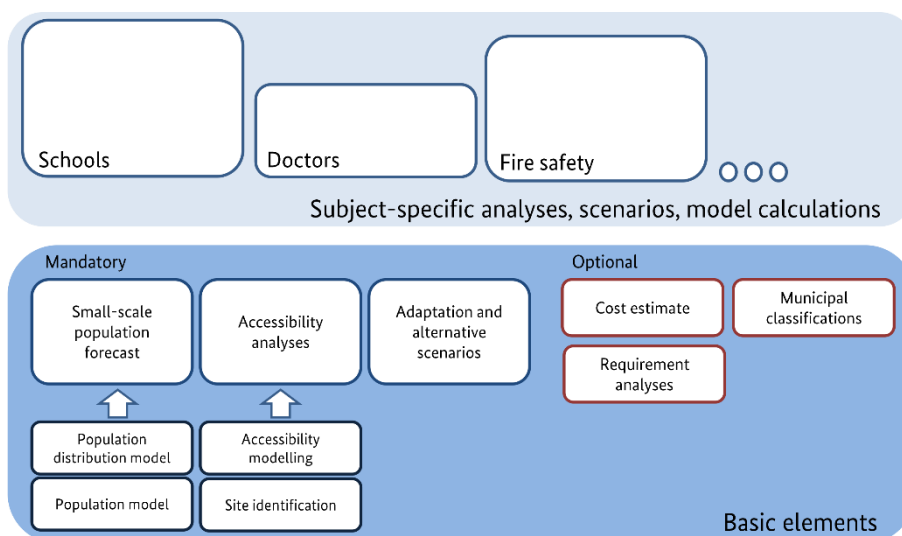


Fig. 7: Basic methodological elements

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.



The result is a division of the underlying process of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level: in a preliminary phase that serves to clarify the technical requirements, collect data and establish the “playing field” from the small-scale population forecast and develop the basic accessibility model, and a strategy and project phase in which scenarios and alternatives for the individual sectors of infrastructure are developed, compared, assessed and enriched with the results of qualitative requirements analyses in a discussion-based process with regard to the relevant regions. Mandatory elements of a strategy process at the regional level are the small-scale population forecasts, the accessibility analyses and the scenarios. Cost estimates or cost-benefit analyses, qualitative requirement analyses or the classification of municipalities, in contrast, are complementary basic methodological elements. This means that their use is not mandatory.

Work in the working groups should not go on for too long without making use of the data basis and visualization. Ideally, the results from the preliminary phase are available as soon as the working groups commence their efforts.

### Small-scale population forecast

In order to facilitate the intense exploration of the consequences of demographic change with regard to the different sectors of the provision of public services, it is indispensable to provide the topic working groups with a uniform and spatially varied data basis of the development of the population. This creates the starting point for joint discussions about consequences and possible adaptation strategies. Maps which show the distribution of the population for a region have proven helpful instruments to raise people’s awareness and stimulate the discussions in the model regions.

One complication is that, in many cases, population forecasts are only available at the level of districts. However, the structure of most districts is very different (cities, villages, work place priorities, rather peripheral areas, tourism destinations). This scope of spatial structures raises the expectation that not every municipality and not every community will develop according to the average figures shown in the forecasts for a district.

Therefore, it is advisable to further differentiate the overall number and the age structure of the population with regard to the district in the framework of a small-scale population forecast (e.g. at the level of municipalities and communities or authorities/municipal associations/collective municipalities).

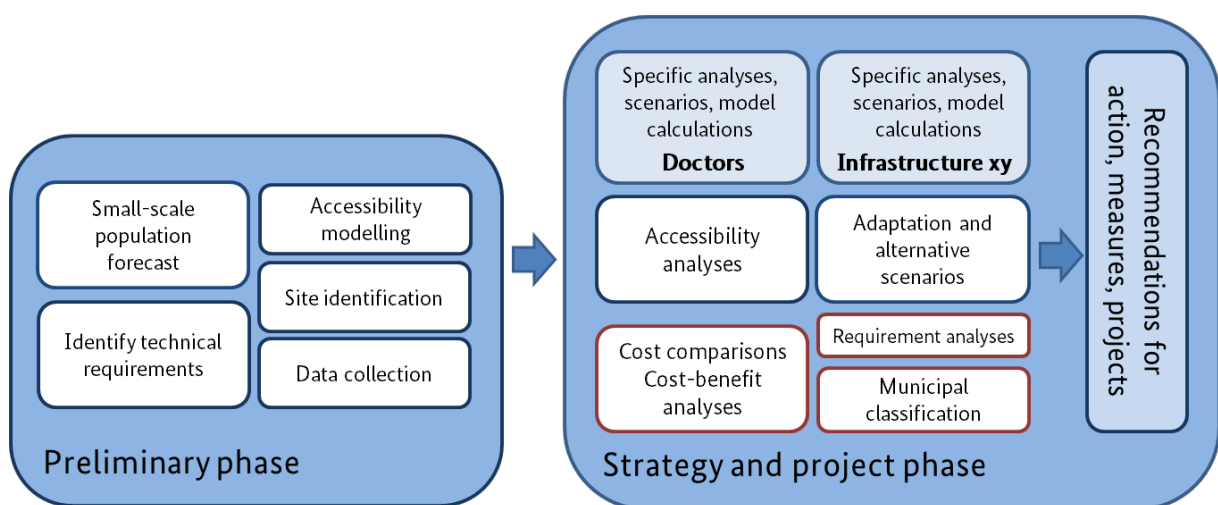


Fig. 8: Phased model of basic methodological elements

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.

Population forecasts should comprise a period of approximately 20 years. Their purpose is to predict the development of the population in general as well as by age groups and gender at least at the municipal level and show the results in the form of tables, diagrams and maps. In addition, an estimate of the current and future distribution of the population among the different communities of a municipality is to be established. Therefore, in terms of empirical analyses, two types of foundations are required to perform a small-scale population forecast: a model of the population which predicts the population size for a period of approximately 20 years at the spatial level of municipalities and is differentiated by forecast year, age and gender, and a model of the population distribution which allocates the current and the predicted population sizes at a small scale to individual residential locations. This includes the capturing of settlement structures below the municipal level (settlement structure cells, residential blocks or grid cells). In combination with accessibility analyses, demand potentials and accessibilities can also be broken down to small spatial units and differentiated locations.

However, when making a small-scale population forecast, it must not be forgotten that the reliability of each and every single value decreases to the same extent that the size of the spatial unit described is reduced. Therefore, in processes related to strategies at the regional level it must be avoided to give the impression that with a small-scale population forecast it would be possible to predict the exact number of inhabitants of every municipality in the next 15 to 20 years.

However, despite this limitation the forecast still allows for gaining a substantial amount of knowledge which otherwise would only have been available for the district as a whole. For example, owing to the analysis, a much more differentiated picture of the development can be drawn and the structural differences within a district can be taken into account. As a result, a uniform and spatially varied data basis is available for discussions in the topic working groups; this data basis is essential for the work of the groups and makes their results and planning activities comparable. Moreover, the small-scale population forecasts have an important procedural function because they can be used as an intermediate result at a relatively early stage in order to increase interest the process.

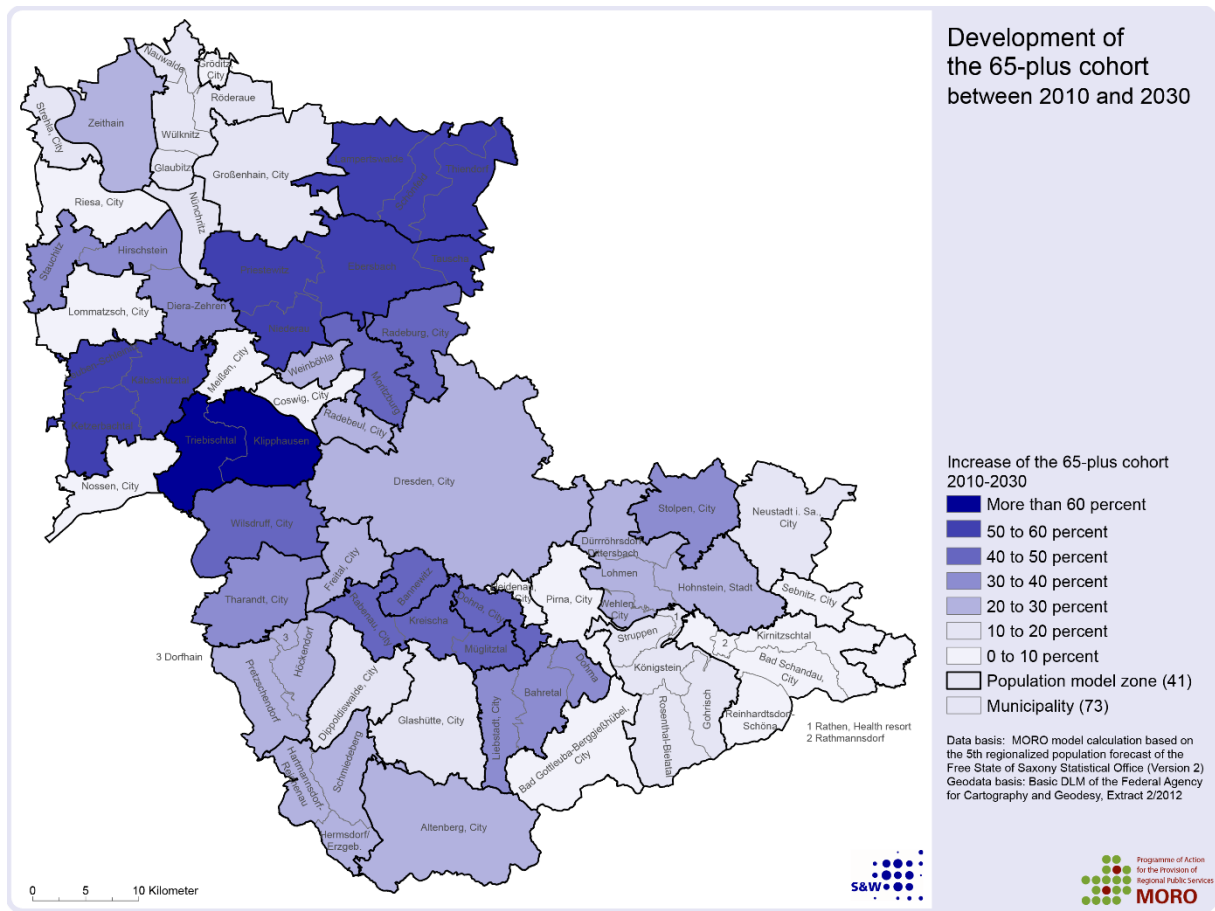


Fig. 9: Example “Small-scale population forecast; development among the 65-plus cohort”

Source: A strategy for the provision of public services in the Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge region (S&W), p. 9.

### Depict the accessibility situation

In rural areas, in particular, but also in the wider urban fringe, demographic change meets a low population density as well as a significantly lower density of location-based infrastructure facilities than in centres. The question of accessibility of services is automatically raised in every discussion about the possible closure or consolidation of a facility. Where are the facilities located that users could or would need to access if the facility that is discussed was closed, for example due to a substantial decline in user numbers? Is it possible to bring services to users?

Accessibility models and analyses are a helpful tool that facilitates systematic dealings with the question of accessibility in the topic working groups.

Accessibility analyses provide information on the location of facilities as well as on their accessibility with different means of transport for the general population or specific demand groups (pupils, patients etc.). Possible evaluations of the data by means of transport include bicycle, passenger car, local public transport and pedestrian traffic.

Accessibility analyses can be prepared in the form of maps, tables or accessibility profiles as well as illustrations of transport services, small-scale transport situations and accessibility transformations.

They can be very helpful during the different phases of the working group processes – from problem analysis to the evaluation of consequences and possible alternative solutions. Consequently, a distinction between two phases of accessibility modelling can be made:

- In a reference scenario ("status quo"), the current accessibility situation of selected infrastructure locations is analysed.
- In an accessibility scenario ("20xx"), the impact on accessibility is analysed by means of scenarios which are defined by the model regions for the time horizon 20xx.

Social infrastructures which are usually not mobile are particularly relevant in terms of accessibility. From the perspective of model regions, standardized accessibility models are generally suitable for many problems. However, with regard to sets of topics such as arrival times of fire fighters or accessibility of doctors depending on the time of day, there is an additional need for information which makes specialized models necessary that are based on standardized models. In another application scenario, the future number of users of the facilities could be predicted. If there are only a few facilities (left) in an area, accessibility becomes the primary decision-making criterion for users. This means that future demand patterns of facilities can be predicted by means of assumption models where it is assumed that every user accesses the facility that is closest to their place of living.

### Model calculations and scenarios

The development of scenarios and assessments of the advantages and disadvantages by means of model calculations are important aids for the topic working groups. It is only when alternatives are thought through that adaptation strategies can be developed. Here, a division of labour has been tried and tested: While the members of the working group define the content as well as the key levers and parameters, the actual modelling and calculation work is performed by an external agency.

The work with scenarios includes the status analyses and assessments of existing facilities related to the provision of public services. These scenarios are usually based on small-scale population forecasts in conjunction with settlement structures and accessibility models or analyses. Two basic scenarios can be distinguished:

1) *Trend scenario*

The first step is usually to assume that there are no changes to current services and future demand while taking account of the demographic development: "The trend scenario shows what happens if nothing happens."

2) *Alternative adaptation scenarios*

Based on these trend scenarios, the results of the qualitative requirement analyses and discussions about aspired standards in terms of the future provision of services, the working groups should develop and assess alternative future scenarios.

The scenarios differ between infrastructures and depending on the question defined by the working groups. Notwithstanding these differences, most model calculations in the framework of strategy processes at the regional level have in common that they compare (today's and tomorrow's) demand for infrastructure services in a region with the efficiency of the local infrastructure facilities (capacity, operational readiness). The services offered, in particular, can be varied within the context of scenarios. Below are some examples of typical measurement parameters or benchmarks for the comparison of scenarios:

- percentage of inhabitants whose demand can be satisfied differentiated by region;
- capacity utilization of individual facilities;
- accessibilities, i.e. travel times to access services;
- costs for users and operators.

Experience from the model regions shows that trend, adaptation and alternative scenarios are helpful in a number of areas related to the provision of public services and that the comparison and assessment of scenarios, in particular, can be used to develop and choose adaptation strategies and solutions. The outcomes of the comparisons represent an important argument for the concepts and solutions that will later be proposed by the working groups.

What is important for the process is that, with a view to the discussion of the working groups, the model calculations and scenarios, at any time, maintain their supporting character. A situation where the possibilities and limitations of modelling define the framework of opportunities for discussions on content ("There will be no further debate on this option because we are not able to perform the corresponding calculations.") is to be avoided. The key responsibility of an external agency is to prepare a "playing field" for the working group which stimulates the creativity of the participants while expanding their knowledge of the facts and of the scope for action step by step. This represents quite a challenge for the external agency. For example, when the working groups phase starts, neither the exact formulation of the question nor the corresponding modelling needs are known. This means that significant elements of the model calculation need to be developed in parallel with the discussion. If the external players already have a number of methodological elements at their disposal, and if the actors in the region have the possibility to define the different boundary conditions for the scenarios at a relatively early stage and subsequently discuss and compare the results, this turns out to be advantageous. However, if the development work requires too much time, there is a risk of bogging down the discussion process of the working group.

Besides a good visualization, the prerequisite for success is a good "translator" and facilitator who does have the required technical knowledge and has no problem with leaving the "playing field" to the regional actors.

### Cost estimates

A major assessment criterion of scenarios is the estimate of their costs. It is important to make use of this instrument in a way that prevents creative ideas from being choked by being "subject to availability of funds", in particular at the beginning. However, in the course of discussions cost estimates can help to examine a possible implementation of considered scenarios.

Differentiated cost analyses allow for a comparison of the costs and service provision degrees of different location alternatives and alternative adaptation strategies. From these comparisons, adaptation measures should be derived that result in a provision of public services to the population which is cost-effective and as comprehensive as possible while avoiding unreasonable consequences with regard to accessibility. Taking a look at the costs can also be very important during the analysis of a problem as this may raise awareness with regard to the need for action. Often, the most expensive alternative is to just keep going or not to act at all: Cost analyses can help to uncover consequential costs in sectors that have not yet been considered to date.

However, the methodology behind cost analyses is complicated and they require a considerable effort in terms of data collection and preparation. First, every single cost item must be identified and calculated. Relevant cost items are items which are particularly dependent on demographic development, for example the number or structure of users of a facility. As soon as this has been accomplished, the costs of the provision of public services or of a location can be estimated for a forecast period in separate step. The same applies to the scenarios which have been established in the working groups and are related to the adaptation of the public services provided.

With regard to the joint interpretation of results in the working group it makes sense to not only calculate the absolute costs but also the costs per user. Moreover, it is advisable to compare the levels of quality achieved in an adaptation

scenario to the costs. Cost aspects are generally not the only criterion when it comes to making a choice between strategies and measures.

Experience from the model regions shows that – with regard to the corresponding process phase and the individual topics – a distinction can be made between different use cases of cost estimates and cost-benefit analysis. Costs can be analysed with regard to locations and their accessibilities as well as with regard to non-mobile infrastructures. Cost considerations can be applied during the analysis, scenario and project phases. Cost considerations can also be continued in trend scenarios or be used for a comparison of scenarios. Here, the focus was on areas such as long-term care/senior citizens/living in later life, places for social interaction and fire protection. Extensive experience in terms of cost considerations has been gained with regard to water/waste water and corresponding status analyses and assessments, trend scenarios and scenario comparisons.

In any case, the questions if the often high amount of work is worth the effort need to be raised. This always seems to be the case when actors from administration and politics are willing and able to compare potential adaptation and modification strategies for a sector of infrastructure and when they actually implement such strategies. If the strategy at the regional level, for the time being, does not reach beyond basic concepts and statements on its objectives, the effort, in many cases, would be too big. Cost-oriented standard values and indicators may help to establish a cost estimate or a cost-benefit analysis. A systematic set of some indicators can be found in a publication of the accompanying research on indicators.

### **Indicators**

Indicators are frequently used in the process of a strategy at the regional level to describe circumstances in quantitative terms and make a comparison between them by establishing a connection between two or more factors (e.g. costs for the space used, equipment per spatial unit, accessibility information). Within the context of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level, indicators usually have a spatial relevance. For example, indicators are used when measuring the quality of the provision of services, when comparing costs, in conjunction with scenarios, when formulating (regional-specific) objectives or when evaluating objectives.

Indicators should be clearly understandable and measurable in order to facilitate their application in administrative practice where personnel resources are often scarce. Therefore, choices must be made very carefully. Often, figures from publications or other sources are used. The extent to which the figures – in terms of spatial relevance, origin and age – are actually suited to assess the fulfilment of objectives, in particular, should be verified at the beginning. In addition, it should be examined whether the required data basis for an application exists or what effort would be required to establish it. Data requirements are potentially diverse and may require substantial effort. During research on key figures of the provision of public services which accompanied the programme of action for the provision of public services at the regional level, user-oriented profiles with indicators for fields of action related to social and technical infrastructure were prepared that can be used like a work of reference. Each requirement for action in the areas related to the provision of public services is accompanied by basic numbers and indicators as well as by examples of minimum or comparative figures, and application examples from the model regions are given to illustrate the use of indicators.

### **Classification of municipalities or communities**

Another optional methodological element that some model regions have made good experience with is the classification of municipalities or communities. Classification offers the possibility to identify the attractiveness of individual municipalities or communities and assess the locational quality of corresponding sub-regions by target

group and depending on the function. The underlying methodology is based on criteria related to the accessibility of and services provided by facilities for the provision of public services and work places.

Below are examples of some aspects that can be used for classification:

- local availability and accessibility of education, service and public services infrastructures with different means of transport (by passenger car, local public transport, bicycle or on foot);
- accessibility of work places differentiated by means of transport;
- current population figures and expected future development;
- conditions of the individual spatial units in terms of settlement structures.

The individual criteria are weighted differently by the members of the working groups depending on the corresponding question.

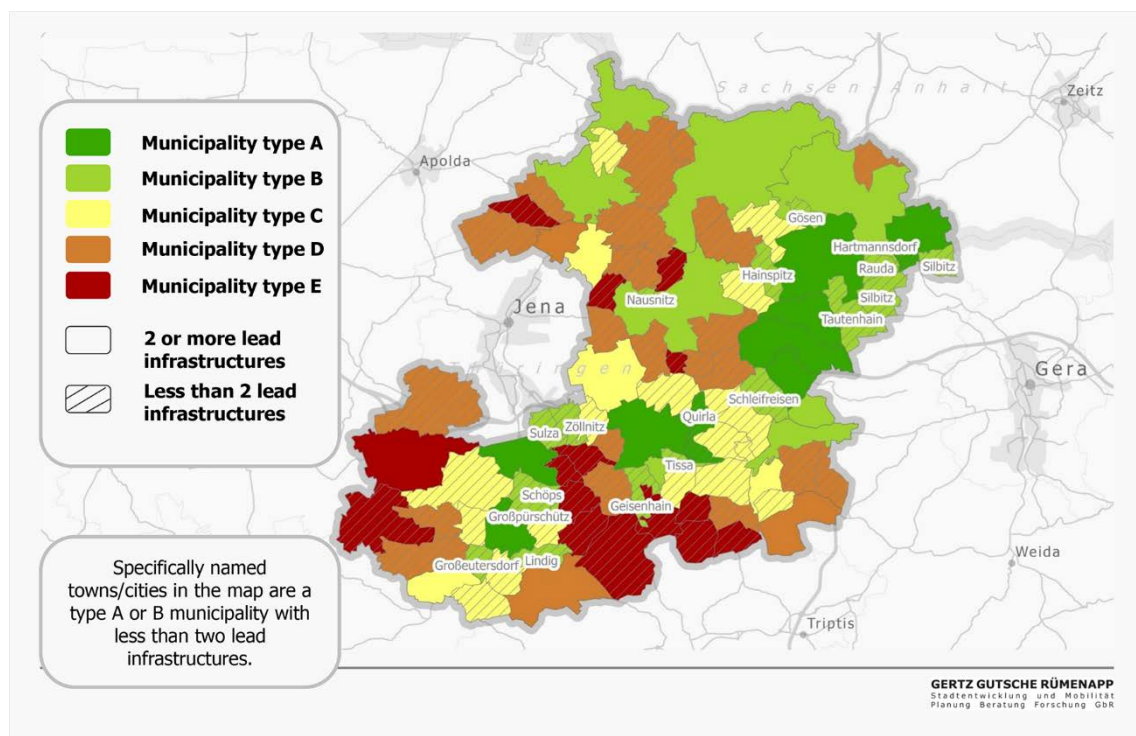


Fig. 10: Example of a summarizing aggregate indicator of the classification of municipalities, categorization by lead infrastructures

Source: Saale-Holzland district strategy at the regional level (GGR), p. 51.

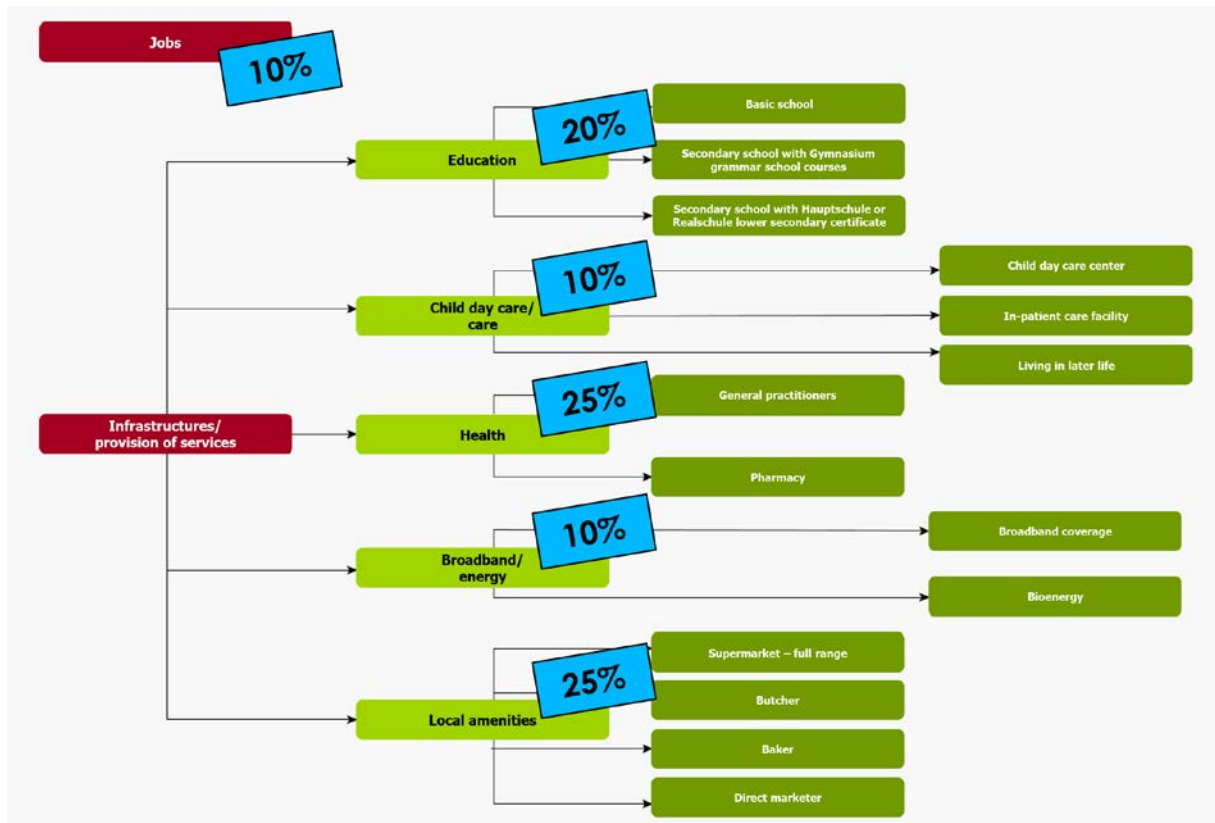


Fig. 11: Example “Weighting of infrastructures”

Source: Saale-Holzland district strategy at the regional level (GGR).

In the Vogelsbergkreis district, the accessibility of work places was weighted with 30 %, and the accessibility and availability of infrastructures in terms of education and the provision of services was weighted with 70 %. In the Saale-Holzland district, it was agreed to have a weighting of 10 % to 90 %. When the summarizing indicator “accessibility of infrastructure facilities related to the provision of public services” was derived, additional infrastructures (e.g. education/young people, health, local amenities, local public transport) were weighted here.

Based on models from the accompanying research and summarizing indicators, parameters are derived which represent the quality of each city and each municipality or of the corresponding communities in terms of facilities and the provision of services. However, it has to be noted that these parameters constitute only part of what can make rural areas attractive. Other substantial reasons exist but – because of their diverse nature or individual weighting – cannot be included in models and, for this reason, another way must be found to integrate them.

Next, a spatial classification can be established on the basis of the parameters. In the model regions, the classification generally yielded five types (A-E). By classifying the types, a practicable “intermediary level” – between the district level which, due to the different conditions, is often not fine-grained enough (“something different in a middle-order centre and in rural areas”) and the municipal or community level which is often too small-scale for projects at the regional level – is created that allows to focus approaches for action and strategic recommendations on individual types of spaces.

Apart from such basic scopes of application, the methodological approach can also be used to address issues of specific target groups, e.g. living in later life. For example, in the model regions Westmecklenburg and Schleswig-Flensburg, maps have been developed which show the differences between sub-regions with regard to everyday



conditions and are used to further develop public services' structures with a particular focus on elderly people (e.g. locations where sheltered housing or elderly residences are given priority, locations where no housing for elderly people is to be developed or identification of sub-regions where there is a particular need to expand support services on a voluntary basis and with low thresholds).

#### EXAMPLES OF MUNICIPAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Future of the Vogelsberg volcano region: results of and recommendations from the model project "A strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level (MORO)". A publication in German of the Vogelsbergkreis district (2014), p. 12-13.

A strategy for the provision of public services in the Saale-Holzland district. A publication in German of the Saale-Holzland district (2014), p. 49-53.

Documentation of model calculations and analyses for the strategy related to the provision of public services at the regional level in the Saale-Holzland district with regard to energy and district development. A publication in German of GGR (Gertz, Gutsche, Rümenapp) (2013), unpublished. Download available at [www.rag-sh.de/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=80&Itemid=65](http://www.rag-sh.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80&Itemid=65)

Facing change, shaping the future – a strategy for the provision of public services in the Westmecklenburg region. A publication in German of the regional planning association of Westmecklenburg (2014), p. 34-37.

Ensuring the provision of goods and services by means of a regional coordination of local public transport and service strategies. Development prospects of schools, primary medical care, food supply and public transport as well as local differentiation of the requirement for action by means of a settlement classification and taking the area of Mitteldeutscher Verkehrsverbund as an example. A publication in German of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (10/2015). Download in German available at [www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/dl-bmvi-online-10-15.pdf](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/dl-bmvi-online-10-15.pdf)

**EXPERIENCE WITH THE MODEL CALCULATIONS – THINGS THAT MATTER***Visualization*

For the work with data and model calculations in the regional working groups and with regard to raising awareness among the ranks of politics, administration and the population, it is very important that the visualization of small-scale population forecasts, accessibility and locational analyses as well scenarios in maps and illustrations is well-prepared. When compared to other planning and development approaches, visualization offers substantial added value. It allows to represent facts in a manner that is short, to-the-point and clear. For the first time, the perceived knowledge on the issue of the provision of public services is transferred to reliable figures for the entire region and for sub-regions.

*Right time*

It is of particular importance that the data and calculation results are available at the right time. Only then can they be perfectly introduced in the discussion process of the topic working groups. This makes careful planning at the beginning of the strategy process required. The schedules of the working groups should be closely aligned to those of the accompanying scientific research. This includes to commission corresponding external services in time. The early availability of the small-scale population forecast, in particular, has proven very fruitful for the discussions in the region and turned out to be a qualitative amendment.

*Methodological elements*

The different methodological elements are not equally suited for use with all areas related to the provision of public services. While small-scale population forecasts are generally appropriate and relevant, this does not apply to the other methodological elements. For example, analyses and scenarios related to accessibility do not make much sense in the field of technical infrastructure which is why other approaches need to be chosen here. At the regional (i.e. below district) level, the insight value of accessibilities is rapidly becoming too marginal when compared to the effort. For larger regions, in contrast, the effort involved in complex model calculations can turn out to be unreasonably high.

*Own regional models*

Experience from the model regions with regard to the application of population forecasts and accessibility analyses shows that developing own flexible models is more appropriate for strategies at the regional level than using forecasts of the state statistical offices which cannot be influenced. Own models allow to account for special regional effects or to adapt methods to specific questions or particular regional scenarios by adjusting the levers.

*Increasing complexity – consider costs and benefits*

The methodological elements and the model calculations are becoming increasingly complex during the process because collecting, processing and modelling the required differentiated data is extremely demanding. Often it is also limited resources of the regions/districts in terms of time and personnel which make the application of scenarios and cost considerations in all fields of action impossible. Therefore, the regions and the working groups should always raise the question of costs and benefits of the model calculations for the corresponding area related to the provision of public services before they commission the corresponding accompanying research.

*Integrate accompanying research – “translators” required*

The professional and methodological competence of the local and external accompanying research is very important. The service providers contracted by the regions should have the required methodological knowledge and experience with process management. The presentation and the guided interpretation of the data and the results as well as the targeted, regionally-determined development of models and scenarios are success factors for the applicability and usefulness of the model calculations. While working group members should be flexible in determining and adjusting the scenarios and models, they can and must not be left alone with the data and maps. Intensive communication between model developers and working group members is a prerequisite. This responsibility of adapting models in a practice-oriented way can be assumed by model developers, regional experts or external project assistants. It is important that provisions with regard to funds are made during the process.

**FURTHER READING ON METHODOLOGICAL ELEMENTS**

Small-scale population forecast and regional accessibility modelling in the programme of action for the provision of public services at a regional level. Final results of the accompanying research by the central data services unit. Final report. Edited by Björn Schwarze and Klaus Spiekermann (2014). Download in German available at [http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/FP/MORO/Forschungsfelder/2011/Aktionsprogramm/ZentraleDatendienste/RegDas\\_Endbericht\\_Datendienste.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/FP/MORO/Forschungsfelder/2011/Aktionsprogramm/ZentraleDatendienste/RegDas_Endbericht_Datendienste.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4)

Parameters of the provision of public services. An online publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (01/2015). Download in German available at [http://www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/DL\\_BMVI\\_Online\\_01\\_15.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](http://www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/DL_BMVI_Online_01_15.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4)

Planning the provision of public services at the regional level. A guideline for adapting the provision of public services to demographic change. Werkstatt: Praxis, no. 64. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (2010). Download in German available at <http://d-nb.info/100340751X/34>

Options for action to ensure the provision of public services in the context of planning efforts at the regional level. An online publication of Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (32/2009). Download in German available at [http://www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BBSROnline/2009/DL\\_ON322009.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](http://www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BBSROnline/2009/DL_ON322009.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2)

### Take account of users' needs – qualitative needs analyses

Guide values often serve to record and assess future needs, for example the number of teachers in relation to the number of pupils or the number of doctors in relation to population figures. Generally, these guide values are related to the general population figures and are based on average or standard needs. However, they don't say much about the function, size and quality of services that users are looking for.

#### *What is a qualitative analysis of needs?*

By means of a qualitative analysis of needs, the views of users and providers of public services are to be included in the process of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. The results of such analyses are to complement the quantitative parameters of the provision of services that were established by means of analyses and model calculations with qualitative data. In addition, public infrastructure operators and private service providers are to be supported in identifying unmet demand or capacity limits.

Ideally, the results are included in and qualify model calculations, demand estimates, the development and assessment of alternative adaptation scenarios as well as recommendations for action of the working groups. Involving civil society can be an additional function of user-focused surveys. Qualitative analyses of requirements are important empirical elements to broaden the regional knowledge base and involve citizens.

Qualitative aspects can be identified by involving persons concerned, multipliers and other experts in the discussions of the topic working groups. Moreover, there is a number of empirical social research methods to obtain information on needs, desired qualities, (minimum) standards in terms of the provision of services, available facilities or (reasonable) accessibilities and "pain thresholds". Existing standards and the status quo with regard to the services provided are assessed, potential demand is identified with regard to specific aspects and at a small scale, and possible solutions for the future infrastructure development are registered.

Accordingly, methods can be grouped by working group discussions, expert talks, citizens or future workshops and surveys among users. The scope and amount of work related to these methods differ. For example, the preparation, execution and evaluation of surveys require a much greater effort in terms of time and personnel when compared to expert talks. Moreover, a greater deal of scientific know-how is required for surveys.

On the one hand, target groups of qualitative analyses of needs are infrastructure users, for example pupils, young persons, persons in need of long-term care, patients, senior citizens, people with disabilities, parents or the "average" population of a village. On the other hand, they are infrastructure and public services providers, for example teachers, social workers, doctors, professional carers, unpaid carers, elderly care home and the administration (municipalities, administrations). As carrying out a full survey will be rarely possible, it is useful to not only take samples, but also reach out to key players or multipliers.

#### *When is an analysis of needs carried out?*

Qualitative analyses and surveys should be based on initial intermediate results of the model calculations and should be included in the assessment of the status quo, but, in particular, in the comparison of scenarios and alternatives with regard to adaptation options.

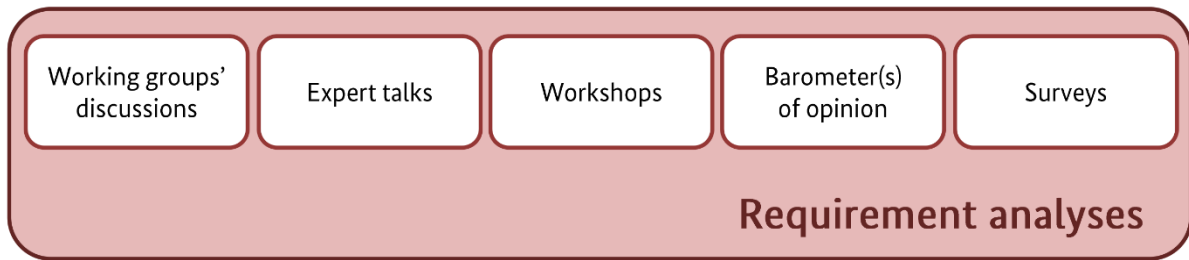


Fig. 12: Methods of the qualitative analysis of needs

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.

Moreover, the effort involved in a user survey should only be made if it is actually planned to include the results in the further steps of the process for a strategy at the regional level. The questions should be coordinated in the topic working groups or should be formulated by the members of the groups themselves. In addition, performing a qualitative analysis of needs – as is the case with model calculations – makes sufficient resources in terms of time and personnel as well as professional competences necessary.

*Topics:*

Qualitative analyses of requirements can be carried out for most issues related to the provision of public services. In the model regions of the action programme, analyses were primarily performed in the fields of local amenities, long-term care/senior citizens/living in later life, medical care and education/school development. Experience with analyses of requirements in previous projects was also positive with regard to cultural education, in particular music schools and adult education centres.

	Most important parameters of the analysis of needs
Libraries, music schools, adult education centres, local culture clubs	Accessibility, acceptance, range of services (contemporaneity, broadness, depth), reachability, space and technical equipment, personnel
Senior citizens	Quantitative degree of the provision, accessibility, flexibility/combinability, demands in terms of long-term care/living in later life, future long-term care needs, possible support
Schools	Accessibility, class sizes, technical equipment, accompanying optional services, school meals
Healthcare	Quantitative degree of provision, accessibility, waiting times, combination with pharmacies, physical therapy etc.
Settlement areas	Qualities of open space, natural scenery, quality of accessibility
Fire protection/emergency services	Accessibility, dispatch times, motivation, social function, level of protection
Local public transport	Trip times, intervals, transfer times

Tab. 2: Most important parameters of the qualitative analysis of needs for selected infrastructure

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.

*What data is collected?*

Generally, the data collected relates to the assessment and redrafting of standards, for example the maximum class size, maximum (reasonable) travel times, dispatch times, current and prospective desired service quota (doctors per 1,000 inhabitants, music school places per 100 inhabitants), residents' satisfaction with their local environment, frequency of use, willingness to pay for certain services as well as to desired qualities (waiting times, travel times, diversity of services) but also to possible alternatives.

**Surveys**

Surveys have come to play an important role when it comes to identifying the needs of and motivating people in a model region of the action programme. Surveys may be classified by subject, target group or sub-region, but it is also possible to carry out surveys across subjects or comprehensively. Moreover, a distinction can be made between user-focused and provider-focused surveys. As regards content, these surveys can cover the whole range of areas related to the provision of public services. The cross-subject survey carried out in the Trier-Saarburg and Merzig-Wadern districts and in the Altmark region related to the quality of life in the municipalities and included questions which covered the whole range of areas connected to the provision of public services that were dealt with in the topic working groups, i.e. accessibility and mobility, schools, support services, health and long-term care services.

User-focused surveys are to be designed in a way that facilitates the involvement of the actors. They can motivate people to participate in the discussion process on school locations or the accessibility of locations or to help with the implementation of the strategy at the regional level in specific local projects, for example the establishment of long-term care networks of volunteers.

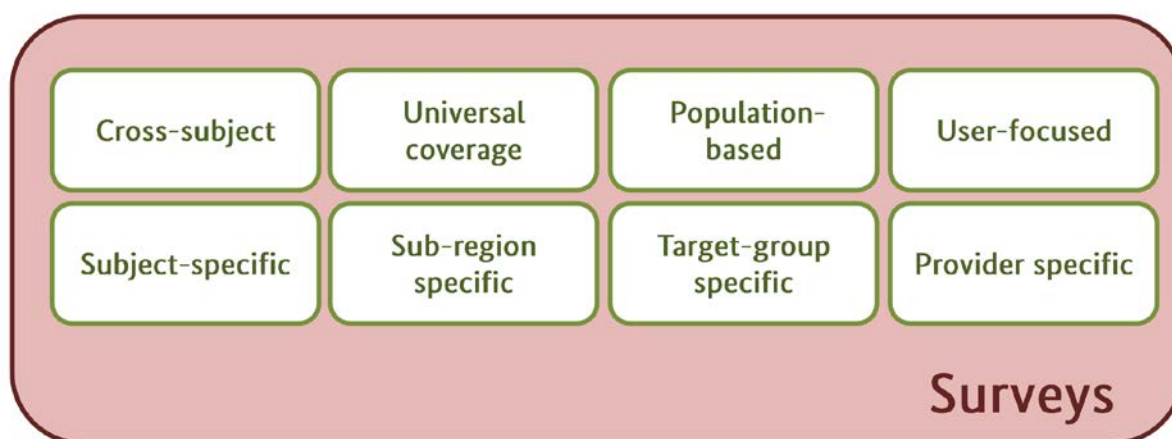


Fig. 13: Types of surveys

Source: Hochschule Neubrandenburg.

The surveys are often carried out by regional project assistants, accompanying researchers and academic partners. However, this responsibility can also be assumed by the model regions themselves, i.e. by their regional coordinators, provided that the corresponding methodological know-how exists. Standardized questionnaires in printed form may be sent to selected households (representative sample), made available in municipalities and district administrations or be directly sent to target audiences by multipliers. Another possibility would be to make the questionnaires available online as was the case in the Altmark region.

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS OF SURVEYS FROM THE TRIER-SAARBURG AND MERZIG-WADERN DISTRICTS**

- What is your assessment of the local public transport links of your place of living?
- Do you need help from relatives, neighbours or friends for transport services or doing errands?
- Would you generally use buses, trains or alternative means of transport, for example shared-use taxi or dial-a-bus, if they better served your needs?
- What sum would you be willing to pay in addition to the standard bus fare if the alternative means of transport (shared-use taxi or dial-a-bus) provided a significantly higher level of quality?
- As a rule, we consider a journey time of to the school location reasonable.
- What form of housing would you be interested in if it was no longer possible to live in your own flat/in your own house (old people's home/elderly care home, sheltered housing, multi-generation house, common household with other elderly people, moving in with family/relatives)?
- For a number of years now, the issue of living in later life has been intensively discussed. What is your opinion on the different forms of living (common household with other elderly people and home care services, sheltered housing in a retirement complex, in a house with my kids, in my own house/in my own flat, nursing home, common household with other elderly people, residential area/residential courtyard)?
- How do you assess the childcare facilities you use (crèche, nursery, kindergarten, able child minders)?
- If care for relatives is provided at home: Are you supported by a long-term care service or a permanent carer? How do you assess that long-term care service (quality of the care provided, friendliness of the care staff, reliability of the care personnel)?
- How do you assess the provision of medical care by general practitioners in your region?

**GOOD EXAMPLE: BAROMETER OF OPINION**

Barometers of opinion are an interesting instrument. They were used during the interim review events that took place in the Saale-Holzland and the Vogelsbergkreis districts. Intermediate results, determinations and recommendations of the working groups were presented to the participants who could then make an assessment and, for example, evaluate reasonable distances to specific facilities related to the provision of public services by means of markers on the posters. Later, the opinions expressed were again included in the working groups' discussions.

The good experience that was made with the barometer of opinion during the interim review event initiated a further development of the approach in the Vogelsbergkreis district. People were given the opportunity to assess the recommendations for action and questions that were developed as part of the model project over a period of six weeks online on the public dialogue platform of the district commissioner. While about 1,000 votes on seven questions do not qualify for a representative result, basic tendencies were revealed for most of the questions which were then taken up by the individual working groups.

**TIPS**

- It is appropriate to combine different methods.
- Prioritization depends on the infrastructure and availability of data (current situation).
- Objectives and procedures in the relevant working groups need to be coordinated in time in order to create a proper understanding of the objective and benefit of the analysis of needs as this instrument is alien to the traditional planning/expert approaches.
- Planning of costs and time: In order to make sure that the results are available when scenarios are defined, sufficient amounts of time need to be set aside for answers and evaluations.
- Representativeness: As a result of current municipalities' and districts' boundaries, the population size of the survey is very large. Therefore, in order to obtain reliable statements, time and place of a survey must be carefully chosen. There will be numerous analyses of needs for many sectors of infrastructure, some parts of which can be transferred to other sectors. The trick to the process is to make the difference with regard to the local population visible, for example the difference to the national average; here the choice of the survey instrument plays a significant role.
- Analyses of needs may prove useful at different stages of the process and require sufficient time and resources. Own resources will need to be allocated, and/or it will be necessary to seek external support, for example by making use of the potential of regional universities.

*Good example*

Quality of life in the Trier-Saarburg district. Edited by Jacob, Rüdiger; Sischka, Philipp and Helsper, Anke (2013). Download in German available at [https://www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb4/prof/SOZ/MES/MORO-Bericht\\_LQ\\_in\\_D%C3%B6rfen.pdf](https://www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb4/prof/SOZ/MES/MORO-Bericht_LQ_in_D%C3%B6rfen.pdf).



## Participation and communication – getting people involved

There is an increasing desire of citizens to be involved in decisions that shape their living environment. As the development of demographic change has a specific impact on the quality of the provision of public services and, in consequence, also on the quality of life of people, involving the persons concerned as well as communication and transparency are important aspects a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. Participatory processes promote the acceptance also of less popular decisions, provided that the need of a project can be explained in a comprehensible manner. Participatory processes also promote cooperation and support when it comes to the implementation of projects as well as with regard to shared responsibility for society.

In terms of participation and communication, processes that are related to strategies at the regional level should involve different dimensions:

- internal communication between those who are directly involved in a project within and between the different units of the model regions;
- communication with the expert community, politics and administration;
- communication with and participation of members of the public who are interested or whose interest is to be raised.

Public participation can include forms of public relations work; however, here it refers to additional measures to motivate and involve actors from the civic sector in the planning and coordination process. In this context, different roles must be distinguished that people may possibly play, be it representatives from government and administration, function or mandate holders in interest groups and initiatives, experts, commercial enterprises or interested private individuals.

Participation can happen at different levels and can be distinguished by the form, be it informative, consultative and cooperative forms of participation. Technical literature often distinguishes between several levels of participation by degree of participation – from the provision of information to the taking of autonomous decisions.

### *1. Level: Information*

Collect information, learn about aspects and provide information to others.

### *2. Level: Participation*

Exchange, dialogue, discussion. Besides the mere provision of information, suggestions, comments and opinions can be introduced. However, the competent institutions maintain their decision-making authority.

### *3. Level: Co-decision*

Cooperation based on partnership. Participants also have a say. There are different degrees of co-decision.

### *4. Level: individual responsibility*

Delegation of decisions. Participants take decisions at their own discretion and with a binding character.

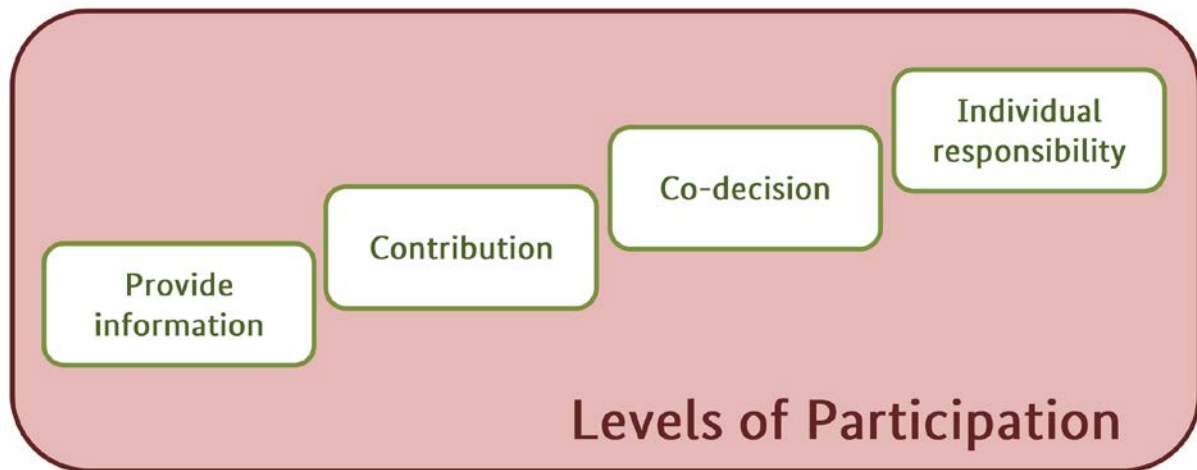


Fig. 14: Levels of participation

Source: Lüttringhaus 2000.

## Participation

Experience from the model regions shows that – due to the degree of abstraction of the issue, the scope of, in particular, more sizeable model regions and the complexity of the (planning) levels involved (region, districts, municipalities) – it is not easy to raise interest in the issue of the provision of public services among broad sections of the population and get people involved. Citizens, municipal councillors and mayors of smaller municipalities seem to identify with their direct environment to a greater extent and are often of the opinion that the exchange with other municipalities and actors in the region is only of limited help. Therefore, their interest in strategic questions at the district level is not very strong. Citizens, in contrast, frequently have a very good idea of what their life in the municipality or in their residential and living environment should or could be like in the future and which adjustments are inevitable. This would be a good point to start. The participation of citizens as well as of local politicians and actors fulfils an important function in the processes involved in establishing a strategy at the regional level.

As regards the processes of a strategy at the regional level, especially services related to the provision of information and participation may be used. However, there is no uniform solution for involving citizens in the processes of a strategy at the regional level. The approach that is chosen will largely depend very much on the specific conditions on the ground, the local issues that are most pressing or the resources available in the region. Ultimately, the communication with and participation of citizens, to a large degree, will depend on the understanding that each municipality has of itself and of its political culture.

## Take participation to the people

Based on the experience in the model regions of the action programme, it is advisable to build up participation at the local level, i.e. at the level of the affected municipalities and communities, as well as during the phase of implementation of specific projects. At the level of strategy development and in large-scale contexts, in contrast, communication, public relations work and raising awareness among the population for issues of demographic change and the provision of public services play a greater role. People must be enabled to participate where they live. Therefore, participation in the regions and villages must be organized in a decentralized way and fairly straightforward in terms of location, atmosphere, methods and actions. Community workshops, future workshops or village workshops are an appropriate form for this, but can require a substantial effort.

An interesting special form that connects the two approaches is the mobile workshop on the future of the Elbe-Elster district where a group of interested citizens was taken to different locations of the region during a day to discuss a number of topics. Another approach that was chosen in the Nordeifel region is to host community workshops in a mentoring municipality and use the results in the strategy at the regional level as a substitute for other municipalities. The workshops can be focused on one issue or cover the whole range of public service provision in villages and quality of life. Good experience was made with the World Café format or the Open Space method, a combination of input from regional and national contributors as well as research findings and practical examples.

Directly involving people in the topic working groups has not proven successful in the model regions. The process was handicapped, in particular, by the very different levels of background knowledge and technical competence of experts and citizens, little understanding for strategic issues, the fact that motivation throughout the entire project course could only be kept up with difficulty or by the need to deal with people who had a strong polarizing impact and tried to dominate discussions.

### **Regional competitions**

Regional competitions for civic projects with a low threshold, in contrast, are suitable to win the commitment of citizens in terms of the provision of public services. Thematic campaign days, for example the "30 Hektar" campaign day in the Coburg district with a focus on settlement development or other local campaigns of comparable visibility which, for example, dealt with the issue of free spaces ("Freiräume gestalten") or local public transport in the Spessart region ("Fahr mit"), are also a good choice with regard to the provision of public services.

Using social media for the purpose of involving citizens has not been very successful. The required effort is very high and, according to the experience so far, their use can only be recommended as a means to provide information. When it comes to participation, the right time is also an important aspect. Experience shows that it is better to start with events where the focus is on the provision of information and add workshop-based processes only at a later stage. Participation in terms of getting involved appears more reasonable to people if a reliable assessment of the status quo, model calculations and initial results are already available, if they need to decide on alternative solutions or if there is demand for their help to implement measures at the local level.

### **Participation of children and young people**

A particular form of participation is the inclusion of children and young people. There are a number of successful approaches to this issue. Besides surveys specifically geared toward this target group, formats of an activating or consultative nature were used in the past. For example, the parliament of children and young people can be included in a steering group or the chair of working groups, councils of children and young people can be set up or future workshops for young people, workshops for school children or pupils'/young people's delegate conferences can be held. Here, the focus should be on aspects of the provision of public services that are of particular interest to young people, for example, mobility, education or leisure time activities, as well as on the organization of competitions.

Catchy slogans like "Zukunftsideen für unseren Landkreis" (Ideas for our district for the future) or "Wir mischen mit" (We also have a say) make this issue more attractive to children and young people. What is important is that policymakers and public authorities take up the ideas provided in way that is credible. If that is achieved, such forms of participation can help to strengthen the commitment of children and young people to the region in the long run.



Photo of young people participating.

Source: Regionalverband Ostwürttemberg.

However, there is no denying the fact that a participation process which is intensively and actively shaped by both sides – organizers/facilitators on the one hand and actors on the other – is energy-sapping because it requires a great effort in terms of control and time. Care must therefore be exercised to not make too great demands on people in terms of the time and effort for participation. If the capacities of the actors are overstretched, they might withdraw. The effort required for participation should also be duly considered in resource planning activities and when developing organizational structures.

### Communication

To raise awareness of the issue and increase acceptance for the strategy at the regional level, information on the objectives, course and results of the process should be made available on a regular basis and in a form that is intelligible to all. Public opening and closing events as well as classic press work to gain public attention, for example regular reports in regional and local newspapers, are essential basic features in this context. The same applies to a website with up-to-date information. However, there should also be additional activities, for example the aforementioned community workshops or interim review events, where people can get involved and comment on the results.

A coordinated communications and public relations strategy which includes information on responsibilities is of particular importance and should be established right at the start of the process. Moreover, the required resources need to be made available. Core messages, wording regulations, public relations measures and other planned activities could also be included in such a strategy.

Media such as television, (YouTube) videos or radio are appropriate means to promote the idea of a strategy at the regional level among the more general public and address specific target groups such as young people. Another good idea is to have young people create own media content, for example in the form of an audio or video documentation of the pupils' workshops. Simpleshow videos are also an interesting example. In these animated videos, the intention behind a project is explained. For example, the approach that is pursued in the Saale-Holzland district on the basis of the action programme for the provision of public service at the regional level is explained in a video on YouTube. To raise awareness with regard to the strategy at the regional level and guarantee the provision of services in the region, promotion material can be developed, for example postcards or buttons with the logo of the action programme, provided that sufficient funds are available.

#### GOOD EXAMPLES AND FURTHER READING

Documentation of the pupils' workshop in the Saale-Holzland district. Download in German available at [http://www.rag-sh.de/images/stories/moro/dokumentation%20schuelerwerkstatt\\_031212.pdf](http://www.rag-sh.de/images/stories/moro/dokumentation%20schuelerwerkstatt_031212.pdf)

Simpleshow of the public services action programme (MORO) in the Saale-Holzland district. Video in German available at <https://youtu.be/foe9g55pTO8>

Manual on Participation. 2nd edition. A publication of the Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment (2011). Download in German available at [www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale\\_stadt/partizipation/de/handbuch.shtml](http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale_stadt/partizipation/de/handbuch.shtml)

Urban development and participation. Case studies in German from the Katernberg community of Essen and the Äußere Neustadt community of Dresden. Beiträge zur Demokratieentwicklung von unten, no. 17. By: Lüttringhaus, Maria (2000)

#### TIPS

- There is no one-fits-all solution. Suitable measures and instruments depend on the local culture of participation, the respective issue or the available resources.
- Instruments of participation should be adapted to target groups, for example young people or elderly citizens.
- Involving citizens is best achieved by providing information and offering opportunities for participation.
- Public participation initiatives need to reach out to people, and the corresponding measures need to be implemented at the level of municipalities and communities (where people concerned are living) while specific projects are being realized.
- Regional competitions for civic projects with a low threshold animate people to get involved in the area of the provision of public services.
- As far as the development of strategies at the regional level is concerned, it is advisable to offer formats where information is provided or which involve public relations efforts.

## Ensuring results, implementation, monitoring – what are the next steps?

### Ensure results

Discussions in the individual working groups are not an end in themselves. Results must be retained to integrate them in the technical and political activities that follow and make possible their implementation. In addition, they serve to provide technical arguments with regard to the political decision-making process.

The minimum requirement here is to document the recommendations for action as well as the academic fundamentals, i.e. the forecasts, model calculations and organization scenarios including the corresponding comparative assessments by means of the parameters that were defined in the working groups. This responsibility is usually assumed by accompanying research and regional coordinators.

At the end of the work process, the working groups should set out in writing their preferences for a scenario as well as the technical conclusions and recommendations for action. In these documents, the participants, the initial situation, the pressure exerted by problems and the requirement for action as well as the objectives in the individual infrastructure should be outlined briefly. Corresponding conclusions, recommendations for action as well as initial proposals for measures should also be already included. Ideally, the measures, in particular, are categorized by level of addressee, potentially responsible persons and the time horizon of the implementation. The documents are discussed and adopted in the steering group.

The different documents relating to the individual infrastructure measures will then be combined in an overall document that describes the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. This document should be established at the operational level (secretariat, operative working group) with external support, adopted by the steering body and finally introduced in the political decision process.

### *Decision-making*

The adoption of the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level by the politically legitimized bodies is important for the significance of results and a precondition of further implementation. It is desirable to achieve the highest possible level of obligation. This is dependent on the deciding bodies and institutions. The highest level of obligation is associated with the binding adoption of the strategy at the regional level by political bodies, for example municipal councils, district councils, authority councils or regional assemblies. This includes the self-commitment to implement the recommendations for action described therein in the proper areas of responsibility or to work actively towards their implementation in other areas. The adopted document should rather be understood as a local governance paper than as a specialist planning paper.

A lower level of obligation is attached to the decision made by a regional control body of the process related to the strategy at the regional level, for example a MORO council (mayors and heads of authorities), the chair or the planning committee of a regional planning association. If it is not possible to make a decision, the strategy at the regional level or its results should at least be presented and discussed in as well as acknowledged by the relevant bodies. Examples of such bodies are the technically responsible committees of the city council representatives, of the district council or the district council itself.

In order to achieve the highest possible level of obligation with regard to the strategy at the regional level, some model regions have already initiated relevant steps in the course of the process. For example, local government officials (such as mayors) can be involved in the steering group and in topic working groups early on, and politicians at the local level can be updated regularly in authority or district committees or in an advisory council.

### *Structure of a strategy at the regional level*

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for the structure and design of the paper that contains the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. Generally, there will be a mixture of strategic elements, documentation related to the cooperative process and academic fundamentals. As a minimum requirement, the documents of the strategy at the regional level should make reference to the structure and organization of the process including the parties involved, and the key findings of regional analyses and model calculations should be explained. This includes a concise presentation of the results of the small-scale population forecasts and the areas of action or areas related to the provision of public services that were discussed, including challenges, agreed strategies and recommendations for action, measures and addressees. Moreover, the relations between the different infrastructures and their interfaces should be identified in order to satisfy the cross-sectoral requirements of the approach of a strategy at the regional level. Statements on the implementation, establishment of a long-term basis and updating should also be included.

The degree of detail and, in consequence, the adequate scope of documents that contain a strategy at the regional level depend on the aspired functions. For politics and interested members of the public, an obvious option would surely be a concise format of about 20 to 40 pages with a summary of the most important aspects, while more elaborate and sound reports of the model calculations, in particular, are rather suitable for technical administrations and other specialist actors. Another idea is to design a brochure of about 20 pages with the results in a more appealing format for a wider public which contains also graphics and photographs.

Apart from the documents related to the strategy at the regional level, also the detailed reports with the results from the accompanying research on the basic methodological elements should be published or made available to specialist actors, administrations, municipalities and authorities in the region. This enables them to use the results of the small-scale population forecasts, accessibility analyses, trend and alternative scenarios as well as of the other topical analyses and surveys for specialized planning or municipal planning purposes.

### *Adaptability*

The weak spot of many planning activities and concepts is often the interface between strategy and implementation. The documents related to the strategy at the regional level are intended to have a guidance and steering function with regard to the future cooperation at the regional level that is aimed at developing and securing the provision of public services. (Key) actors in the districts and in municipal policy, in particular, are to use the documents to organize the required adaptation processes in a reasonable way. Their purpose is twofold: offer practical help and accompany the ongoing process. It is therefore important that the course for continuing, making sustainable and implementing the proposed measures is set in the final strategic documents. For this reason, in the document related to a strategy at the regional level and in the sense of "next steps", the measures should be assigned to fields of action, persons responsible should be specifically identified and the measures should be prioritized in terms of time. Possible organizational, funding and business models can also be outlined here.

## **Implementation**

The implementation of the achieved results is an important aspect in terms of the efficiency and sustainability of the strategy process at the regional level. However, the implementation cannot only be confined to the level of the model regions, i.e. the districts, municipal associations, regional associations or planning assemblies. Rather different levels and addressees are targeted. This includes municipalities, specialist planners, public and private sector infrastructure operators, members of the civic society, federal state and federal government ministries as well as lawmakers.

The scope of implementation of the recommendations for action varies:

- 1) Providing information and communicating the results;
- 2) involving actors in formal and informal specialist planning, programmes and concepts;
- 3) organizational changes;
- 4) projects.

#### *Information and communication*

As a minimum, the results need to be actively distributed among the actors of municipal policy or other parties with political responsibility, administrations, specialist planning institutions, other infrastructure operators and interested members of the public. Communication should already begin while the working group process is still ongoing, i.e. information should be provided on the pressure exerted by problems, requirements for action and intermediate results. Providing information to and involving the actors from politics and administration at the municipal level (authorities, municipalities, communities) can be considered particularly important as they are responsible for many sectors of infrastructure. It is a matter of raising awareness in the municipalities and emphasizing the small-scale challenges with regard to the different sets of topics, making available data bases and analyses as well as putting options for action into focus.

#### **BODIES THAT CAN BE USED TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION:**

- Meetings of the heads of offices/sections
- Mayors' consultation rounds
- District committees/district council
- Consultations with the heads of offices/chief administrative officers in the district
- Meetings of the municipal councils
- Regional or planning area conferences
- German Association of Cities and Municipalities/German Association of Towns and Municipalities
- Meetings of the regional planning associations
- Public meetings

In order to convince the federal state ministries and other authorities of Germany of the implementation of measures and facilitate the transfer of experience to other regions of the country, the provision of information to and communication with these entities is of particular importance.

Another important aspect is to try to convince operators of infrastructures and facilities related to the provision of public services or institutions which establish framework conditions, for example federal or federal state ministries, associations and groups, to adapt the legal and other framework conditions such as funding guidelines, make pilot projects or facilitate model projects.

Interested members of the public can be informed via relevant regional events, for example demography forums, topic-specific meetings, local expert workshops, open dialogue events and the local and regional press. In addition, dialogue with citizens should be sought, results of the working groups should be critically discussed with them and their concerns and needs should be identified. A means to this end are community or village workshops (see chapter on public participation).



*Involve actors in formal and informal specialist planning and concepts*

The data, analyses and findings represent new planning bases for the specialist planning purposes of the individual infrastructure. Moreover, solutions are often developed which can only be implemented between different sectors or operators. Leading actors from administration should therefore make sure that the fundamentals and objectives from the strategy at the regional level serve as requirements for future specialist planning, for example structural planning related to residential care facilities, local transport, school development, security requirements and regional planning. For example, the Altmark region wants to complement its plan for the development of the region with a partial plan on a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level and development of the settlement structure; in addition, the functions of a lower-order centre are to be ensured in the long term by means of spatial planning contracts between planning association, district and municipalities. In the Upper Elbe Valley, the results from the strategy at the regional level are included in the second overall update of the regional plan and, in particular, the chapter about regional cooperation.

One important chance for implementation is to make use of the results of the strategies for the provision of public services at the regional level as an analytical and conceptual base within the framework of programmes for rural development, in particular, that are funded by the EU or by the federal government and the federal states, e.g. ELER or GAK, i.e. for LEADER concepts or integrated rural development concepts (ILEK). As a result, the quality and poignancy of statements is increased. In addition, there is an opportunity to implement recommendations for action by means of corresponding projects in the relevant LEADER funding period.

*Projects*

In addition, specific support programmes of the federal government and the federal states can be used to implement individual measures and projects from strategies at the regional level. Wherever possible, own funds of the districts or municipalities should be used, too. For example, the Trier-Saarburg district funds individual projects from the Zukunft in Trier-Saarburg foundation which is owned by the district. The Coburg district uses own resources to fund a scholarship programme for students of medicine or stage the annual "Jugend bewegt" competition.

*Organizational changes*

When a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level is implemented, there is no guarantee for success. Therefore, in terms of regions and projects, in particular, it is not only important to provide information and communicate, but efforts need to be coordinated and managed and corresponding (long-term) structures and resources established. Accordingly, coordinators of a strategy at the regional level, such as secretariats or regional management bodies, need to be closely involved also in the phase of implementation and assume responsibilities associated with the provision of information and management.

Apart from putting the organizational structures (including the district and other important regional development actors) – that were established in the context of the strategy process at the regional level – on a stable, long-term footing, it can also be helpful to adapt organizational structures of the district administration. For example, the establishment of an internal cross-sectoral unit with representatives from all fields related to demography or the provision of public services should be considered. In the Merzig-Wadern district, a task force on the provision of public services was established; in the Coburg district, a specialist office for demography was set up as part of the planning group for the development of the district. Such a unit can initiate projects which are to be implemented in the administration. Another possibility would be to set up cross-sectoral project groups which are to implement specific measures. At the level of cities, authorities and municipalities, municipal demography commissioners might serve as contact points for such tasks.

## Monitoring

In view of the importance of sound spatial data and information bases from academia, they should also be maintained and used when the process related to a strategy at the regional level has been completed. On the one hand, the data and information can be used to complement and continue the planning activities of specialist planners and other actors related to the provision of public services. On the other hand, they serve to monitor the small-scale spatial development and control the success of projects and measures that have been initiated on the basis of the strategy at the regional level. The implementation of the results of the process and the realization of projects should be monitored regularly and their efficiency should be evaluated.

Regions should reflect early about a monitoring concept and on-going small-scale observation measures (indicators, required data, methods and instruments, responsible persons, funding) as well as financial resources for data extrapolation and spatial monitoring. Links to the existing spatial observation should be examined by the planning region, the districts or the federal state.

Management of such a monitoring system should be rather straightforward so that districts and municipalities can maintain and use their own data and do not need to recur to expert assistance or technical application support on a continuous basis.

The kind of content that is to be kept or generated within the context of a small-scale monitoring system depends on the requirements of the regions and the conditions on the ground. This relates to the availability of fundamental data as well as to the output requests which result from thematic foci set by the individual (district) administrations.

An appropriate basic set of data which, in principle, is available for monitoring developments during the observation period might cover the following areas:

- Population (e.g. by age category and gender, fertility, deaths, migration movements)
- Settlement development (settlement density, information on structures of the building stock)
- Fundamentals from the different areas related to the provision of public services (location and facility structures, user numbers, cost indicators, etc.)
- Mobility and accessibility (local public transport services, complementary and alternative mobility services)
- Social structure (educational participation, receipt of social security benefits)
- Economy (sectors, distribution of work places, commuter flows)

As a rule, it should be possible to output all data at the regional, district, municipal or community level as well as for different points in or periods of time including the calculation of development indicators. For example, regular reports on the provision of public services or regional demography reports could represent a more simple form of monitoring or evaluation.

**TIPS**

- Plan sufficient personnel resources to implement the results and establish coordination structures (with a long-term footing).
- Managing and steering committees should make clear declarations of intent.
- Involve policymakers early on and provide them with information.
- Identify addressees of the recommendations and persons responsible for their implementation as well as corresponding time horizons.
- Consider monitoring and evaluation from the start, think about corresponding indicator sets, define responsibilities and make resources available.
- Combine monitoring efforts with spatial monitoring already in place (where applicable).

**GOOD EXAMPLES AND FURTHER READING**

Toolkit for actors from the civic sector who wish to tackle projects related to the provision of public services: New cooperation and funding models for the provision of public services – a practical guideline. A publication of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (2015). Download in German available at [http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/Sonderveroeffentlichungen/2015/DL\\_Kooperationen-Finanzierungsmodelle.pdf](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/Sonderveroeffentlichungen/2015/DL_Kooperationen-Finanzierungsmodelle.pdf)

1. Draft partial plan on a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level and development of the settlement structure to complement the 2005 regional development plan for the Altmark region. A publication of Regionale Planungsgemeinschaft Altmark (2014). Download in German available at [www.altmark.eu/index.php?id=258](http://www.altmark.eu/index.php?id=258)

2. Overall update of the regional plan Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge – participation phase. A publication of Regionaler Planungsverband Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge (2015). Download in German available at [www.rpv-elbtalosterz.de/index.php?id=fortschreibung\\_rpl](http://www.rpv-elbtalosterz.de/index.php?id=fortschreibung_rpl)

Examples of indicators/parameters from the different sectors of the provision of public services: Parameters of the provision of public services. An online publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (01/2015). Download in German available at [http://www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/DL\\_BMVI\\_Online\\_01\\_15.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=4](http://www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/DL_BMVI_Online_01_15.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=4)

## 4. FROM SCHOOLS TO FIRE BRIGADES

### Sets of topics and examples

**What is the problem? What is to be achieved? What needs to be done? Which options for action are there?**

These questions are at the heart of the case studies from selected areas which relate to the provision of public services in different model regions and are presented on the following pages. Good examples and tips on where to find in-depth information complement and enrich the individual chapters.

As a consequence of demographic change, the challenges from the subject areas described as examples are also pressing in other districts or this will be the case in the near future. What all sets of topics have in common is that the respective administration is either directly responsible at district level or that districts have a vested interest in developing options for action at the regional level. Along these lines, the approaches and results described herein can be transferred to other scenarios. They are to provide incentives and guidance to other regions, districts, cities and municipalities that are faced with the challenges of demographic change.

## School development and education

### Schools in rural areas: close, reduce in size or consolidate?

Schools and education are important factors that make rural areas attractive and, consequently, they are also an important subject area in the model regions. Unsurprisingly, this issue has already been dealt with many times within the framework of strategies for the provision of public services at the regional level.

In the given context, the school development field of action can almost be considered a classical sphere of infrastructure. This set of topics is characterized by a high level of complexity. In the federal states, there are different legal framework conditions and, in consequence, different responsibilities, operators and standards; moreover there are diverse actors (parents, pupils, teachers, head teachers, educational authority, municipality, district, federal state, etc.) who pursue heterogeneous interests and act in different roles.

School development is an area that is particularly affected by demographic change because the number of school children is declining in the whole of Germany. As a result of the low numbers of pupils and the lower capacity utilization figures that go along with it, in the Eastern German regions, in particular, a process of closure and consolidation of school locations has already taken place. In the future, many more locations also in the Western German regions are threatened with closure.

The school development planning provides a clearly structured and legally sound planning instrument for all federal states which makes it possible to account for demographic change. Nevertheless, in the school sector, in particular, there is a high need of dealing with the challenges presented by demographic change in the framework of a strategy at the regional level from a significantly wider perspective and on the basis of a longer planning period. Often, school network planning, transport planning (school transport services) and spatial planning are not coordinated well enough. Establishing a connection between the issues of "school" and "local public transport" is an obvious thing, because 80 % of local public transport users in rural areas are pupils, and, for this reason, local public transport is very closely linked to school locations. Moreover, accessibility within a reasonable time period is a major criterion for the distribution of school locations. In addition, improved coordination with federal state and regional planning objectives is required.

#### **TIP: BUILD ON PAST ACTIVITIES!**

Often, the process of adaptation that is a consequence of demographic development has already been intensively discussed in districts. Therefore, when addressing this issue, there is no start from scratch, and regional discussions to date, existing reservations or adaptations which have already been made and often resulted painful need to be considered.

### What is to be achieved?

In many model regions, school development was handled in the context of a broad-based concept of education or as part of lifelong learning. Moreover, in some working groups and pilot projects, the focus was also put on professional education, transition management, places of learning outside schools or continuing and advanced training. The reason for focussing on these issues is the shortage of skilled professionals that exists in the regions or is expected to become even greater in the future.

Therefore, the underlying question of efforts in the model regions was the question of how to ensure and develop a quality education landscape that is able to meet the needs of the future. The focus here was on maintaining the

basic provision of school services given the declining population and, as a consequence, numbers of school children.

- In the long term, a decentralized provision of schools of different levels and many different services is to be ensured and its quality improved.
- School and education locations are to be found at reasonable distances from places of living.
- In terms of the decision on where to locate schools or other public services facilities, it is desirable to achieve the highest possible level of planning certainty for investments to be made.

The objective to maintain the highest number of education locations is not an end in itself in the model regions. Not only are schools to be preserved because they are places where education is provided, but also because they serve as centres of social life and social exchange in the municipalities. In this respect, they have an additional function in terms of quality of life and, for this reason, the attractiveness of the respective place for younger families in particular.

These are rather basic objectives which, in the course of the work process, are further refined by defining parameters for the aspired quality, for example the number of schoolchildren per class, the number of classes per year and the school levels or the maximum journey times to school. With regard to the definition of parameters for quality, it is crucial to decide whether, for example, the current federal states requirements (class size, number of classes per year and school forms) – which differ substantially between the federal states – are to be maintained or can be adapted by the working groups during the process. If the straightjacket of federal state requirements can be removed, it is possible to develop new solutions that are adapted to the regional conditions and create incentives for the revision of standards.

The planning horizon that is to be considered should also be defined at the beginning of the process. A longer-term planning horizon until 2030 was defined in the model regions, including all the uncertainties that usually apply to forecasts. Other definitions relate to different school forms as well as to the criteria “viable school sizes”, “reasonable distance”, “investment protection” and the planning of school locations between different federal states or districts.

### **What needs to be done?**

An obvious option for addressing the issue of schools is the traditional procedure of a strategy at the regional level with stock-taking, status quo analyses and scenarios. The procedure is guided by five questions:

- 1) How is the number of school children going to develop in the next ten to twenty years?  
Establishing a small-scale population forecast that should be available at least at municipal level (here: at community level) so that the reality (school location boroughs and future changes) can be represented with as much detail as possible.
- 2) What does this mean for the individual school locations?  
Creating a trend scenario while maintaining the requirements of federal state policy (class size, number of classes per year, etc.).
- 3) What options for action are there for the individual locations or for the school system as a whole?  
Developing alternative scenarios and look at changing class dimensions, variations in age group sizes and alterations related to accessibilities.
- 4) What can such scenarios look like?  
Developing scenarios to show how a decentralized long-term planning of school locations can be achieved.

- 5) How are the results and recommendations of the working groups to be introduced into the political arena?  
Developing recommendations and draft resolutions for politicians with special expertise and other politicians at the federal state, district and municipal level.

#### *1) Development of school children numbers*

The small-scale forecast of the number of school children by school type is of major importance with regard to future needs. In general, a similar tendency was found in the model regions: The number of school children will continue to decline significantly.

#### *2) Impact on the locations*

Based on the analysis of current and future flows of schoolchildren, indices for the numbers of school children were calculated for each location and assessed by sustainability. The extrapolation of the trend showed that – due to the continuing decline in the number of school children – school locations will repeatedly be threatened with closure in the future. For example, it became clear that, given the present framework conditions, in 2030 a quarter of primary schools in the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district and half of the lower- and upper secondary schools in the Westmecklenburg region as well as in the Schleswig-Flensburg district will no longer be able to find the required minimum numbers of school children. The result of this step are maps that represent the current and forecast indices of the numbers of school children and assign the locations to one of five different risk levels. The maps can already be differentiated according to schools with “normal” minimum numbers of school children and schools with “reduced” numbers of school children because of their peripheral location.

#### *3) Define options for action and examine them with scenarios*

There is a number of options for action for school locations which are threatened with closure:

- Additional locations can be closed and the network of the remaining schools can be centralized, provided that the resulting routes to schools are not too long.
- The minimum numbers of school children can be lowered in order to preserve minor school locations in terms of “small schools”.
- Lessons for different age groups can be introduced.
- The structure of the school system can be simplified, and children can receive education together for a longer time.
- Schools from one or more school forms can cooperate, merge and/or the type of school can be changed; for example a cooperative comprehensive school can be formed from a lower secondary/secondary modern school (Haupt-/Realschule) and a grammar school (Gymnasium) threatened with closure.
- Joint school authorities or school networks may be founded.
- Outposts/branch locations can be established.
- School locations can be combined with facilities such as preschools, child day care centres or after-school care centres.
- Accessibility should be improved and transport of school children should be optimized.

In the model regions, different options for action were chosen by the work groups and transferred to all locations in the form of scenarios. It has proven useful to first analyse all options for action that were chosen by means of test scenarios for any location threatened with closure without giving further thought. This makes it possible to establish an overview for each location showing the impact of the individual options for action on the numbers of school children, the sustainability of the location, the journey times to school as well as on choices and costs (buildings,

personnel, school transport) and what consequences, for example, lower minimum numbers of school children would have on the capacity utilization of the respective school. Some working groups have defined own parameters with regard to minimum numbers of schoolchildren or reasonable journey times to school that are different from the requirements of the corresponding federal states.

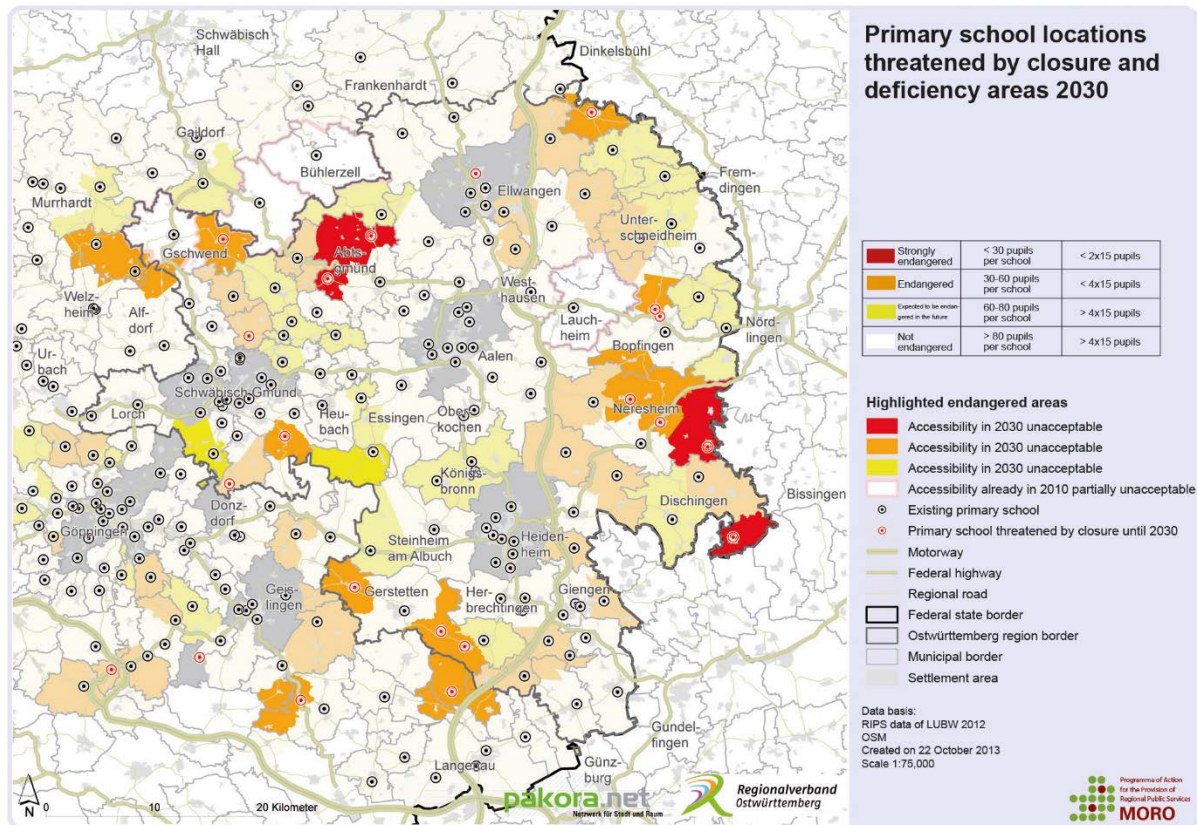


Fig. 15: Primary school locations in the Ostwürttemberg region threatened with closure by 2030

Source: Ostwürttemberg strategy at the regional level (pakora.net), p. 14.

In the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district, the advantages and disadvantages of a “preservation scenario” in terms of quality and finances were compared to those of a “closure scenario”. As regards aspects of quality, the scenario “closure of primary schools not used to capacity and concentration of school children on remaining schools” would result in an accessibility of primary schools that is sometimes significantly worse, i.e. journey times to school would become considerably longer for a higher number of school children. Moreover, relationships between places of living and schools would be cut. The scenario “preservation of a primary school in every municipality”, in contrast, would be accompanied by qualitative disadvantages such as a narrower profile range and problems to find substitute teachers in case of illness. The preservation scenario would also result in financial disadvantages because of higher costs for teaching personnel per pupil. In the closure scenario, in contrast, transport costs increase, and expenses for maintaining and securing locations that are no longer needed or costs for demolishing schools incur.

After weighing up the advantages and disadvantages while consistently taking the cost aspect into account, the working group found that the alternative “preservation of school locations” would include more significant advantages for the district and, for this reason, it was implemented with suitable measures. A crucial factor for this result was that detrimental effects to the attractiveness of the municipalities as a location were feared if schools were closed.



Results also from earlier model pilot projects show that, in discussions about cost savings by closing and concentrating school locations, alleged savings in terms of personnel and building maintenance always need to be contrasted with the transport costs of school children which are usually much higher. Moreover, these savings are generally compensated by less (free-)time at the place of living and, in consequence, limitations on the quality of life of pupils.

All in all, it can be concluded that there is no uniform model for locations threatened with closure. Often, solutions for sub-regions are required, depending on whether a municipality still has several or only one school location. In the latter case it is recommended to cooperate early on with neighbouring municipalities where there is still a school. Cooperation and closer collaboration are also an option with regard to other issues than schools. For example, working groups recommend education planning to happen at the municipal level. This means that child day care centres, after-school care centres and primary schools are to be jointly planned taking account of the transport needs of schoolchildren; moreover cooperation with, for example, clubs or voluntary fire brigades is to be sought and contacts between schools and cultural institutions such as music schools are to be intensified.

If concentration cannot be avoided, working groups recommend improving accessibility by optimizing and restructuring local public transport that is related to school children or combine school locations with other functions and facilities. For example, in the main village or the location of a municipality that is best accessible, education and family centres could be set up as a combination of school, pre-school, child day care centre and after-school care centre or schools can be linked up with centres for the provision of public services (community centres, multi-purpose houses).

#### **TIP: CHECK FOR ALTERNATIVES**

The working group on schools and education in the programme of action has discussed and documented the advantages and disadvantages, open questions and needs for action of a broad range of options for action: Adaptation strategies for the provision of public services at the regional level. Recommendations by specialist working groups on mobility, general practitioners as well as age and education. MORO Praxis 2/2015. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2015). Download in German available at [www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556).

## Child day care centres

### Changing ways of cooperation, but maintaining local accessibility?

Over the last years, childcare which happens outside of the family has become a more important factor in society, and there is an increasing public responsibility with regard to the growing-up of children. For example, since 1996 there has been a legal entitlement to a day care place for children between 3 and 6 years of age; since mid-2013 also for children aged 1 or 2 years. Apart from demographic development, this, too, has an influence on the future needs with regard to childcare places. As a result of this new legal requirement, growth and the necessity to build new capacities may also become issues in regions which are otherwise characterized by a decline in the population. Apart from the purely educational mandate, there is an even closer relation between the taking care of and encouraging of children, i.e. an educational mandate is introduced into childcare. Besides purely quantitative aspects of the provision of services, qualitative aspects also play an important role when it comes to needs-based services.

The term childcare, in particular, refers to care that is provided to children in day care centres as well as to day care. Here, a distinction can be made between care that is provided to children younger than 3 years (crèche domain), children aged 3 to under 6 years (kindergarten domain) and children aged 6 to 14 years (after-school care centre domain). Responsible bodies or operators of childcare facilities are determined by federal state legislation. Generally, this happens at the municipal level, i.e. in districts, urban districts and municipalities. According to the Institut für Stadtforschung und Strukturpolitik (IfS et al. 2014: 20), in particular in rural areas, where the thinning out of the population is especially evident, "there is a difference between federal states in terms of the division of competences with regard to the needs-based planning of facilities and/or day care as well as the operation and funding of facilities".

Care to children is provided mostly in facilities. At the national level, about two thirds of these facilities are operated by private agencies (IfS et al. 2014: 20f.), and about one third is operated by public agencies, i.e. municipalities. Child day care, as a principle, is provided by able child-minders.

The right to supervision time, the minimum space per child and the full-time-staff-per-child ratio differ between the federal states as well as with regard to the corresponding age group.

Due to the narrow age groups, childcare is one of the areas of the provision of public services that is most affected by demographic change; moreover, as the target group is the youngest age group, forecasts are much more difficult to establish than, for example, with senior citizens. Like schools, childcare facilities, too, are confronted with a downward trend in child numbers to a varying degree at the small-scale level.

### What is to be achieved?

Childcare facilities, like schools, are considered an important factor in terms of the attractiveness of municipalities, in particular for young families, and, in consequence, also with regard to the quality of life at the local level which is to be maintained at all costs.

Therefore, in the model regions of the programme of action, one objective was to ensure and maintain high-quality and needs-based care services which are located nearby also in rural areas. The provision of care services in rural areas is to be ensured without the quality declining.

## What needs to be done?

Experience from the model regions shows that it is a good idea to handle the issue of child day care in joint working groups together with other issues, for example education/school development, families or care provided to elderly citizens. This makes it possible to generate synergies and develop integrated solution approaches.

Depending on the focus of the working group, there is a broad spectrum of stakeholders that need to be involved. In any case, the competent special services, authorities and departments at the district and municipal level, for example for child day care or child day care centres, should be involved. Representatives of the childcare facilities should be involved, too. This includes representatives of the centres themselves as well as representatives of their operators, i.e. the municipalities, churches, welfare associations or clubs. Moreover, parents, mayors and representatives of municipal or district politics can be involved. Other facilities and institutions of family and youth services, for example the special service Jugend und Familie, the equal opportunities commissioner, the child welfare officer, the Lokales Bündnis für Familie, family education centres, representatives of a multi-generation house or voluntary actors can also provide helpful and encouraging input.

### *Analyses*

As a first step, status quo and location analyses of facilities can be established. Together with the forecast small-scale population figures, the current and future utilization rate of all childcare facilities can be calculated and the corresponding needs identified. Analyses are usually performed for the crèche and kindergarten childcare sectors and should cover the whole district.

When calculating the needs, a growing likelihood of use of crèche places must be considered, in particular, with regard to the municipalities of Western Germany. For example, the competent working group of the collective municipality of Daun expects the likelihood of use of crèche places to increase from 40 % today to 70 % in 2030; as regards care places for children aged two and three years, the likelihood of use is expected to increase from 80 % today to 100 % in 2030. Considerations on needs could be complemented with a survey among parents to identify their needs in terms of services, opening hours and local accessibility of childcare facilities. For example, it might be a good idea to combine childcare facilities with a primary school location or to take account of regional work sites and commuter flows in order to improve the accessibility situation.

Data that can be collected for the analyses and scenarios, inter alia, refers to the sites, number of places, opening hours, number of kindergarten children who need to be looked after, staff-per-child ratio, group size and catchment areas, but also to building data, such as usable floor space, number of group rooms, modernization level, type and age of heating, need for investment, dates of construction and modernization of buildings. The analysis should also account for alternative services and, in particular, day care.

### *Scenarios*

On the basis of these analyses, different scenarios can be established. For example, scenarios can be developed where the current number of kindergarten places is compared to the future requirements of the year 2030, divided by crèche and kindergarten places. Building on this, the working group can then discuss possible consequences of a reallocation of unused kindergarten places to crèche places.

Another option would be to develop accessibility analyses and scenarios, for example by identifying possible consequences of the closure or consolidation of sites.

In the model regions of the programme of action, trend scenarios of the expected future demand situation at a site were established, and possible development and adaption options were compared by means of alternative

scenarios. For example, in the Oderland region, a comparison in terms of the local provision of services was made between a situation where all sites are preserved and a situation where the corresponding sites are concentrated at efficient child day care centres in central built-up areas that are connected to primary schools. Taking account of educational and economic aspects, the working group assumed the lower limit of children per facility to amount to 20. An adequate staff-per-child ratio should be guaranteed with 2.5 full-time staff places per facility.

In the Altmark region, the consequences for accessibility by passenger car were analysed in a scenario of closure because of an insufficient number of children.

Comparisons of different trend and adaptation scenarios were also made in the Schleswig-Flensburg district:

- Scenario 1: Expansion requirements (crèche 2013, 2020, 2030) (number of required care places per authority in comparison with 9/2012)
- Scenario 2: Service planning with a greater focus on multiple municipalities
- Scenario 3: Reallocation. Number of additional care places for children younger than three years (U3) as a result of the reallocation of crèche places per authority (2013, 2020, 2030) and
- Scenario 4: Expansion of day care services.

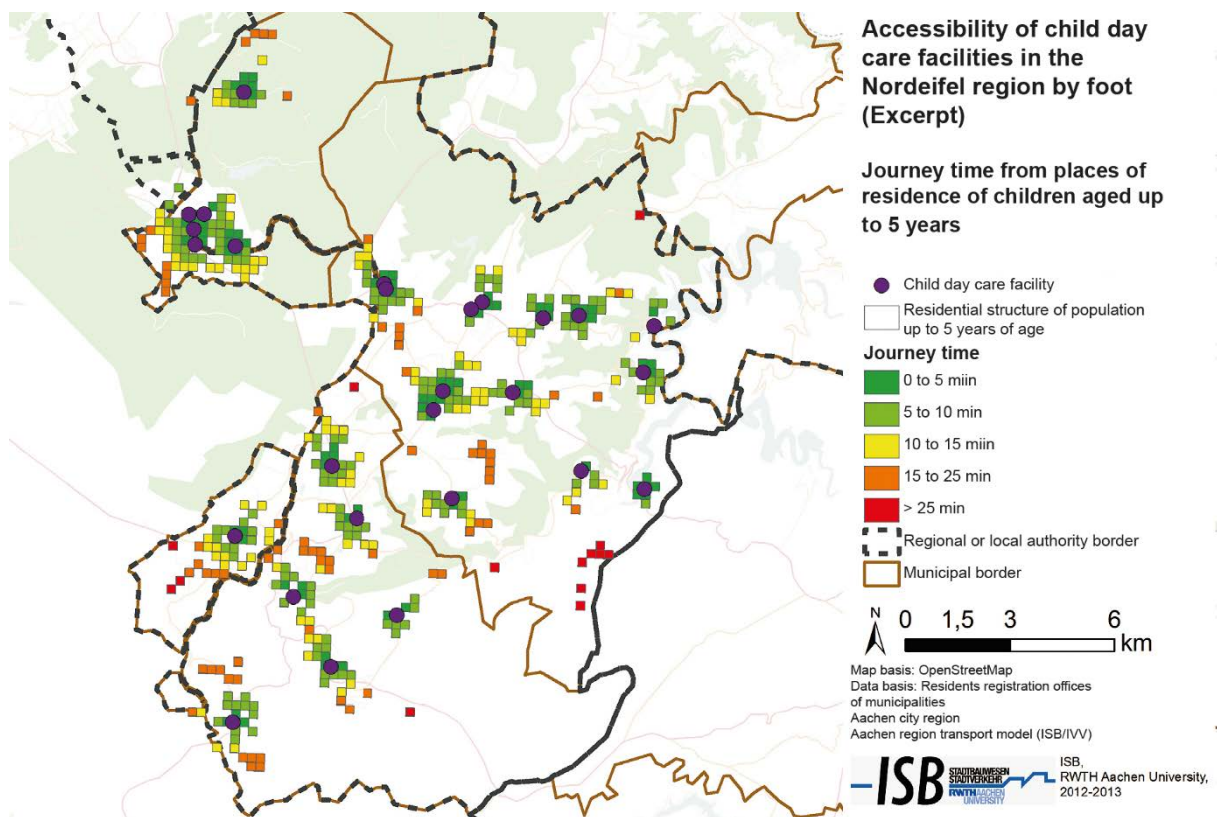


Fig. 16: Accessibility of child day care centres in the Nordeifel region by foot  
 Source: Nordeifel strategy at the regional level (ISB, RWTH Aachen), p. 33.

An important effect of the working groups' efforts was raising awareness among municipal policymakers with a view to upcoming investment decisions in the field of childcare.

Aspects of child day care can also be included in surveys among members of the public in the sense of qualitative analyses of requirements. Questions raised may relate to the types and locations of care facilities as well as to their assessment and the accessibility with passenger car or other means of transport used to bring children to the facility. In different surveys in model regions, a maximum amount of time of 15 minutes was considered reasonable – independent of whether a passenger car or local public transport was used.

Only in the Oderland region, own standards of a minimum number of 20 children per facility were set.

### **Which options for action are there?**

Due to the relatively small and flexible units, the options for action in the field of childcare are often comparatively diverse also in scarcely populated areas. There is a number of solution approaches that have been identified by the model regions in the programme of action:

- closer collaboration and cooperation of municipalities or operators;
- consolidation with other infrastructure facilities such as primary schools;
- restructuring efforts, for example reallocation of free childcare places to crèche places;
- complementary services;
- guarantee accessibilities;
- expansion and strengthening of day care;
- further development of facilities into family centres or multigenerational houses;
- combining child and elderly citizen care and
- more flexibility with regard to building structures or opening hours.

For example, cooperation with childcare facilities can be realized through consolidation and/or concentration of afternoon care services at selected sites. Accessibility is to be improved by setting up satellite sites.

Another approach at the municipal level is the founding of an association of the providers of child day care centres (municipalities, associations, etc.) or generally the introduction of cooperation between childcare providers across municipal or community borders.

With regard to cooperation between local authorities on childcare, two levels can be distinguished:

- the agreed take-over of children from other municipalities and
- the joint operation of facilities.

The most important barrier in this regard are funding issues. In terms of the joint operation of facilities, there is a number of possible provider and organization forms (IfS et al. 2014):

- Operation by one municipality and cost reimbursement by another municipality;
- common association of operators;
- fulfilment of administrative tasks of day care centres in the framework of a cross local authority collaboration;
- joint authorities for the operation of child day care centres serving more than one municipality (for example in Bavaria).

For reasons of accessibility and to facilitate the transition of children in day care centres to primary schools, it is a good idea to have a long-term perspective with regard to sites where both facilities are represented.

Another option is to combine the childcare issue with youth' and elderly citizens' work as is the case in the Spreewald triangle under the heading of fair living for every generation. To improve coordination, one joint requirement plan (instead of three separate ones) has been established for childcare, youth work/social youth work and elderly citizen care.

In the Schleswig-Flensburg district, changes in demand are accommodated for by means of reallocations of free childcare places to crèche places, and corresponding potential is identified at the respective sites.

Other approaches to solutions are flexible or complementary services. In addition, they represent a chance to shape an image, as shows the setting-up of a forest kindergarten groups in the collective municipality of Daun.

Complementary services, for example, relate to the expansion and strengthening of the provision of day care. One option is to integrate able child minders to a greater degree in childcare service structures at the municipal level. Operators of child day care facilities might promote day care by setting up a central point of contact and advice. Another option would be day care cooperation with child day care centres and family education centres, or the provision of day care could be organized by an association. This would allow for setting-up replacement schemes and organizing advanced training courses. Or several able child minders could form a care unit, day care providers could be combined with existing child day care centres, or able child minders could be employed by authorities and municipalities.

To ensure accessibility, it is recommend, for example, to think about setting up pick-up and delivery services (dial-a-bus, KitaMobil).

Some model regions have chosen an approach to further develop childcare facilities. The collective municipality of Daun combines children and elderly care with child day care centres and, in doing so, creates facilities which offer services for multiple generations. In some regions, for example the Werra-Meißner district or the Trier-Saarburg district, child day care centres are being further developed into family education centres or family centres. Similar approaches have also been adopted in the Free State of Thuringia.

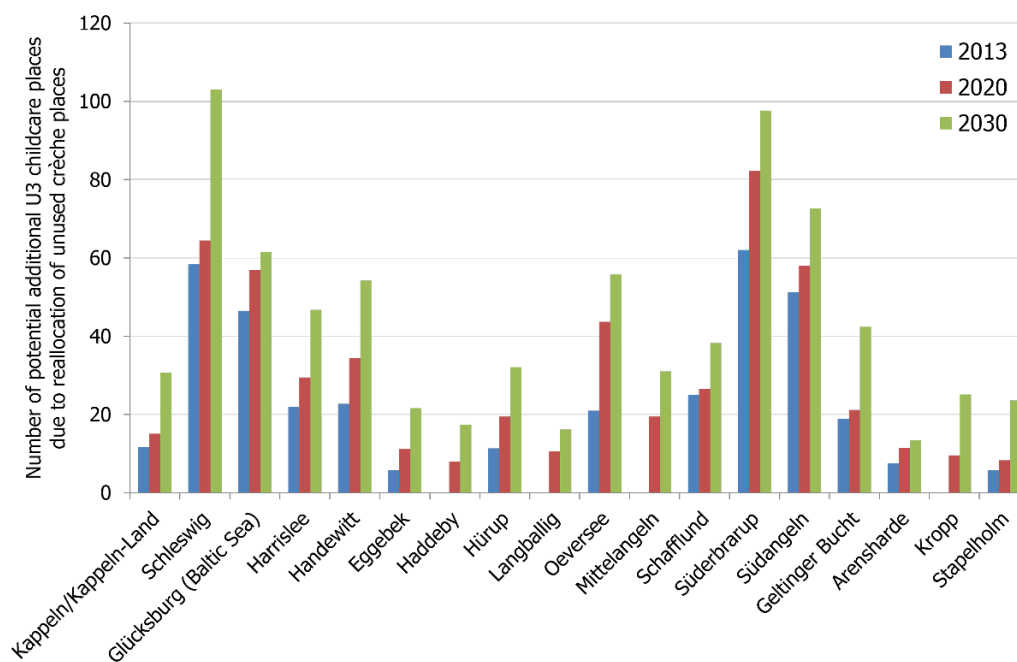


Fig. 17: Number of additional U3 childcare places due to reallocation of crèche places

Source: A strategy for the provision of public services in the Schleswig-Flensburg district (GGR), p. 51.

The basic idea of such projects is to offer family education and counselling on the ground and, in doing so, promote parental skills and support the personal development of each and every child. This way, child day care centres develop into family centres and meeting facilities.

Moreover, account needs to be taken of the fact that user numbers might change again in the future and, therefore flexibility is required with regard to the construction of childcare facilities. Early in time, an extension of use or the subsequent use of a facility by the public or in the public's interest needs to be considered.

### Possible obstacles

However, there are some obstacles to the different solution approaches that need to be considered.

Multi-use of buildings and after-use planning, in particular, are currently still hampered by funding guidelines as well as spatial and structural and/or technical requirements. One issue, for example, is the requirement to have two kitchens when food is prepared for gastronomic as well as for educational purposes which is a result of technical and hygienic standards for kitchens.

The approach of cooperation between local authorities is reaching limits where there is a legal entitlement to locally accessible services. In addition, funding issues are an important obstacle as regards the cooperation between municipalities. Here, it is necessary to establish fair conditions for the covering of costs.

### GOOD EXAMPLES AND FURTHER READING

Example of an analysis of the development of demand for crèche and child day care places: Master Plan for the Development of child day care centres in the collective municipality of Daun into multigenerational houses. A publication in German of IfR Institut für Regionalmanagement und MoRe-Data GmbH (2013).

KitaMobil: The transport service KitaMobil supplements local public transport services in the Altmark district of Salzwedel from the door to the stop at the child day care centre and back again with the person accompanying the child. Further information in German can be found at [www.pvgs-salzwedel.de/fahrplan/kitamobil](http://www.pvgs-salzwedel.de/fahrplan/kitamobil).

Family houses in Eschwege and Witzenhausen: The basic idea of such projects is to offer family education and counselling on the ground and, in doing so, promote parental skills and support the personal development of each and every child. This way, child day care centres develop into family centres and meeting facilities. Further information in German can be found at <http://fbs-eschwege.de/index.php/familien-im-mittelpunkt.html>.

A model project in Thuringia combines responsibilities of child day care centres related to care, education and training with those of family education, counselling and support as described in Section 16 of the Social Code (SGB VIII): Child day care centres in Thuringia on the way to becoming parent child centres – Insights from a model project. A publication of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Health of the federal state of Thuringia and the Familiensinn foundation (2014). Further information in German can be found at [http://www.thueringen.de/mam/th7/tmsfg/familie/bildung/handbuch\\_eltern-kind-zentrum.pdf](http://www.thueringen.de/mam/th7/tmsfg/familie/bildung/handbuch_eltern-kind-zentrum.pdf).

Analysis of the adaptation of standards in the field of the provision of public services against the background of demographic development. Final report in German commissioned by the Federal Government Commissioner for the new federal states. Edited by IfS (Institut für Stadtforschung und Strukturpolitik GmbH) et al. (2014), unpublished.

## Long-term care/living in later life

### Advocating autonomous living and housing in later life

When it comes to the provision of public services, long-term care and living in later life are two issues which, in view of demographic change, are among the most pressing challenges of the future. The number of elderly people will rise and so will the number of people in need of long-term care, in particular among the very old. As we get older, the risks of dementia, multiple morbidities and need of long-term care increase. Last but not least, the costs of out-patient and in-patient care are rising. In many cases, a shortage of professional carers is feared. Already today, a great many qualified carers is missing, and it is expected that this gap even widens in the years to come. It is also unclear how the percentage of home care will develop in the future and what the requirements of professional out-patient and in-patient care will be.

How will it be possible to provide high-quality long-term care based on needs also in the future? How can we ensure dignified and autonomous living in later life? What can be done to help people live for as long as possible in their home and the familiar living environment, neighbourhood or village? These are questions which also districts and municipalities are increasingly concerned about.

However, the issue of old age should not only be considered from a vulnerability perspective, but, in the sense of the report on the situation of the elderly issued by the German Federal Government, also the potentials should be considered. Many people remain fit up to a ripe old age and maintain commitment to themselves and others. Therefore, for a good life in old age, it is not only necessary to close gaps in terms of services offered, but also to develop and promote approaches which make it possible for elderly people to live their lives in an active and autonomous way while remaining anchored in their social environment.

### What is to be achieved?

Districts and municipalities as well as public and private actors need to cooperate and develop an overall strategy on the issues of long-term care, services for the elderly and senior citizens. Important elements are the areas of preparedness and prevention as well as civic and voluntary commitment and different combinations with professional services. As regards the development of specific local approaches and solutions, districts can assume a facilitating and coordinating function.

Often, it is not possible to deal with all of the above facets of the issue in the context of a strategy at the regional level. Taking account of the working groups in the model regions, the following questions can be of relevance:

- What are the future long-term care needs, where will they develop and to what extent? What shares are to be expected with a view to in-patient care, care on a day basis, out-patient care, professional care services and voluntary (private) care services?
- Will there be a suitable potential of carers in the future to stand by the principle of 'out-patient over in-patient care' or is it necessary to revise this objective?
- What services will be required in the future? What would need to be done to achieve this?
- In what way would districts need to extend or adapt their service structures?
- How can structures be established which enable elderly people in need of long-term care to remain in their homes/neighbourhoods for as long as possible?
- What forms of living are there for elderly people with increasing needs of support and long-term care? What demands can be expected with regard to different forms of living? How can such services be guaranteed?
- What does adequate long-term care counselling look like? How does it need to be organized?



- What requirements are there with regard to the design of the living environment (local amenities, places for social interaction, accessibility, etc.)?
- What contribution can civic and social commitment or private services provided by family members make in the field of long-term care? In which way can regions/municipalities support such efforts?

Municipality	Additional number of senior citizens with care needs	Additional number of cases for professional out-patient services	Number of long-term care in-patients	Additional number of long-term care in-patients	Total number of long-term care in-patients	Increase in long-term care in-patients in %
Bebra	204	102	144	102	246	+154%
Alheim	50	25	45	25	70	+141%
Friedewald	42	21	32	21	53	+104%
Hauneck	30	15	28	15	43	+139%
Neuenstein	42	21	24	21	45	+125%
Niederaula	136	68	65	68	133	+195%
<b>District</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>1.047</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>1.470</b>	<b>+ 62,4%</b>

Fig. 18: Municipalities with a particularly high increase in support needs of elderly people because of declining home care services

Source: Hersfeld-Rotenburg strategy at the regional level (DISR/S&W), p. 29.

### What needs to be done?

In the model regions, the issue of long-term care was often dealt with using the textbook steps of a strategy at the regional level. As a first step, differentiated status analyses were performed and, on this basis, different trend and alternative scenarios were calculated. Before the future demand for long-term care services can be forecast and evaluated, it is necessary to analyse the status quo, i.e. current long-term care needs. For this purpose, long-term care statistics of the districts are used. These statistics contain the number of people who are in need of long-term care. A distinction is made between age categories and gender, service types (out-patient, in-patient, long-term care allowance) and categories of long-term care.

As expected, the number of people in need of long-term care increases with age. The increase is particularly significant with people older than 80 years. In this age category, the likelihood of making use of long-term care services as well as that of dementing illnesses increases rapidly. In all age categories, the ratio of women in need of long-term care is slightly higher than that of men.

#### *Forecast of the future long-term care needs*

The most important factor with regard to the development of the demand for long-term care services is the change in the number of inhabitants older than 65 years. To establish the forecast, it is first necessary to identify the probabilities for the need of long-term care or the ratios of persons in need of long-term care. These numbers are deduced from the long-term care statistics.

If you combine the small-scale population forecast with the probability for need of long-term care, the result is an extrapolation of the trend of the number of people in need of long-term care by municipality.

A distinction can be made between the category of long-term care and the mode of care (out-patient, in-patient). The forecasts of the model regions assume that the probabilities of being in need of long-term care remain constant. Based on this assumption it shows that, in the model regions, a significant increase of the number of people in need of long-term care must be expected.

For the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district, it was calculated that the needs of long-term would increase by approximately 12.3 % until 2030. However, at the same time the number of women aged between 45 and 65, the age group which, until today, has to shoulder the main care burden, is expected to decrease by about 19 %. As a result of the different shares of elderly people and the corresponding age structure as well as the number of women, municipalities will be affected by this development to different degrees. This is important as both districts had previously stated that they did not want to build major new in-patient facilities and stick to the principle of "out-patient over in-patient care". However, it is not only the number of people in need of long-term care that rises; the share of persons with extensive and highest care needs (categories II and III) in all persons in need of long-term care and, in consequence, the number of in-patients also increases. The number of patients suffering from dementia, too, will rise significantly in the next few years. These facts increase the demands to be met by long-term care providers in the future.

On the basis of the small-scale demand estimate and the current capacities of in-patient care facilities in the district, it is possible to identify areas where bottlenecks are likely to occur first.

#### *Future potential of carers*

Higher numbers of people in need of care will result in a higher demand for carers. In the future, the provision of services in the fields of in-patient and out-patient care will primarily be dependent on funding and fundability; however, like in other professions, here, too, demographic change will result in an intensifying decrease of the number of skilled professionals. To date, there is no analysis of the development of the potential of carers in the model regions available.

It is easier to establish a forecast for the field of private home care. Here, persons from the near surroundings (family, neighbours, friends) provide care services to a greater or lesser extent. If these persons are no longer available to the person in need of care, in many cases it is no longer possible to provide home care service. Against the backdrop of decreasing population figures, in particular, the question of who is to cater for the increasing need in care services arises.

Research activities in the field of informal home care provide a clearer picture of the age structure of the most important actors in this sector differentiated by gender. It shows that women aged between 45 and 80 years are of vital importance with regard to the provision of care. When you combine the age and gender structures of unpaid carers with the population forecast, it is possible to make a statement on the future potential of these carers. Model calculations of the different model regions show a declining potential with regard to unpaid carers in the years to come. These calculations generally assume that the number of people who provide unpaid care will not change. In the future, the gap between persons who are in need of unpaid carers and the availability of these persons will widen for demographic reasons; moreover, the trend scenarios show that the demand for home care is going to increase even more in the future.

In order to meet future care needs, one possibility would be to significantly increase the number of persons who provide unpaid care. However, there are limits to this approach. For example, the number of persons that are actually available to provide home care decreases when employment figures increase. In the future, a considerable proportion of persons will no longer be in a situation where home care is an option. This will increase the demand placed on professional care services where, as a result of the "transition" from home to professional care,

increments are to be expected. Model calculations from the model regions show that, in quantitative terms, out-patient care services are most likely to be affected by this development; in-patient care services are less likely to be affected because persons who have care needs of category III rarely receive home care.

This means that it is also necessary to analyse capacities in the professional out-patient care sector and with regard to short-term/day care places and make the necessary adaptations. Some model regions have adapted the service structure in the care sector accordingly and have determined the corresponding utilization rates.

### *Costs*

If the number of people in need of care raises, it is not only necessary to increase the capacity with regard to care provided on a day basis and out-patient care, but it also means that costs will be higher. Pursuant to the regulations of the Twelfth Book of the Social Code (SGB XII, Sections 61 ff.), persons in need of care who are not able to provide the required funds are entitled to care assistance. Assuming that the ratios will stay the same, an increase in the number of persons in need of long-term care will also result in an increase in the number of persons entitled to care assistance. In the federal state of Hesse, the funds are provided by the districts and towns or by cities that are not part of a district. Up-to-date figures of average assistance payments per recipient can serve as a basis for corresponding cost estimates. According to calculations made by the district of Hersfeld-Rotenburg, the costs of senior citizens' care in the field of social payments are likely to increase by more than 60 % until 2030.

### *Further analyses*

In the face of the aforementioned objectives, it is a good idea to carry out further analyses in the framework of a strategy at the regional level. The district of Coburg has registered the range of services for senior citizens (adult education centres, town halls, church centres, out-patient long-term care facilities, libraries, day care facilities, senior citizens bureaus as well as leisure, culture, education and meeting facilities) and has carried out corresponding accessibility analyses.

Surveys performed in the model regions, inter alia, covered the following issues:

- initial situation or degree of affectedness of the respondent (e.g. present need of care, degree of severe disability);
- accessibility of the home and need for modifications of the home differentiated by municipality;
- possibility to remain in one's home or required measures to be able to remain in one's home;
- housing needs of elderly people w/o care needs and
- willingness to try new, alternative forms of living (for example old peoples' home, sheltered housing, multi-generation house or common household with other elderly people).

An interesting path was taken in Westmecklenburg and in the Schleswig-Flensburg district, where municipalities were classified in a similar manner taking accessibility indicators of senior citizens' facilities and the quality of local public transport services as a basis. In the Schleswig-Flensburg district, elderly citizens were asked about how they wanted to live (e.g. proximity to medical care, local amenities or public transport) and, based on the characteristics of the places of living in urban planning terms (infrastructure, local public transport connections, etc.), locations/neighbourhoods were identified which are suitable or less suitable for living in later life. All in all, five types were established in the district area to reflect these degrees of suitability. For both model regions, maps of the sub-regions' locational qualities in terms of living in later life were developed; they are to serve as a basis for relevant recommendations for action.

### Which options for action are there?

The development of an overall strategy in the field of services for the elderly and senior citizens is a common responsibility of districts, municipalities and public as well as private sector actors and represents a first step in coping with the challenges presented in the long-term care sector and with regard to the objective of maintaining an autonomous life in the own home as long as possible. Accordingly, measures and strategies of the model regions aim at strengthening and supporting the informal private home care sector (voluntary work, management, counselling with regard to long-term care and for relatives) as well as at ensuring and developing professional care services (promotion of training, improvement of working conditions, optimization of the implementation).

Main category	Weighting	Category	Weighting	Indicator	Weighting
Infrastructures / Provision of services	80%	Local amenities	35%	Local suppliers	100%
		Health	35%	General practitioner	90%
				Ophthalmologist	10%
				Cardiologist	
				Orthopaedist	
				Provision of medical attention and after-care	5%
		Pharmacy	8%		
		Care sector	15%	Institutional care	10%
				Out-patient care	30%
				Day care services	30%
				Sheltered housing	30%
Broadband	15%	Broadband coverage	100%		
Accessibility by local public transport	20%	Accessibility by local public transport	100%	Accessibility by local public transport	100%

Tab. 3: Weightings of the individual indicators, subcategories and main categories defined by the working group in Westmecklenburg to establish a comprehensive overall indicator

Source: own chart based on the Westmecklenburg region strategy at the regional level, p. 35.

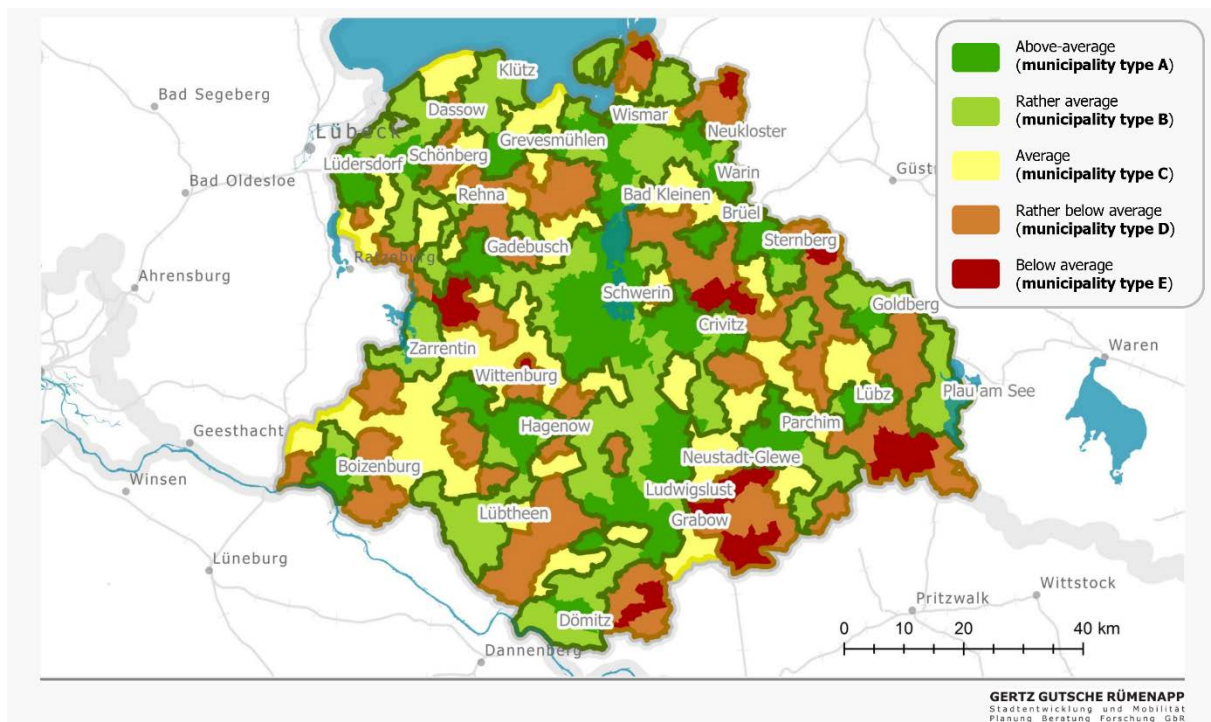


Fig. 19: Assessment of Westmecklenburg municipalities based on their suitability for autonomous living in later life

Source: Westmecklenburg region strategy at the regional level (GGR), p. 36.

Combining voluntary work with professional long-term care services is an important strategy in this regard. Another priority are measures and strategies that promote autonomous living in one's own home for as long as possible despite existing long-term care needs (neighbourhood concepts, alternative living concepts, prevention, cooperative approaches at between medical and long-term care). It should be taken into account in this context that successful living in later life involves much more than accessibility of the own home. It involves age-appropriate design of the living environment, the availability of support services related to social activities and long-term care, the accessibility of local amenities, health care and cultural facilities as well as an appreciative and integrating societal environment. In the medium to long term, municipalities will increasingly need to focus on the needs of senior citizens who require long-term care or help and see themselves as "caring communities". They will adopt new and additional responsibilities and share these responsibilities with independent operators, professional enterprises as well as voluntary workers. Specific local approaches and solutions need to be developed which account for individuals' needs as well as the specific potentials of people living there.

Possible measures are:

- Raising awareness of municipalities by presenting forecasts (more persons in need of long-term care, less persons who can provide care, cross-check with present capacities);
- Initiating local processes to give an impetus to civic and voluntary commitment and analyse which local facilities and services can be realized in the sense of the overall strategy of a mixture between services and long-term care for the elderly;
- Expanding the provision of flexible day care;
- Adopting the able child minders' system also for the care of elderly people (and people with disabilities);
- Initiating common households including care services (at the local level) as a possible alternative to in-patient facilities;

- Promoting initiatives that facilitate autonomous living at home or in the neighbourhood (inclusion of living environment/neighbourhood);
- Initiating projects for optimizing the interface between medical care and long-term care (municipal carers for senior citizens);
- Providing greater support to caring relatives by
  - providing more information on existing relief and support opportunities,
  - facilitating participation in self-help groups and forming networks of support,
  - qualifying unpaid carers and
  - determining specific contact persons for problems and questions related to the provision of long-term care.
- Setting up of nationwide independent points of contact and advice with a low threshold whose responsibilities include the counselling of relatives, housing adaption advice, counselling aimed at avoiding needs of care in the fields of feeding and sport for senior citizens as well as the dealing with people in need of long-term care.
- Counselling and provision of information with regard to alternative forms of living as well as support of good examples;
- Counselling, provision of support to and coordination of voluntary activities (voluntary work coordinators, elderly or everyday companionship by the Bürger für Bürger registered association, senior citizens coaches, village caretakers).

#### **GOOD EXAMPLE: ENJOYING LIFE IN ALHEIM**

In the municipality of Alheim, in the north of the federal state of Hesse, there is already a neighbourhood where the needs of different generations are catered for. The centrally located 55+ residential concept represents a key piece of a network that provides activities for all generations and services for the elderly. The objective is to make it possible for elderly persons to keep on living in their native municipality and take part in social life.

The project includes 15 accessible flats, a professional developer of senior citizens residential homes from the region, a senior citizens counselling centre, guaranteed care provided by the Diakonie's long-term care centre, free choice of all support and care services, everyday companionship provided by the Diakonie as well as a counselling and support network run in cooperation with the senior citizens' office.

The senior citizens and family centre is composed of the FamilienVitalZentrum, the house of generations, the Vitalplatz, a child day care centre and the Umwelt primary school.

Further information in German can be found at [www.alheim.de/seite/167101/generationen.html](http://www.alheim.de/seite/167101/generationen.html) and at [www.stadtumbau-hessen.de/tiny\\_docman/files/Gutes\\_Bsp\\_Alheim\\_HdG.pdf](http://www.stadtumbau-hessen.de/tiny_docman/files/Gutes_Bsp_Alheim_HdG.pdf).

**FURTHER READING**

Adaptation strategies for the provision of public services at the regional level. Recommendations by specialist working groups on mobility, general practitioners as well as age and education. MORO Praxis 2/2015. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2015). Download in German available at [www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556).

Living spaces for an ageing population. Ideas and practical examples for a new togetherness in the neighbourhood. DStGB DOCUMENTATION No. 110. A publication of DStGB and Netzwerk SONG (2012). Download in German available at [www.netzwerk-song.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/DStGB-SONG-Doku\\_Lebensraeume\\_zum\\_AElderwerden.pdf](http://www.netzwerk-song.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DStGB-SONG-Doku_Lebensraeume_zum_AElderwerden.pdf).

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Generali survey on senior citizens. How elderly people live, think and get involved. A publication of Generali Zukunftsfonds and Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2012). Selected results in German available online at [www.generali-alterstudie.de](http://www.generali-alterstudie.de).

KARMANT brochure "Good care in rural areas. A senior citizens' and family members' guide for health, leisure time and living." A publication of the district of Meißen, Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge (2014). Download in German available at [www.kreis-meissen.org/download/Landratsamt/Broschuere\\_KARMANT.pdf](http://www.kreis-meissen.org/download/Landratsamt/Broschuere_KARMANT.pdf).

Senior citizens' coaches of Bürger für Bürger e.V. Daun. Further information in German can be found at <https://www.buerger-daun.de/>.

Enquete commission „Älter werden in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern“, different basic studies on topics such as mobility and old age, old age and health care/long-term care, living in later life. Further information in German can be found at [www.landtag-mv.de/landtag/gremien/enquete-kommission.html](http://www.landtag-mv.de/landtag/gremien/enquete-kommission.html).

## Medical care

### **Desperately seeking general practitioners in rural areas!**

In many rural areas, the provision of general and specialized medical services is becoming increasingly problematic. Many general practitioners and medical specialists in rural areas are not expected to find a successor for their practice when they retire. The number of graduates from medical faculties who are willing to settle in the countryside does not suffice to replace them. The reason is that living and working conditions in these areas are not considered very attractive. Moreover, less and less general practitioners are willing to run their own practice because they fear the administrative and business expenses involved. Another reason why employments are increasingly sought is that employed doctors find it easier to strike a work-life balance. This does not only apply to women, who account for the majority of medical university graduates, but also to men. Current surveys prove this.

The fact that the demand for medical services decreases significantly more slowly than population figures – because an aging society goes along with greater needs in terms of medical care – highlights the challenges. Along with the decreasing number of medical practices in rural areas goes the increase of accessibility problems for an ageing population that is less and less mobile. Such problems exist also in regions which, according to statistics, are well served (number of doctors in relation the population) because panel doctors often have their seat in district towns. Patients who are not on the way to their workplace in the district town anyway need to travel long distances. The on-call service that is organized by the district town is also faced with the problem of having to travel long distances.

Besides the provision of medical services to the population, healthcare in general is of high importance with regard to the attractiveness of regions as it is an essential element of basic services and, in consequence, a location factor that is attributed high value. The scope for action of municipalities may not be significant, but there is nevertheless a requirement for action.

There is a growing recognition in the debate on the issue that the panel doctors' associations will not be able to solve the problems related to the provision of medical services in rural regions on their own. That is why it is reasonable for districts and municipalities to get involved in the planning and development of service structures to a greater degree and link these efforts to questions of site and accessibility. Here, municipalities are primarily responsible for coordinating and talking to the regional health care sector actors and they have an important impulse function. Moreover, lawmakers have recently widened the leeway of municipalities by adapting the most important legal provisions, for example the *Versorgungsstärkungsgesetz* ("Act to Strengthen the Provision of Healthcare"). For example, now municipal centres for the provision of medical care can be established that are operated by public authorities.

### **What is to be achieved?**

In the future, municipalities will be responsible for developing more regional concepts for the provision of health care in cooperation with panel doctors' associations and regional health care service providers. In the model regions of the programme of action, experience has already been gained with such a proactive and regionally differentiated determination of requirements.



## What needs to be done?

When dealing with the issue of the provision of healthcare, it is a good idea to closely follow the ideal procedure described in the strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. It can be divided in the following work elements:

- stock-taking of current site structures and accessibilities;
- establishing the age structure of general practitioners who are currently exercising their profession and corresponding succession requirements;
- identifying endangered locations;
- determining the frequency of consultation of practitioners by patients with a view to age structure and selected medical specialist (demand forecast);
- performing qualitative requirement analyses with regard to the provision of medical care;
- identifying general practitioners' sites with particular relevance to the provision of services near people's places of living;
- developing strategies and options for actions;
- developing and implementing pilot projects.

### *Analysis*

To identify future needs and have enough time to develop and implement appropriate measures and so ensure the provision of services by general practitioners, forward analysis and planning are required. The current age of general practitioners is a good indicator of the medium-term requirement for action. By simply extrapolating the current age of practitioners in a scenario it becomes clear for how many sites in the region a successor will need to be found, assuming that the retirement age is 65 and the current level of the provision of services is to be upheld. For data protection reasons, it is often very difficult to obtain information on the current age of general practitioners from the panel doctors associations. Therefore, it may be an option to ask mayors or the doctors themselves about the expected retirement age and the likelihood of filling possible vacancies.

### *Accessibility*

Adequate provision of health care by general practitioners is defined by the number of general practitioners and, in particular, by the accessibility of their practices. In the model regions, accessibilities were calculated with a view to the use of passenger cars and local public transport. Practices in neighbouring regions were also accounted for to avoid isolated solutions at a later date.

The accessibility was assessed on the basis of different standards. Often, 15 minutes by passenger car and 30 minutes using local public transport are considered a reasonable journey time to access the next general practitioners site; for medical specialists, journey times between 30 and 45 minutes are considered reasonable. Surveys in model regions confirm this. Moreover, it turned out that local public transport plays only a very marginal role in terms of the accessibility of medical practices. Analyses of the status quo show that the accessibility of general practitioners' by passenger car is still fairly good.

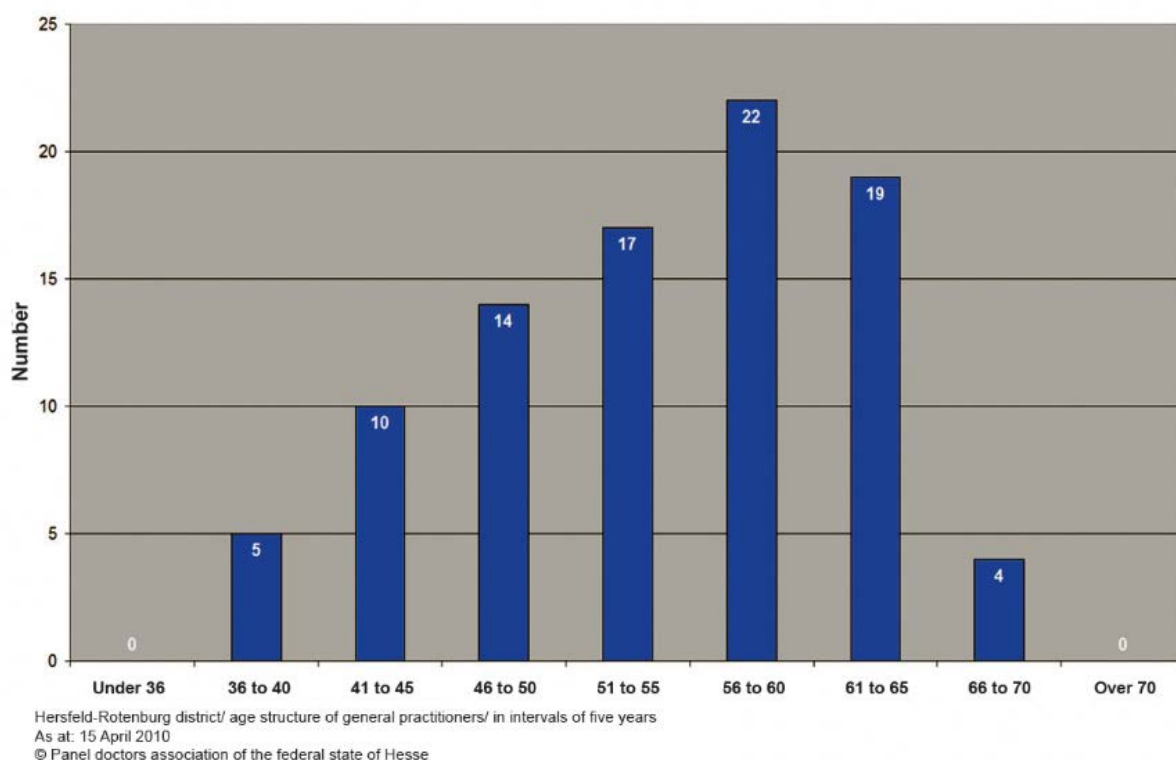


Fig. 20: Age structure of general practitioners in the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district

Source: Hersfeld-Rotenburg strategy at the regional level (Panel Doctors Association of Hesse/Hersfeld-Rotenburg district), p. 24.

When analysing the accessibility using local public transport, there are some difficulties because the optimum connection may not always be suitable for a visit to the doctor. Because local public transport is primarily based on school transport services, a model was developed in different model regions, for example in the Vogelsbergkreis district, that shows how long the journey time would be for a visit to the doctor that starts at 10 o'clock. Under this condition, about 30 % of the population would need to travel between 30 minutes and one hour to visit a general practitioner. One sixth of the population would need more than one hour to make the outward journey to the GP.

#### *Demand forecast*

The demand for general practitioners is not expected to decline in proportion to the population figures in the region. The reason is that older people visit the doctor way more frequently than younger people. Therefore, when trying to establish the demand forecast, besides the decline and ageing of the population, it should also be considered how often the individual age groups visit the doctor.

#### **Medical specialists**

In contrast with general practitioners, the area-wide coverage plays a less important role when it comes to medical specialists. It is rather based on the central places system. Problems in terms of the provision of medical services in rural areas are generally not as pressing here. However, in some regions, the situation with regard to certain disciplines, for example paediatricians, may well be critical. In the model regions, aspects of the provision of specialist medical services were dealt with only in the passing.

### Identify priority sites for general practitioners

The strategic relevance of general practitioners sites for the provision of local amenities to the population can be identified on the basis of the demand forecast. To this end, a “harm index” for the assessment of sites was established. It shows which disadvantages arise to the population if a practice is closed and, in addition, up to three neighbouring sites are also closed. The accessibility standard in this case was generally 15 minutes.

Moreover, using the same model it was analysed what consequences the elimination of a practice site would have for the population, assuming that it should be possible to get to the doctor by means of local public transport without travelling more than 120 minutes from door to door (outward and inward journey).

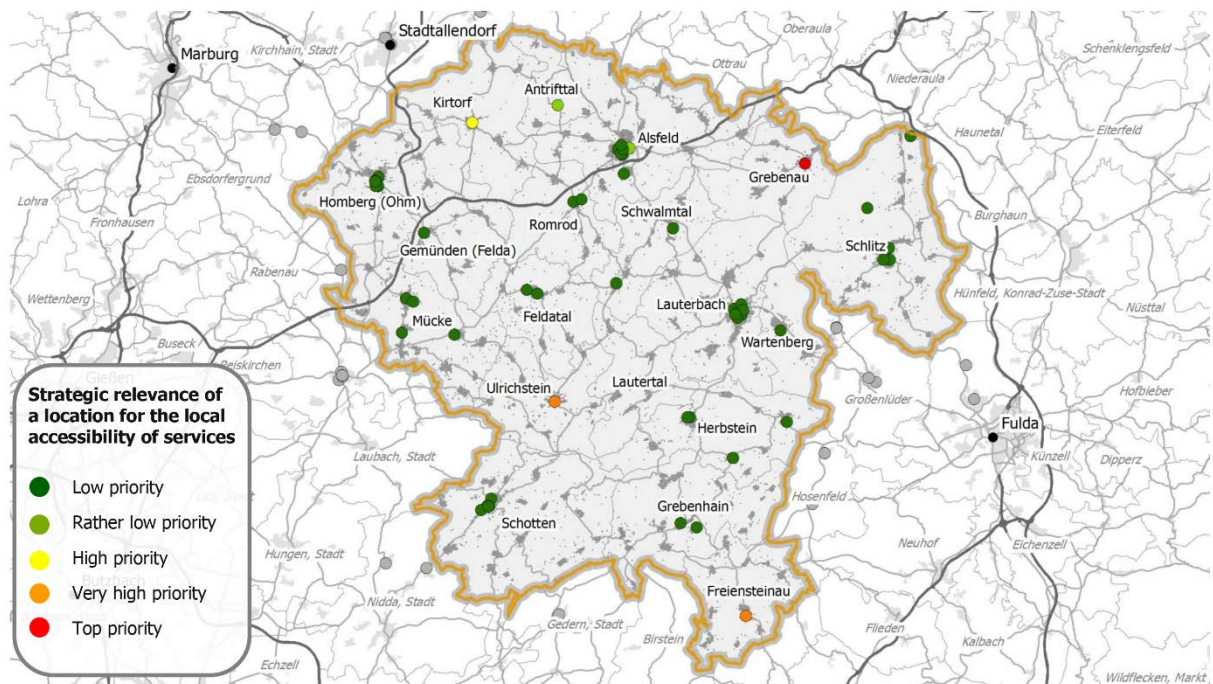


Fig. 21: Strategic relevance of a general practitioner's site for ensuring the provision of services near the place of living in the Vogelsbergkreis district

Source: Vogelsbergkreis strategy at the regional level (GGR), p. 17.

This makes it possible to identify sites with a very high significance in terms of the provision of medical services to the population that, as a result, need to be preserved upfront.

### Which options for action are there?

To ensure the provision of medical services, districts and municipalities have a number of options for action that have often already been tried and tested in the model regions. Thinking outside the “municipal box” as well as cooperation between local authorities and competent local panel doctors' associations in the spirit of partnership are of particular importance to all activities aimed at avoiding the development of isolated solutions and unnecessary competition.

*Forward planning*

- Together with the regional panel doctors' association, an overview of doctors' sites in the region where a successor will probably need to be found in the years to come should be established and updated on a regular basis ("monitoring").
- A district-wide dialogue between all relevant health care actors should be organized in the form of working groups, health conferences for sub-regions or round tables.
- Discussions with panel doctors' associations should be held that aim at taking account of priority sites in the context of requirement planning efforts.
- By means of discussions in the districts' committees and with the mayors of municipalities the attempt should be made to develop an internal, regionally coordinated approach that takes account of the priority sites.

*Influence doctors' location choices*

- Suitable support structures for general practitioners and their families, for example a general practitioners' academy (like in the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district) or a general practitioners network in rural areas, should be established.
- Suitable properties should be provided at low prices.
- Regional marketing and image campaigns should be specifically aimed at medical practitioners, for example "Ärztlich willkommen" in the Mitte Niedersachsen region of Lower Saxony.
- Funds should be provided for the take-over or new-founding of a practice as an established doctor. Support for take-overs should be coordinated at locations which, from a regional perspective, are important in terms of the provision of health care, in order to prevent "checkbook competition".

*Adapt service structures and take burden of doctors*

- Centres for the provision of medical care with an operator structure that accounts for regional particularities should be established. When a new centre is built, in smaller cities and municipalities, in particular, the focus should be on consolidation with other services in the centre of the city or municipality and good access to public transport links.
- Land should be made available and properties developed for medical care centres or similar facilities.
- Establishment of secondary practices needs to be supported.
- Regional forms of cooperation of doctors must be facilitated, for example regional practices, joint practice units, cross-sectoral patient records in electronic form at the regional level or jointly employed doctors.
- Models such as VeraH or AGnES which relief practitioners and improve interfaces with municipal care for senior citizens should be expanded
- If doctors' and other medical services are concentrated in corresponding centres, new approaches to mobility are required to ensure their accessibility, for example buses for patients, pick-up and delivery services or voluntary transport services.

*Establish long-term relations with doctors and graduates within the scope of training*

- Scholarships with the requirement to start working as a doctor in the region after graduating from university could be awarded.
- Clinical traineeships in regional practices should be facilitated.
- Regional networks of further education need to be established and supported.

**FURTHER READING AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Adaptation strategies for the provision of public services at the regional level. Recommendations by specialist working groups on mobility, general practitioners as well as age and education. MORO Praxis 2/2015. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2015). Download in German available at [www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556)

Practice forum on the provision of medical service of the service point Vitale Orte 2030 (Federal state of Hesse). Further information in German can be found at [http://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum\\_%C3%84\\_rztliche\\_Versorgung.html](http://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum_%C3%84_rztliche_Versorgung.html)

Hersfeld-Rotenburg general practitioners' academy. Further information in German available online at [www.hausarztakademie-hersfeld-rotenburg.de/](http://www.hausarztakademie-hersfeld-rotenburg.de/)

Lahn-Dill general practitioners' network. Further information in German available online at [www.landarztnetz.de/](http://www.landarztnetz.de/).

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Win general practitioners. Information for municipalities to assure primary medical care. A publication of Amt für regionale Landesentwicklung Leine-Weser (2016). Download in German available at [www.arl-lw.niedersachsen.de/download/104245/Hausaerzte\\_gewinnen.pdf](http://www.arl-lw.niedersachsen.de/download/104245/Hausaerzte_gewinnen.pdf).

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Satisfaction of real needs – perspectives for rural regions and selected service categories. Bonn/Berlin. A publication of the German council of economic experts for the health-care system (2014). Download in German available at [www.demografieportal.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Studien/Bedarfsgerechte\\_Versorgung.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=2](http://www.demografieportal.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Studien/Bedarfsgerechte_Versorgung.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=2).

Career prospects of medical students. In what field do they want to specialize, where and how do they want to work? By: Heinz, Andreas and Jacob, Rüdiger (2012). In: Bundesgesundheitsblatt, volume 55 (no. 2), p. 245–253. Download in German available at [www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb4/prof/SOZ/MES/Lehre/WS1112/Medizinstudenten\\_und\\_ihre\\_Berufsperspektiven.pdf](http://www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb4/prof/SOZ/MES/Lehre/WS1112/Medizinstudenten_und_ihre_Berufsperspektiven.pdf).

What factors can promote the willingness to settle in rural areas? By: Steinhäuser, Jost; Joos, Stefanie; Szecsenyi, Joachim and Götz, Katja (2013). In: Zeitschrift für Allgemeinmedizin 2013, no. 89, p. 10-15. Download in German available at [www.online-zfa.de/media/article/2013/01/787ECA7D-5266-458B-BC5E-CDF35A73A91F/787ECA7D5266458BBC5ECDF35A73A91F\\_steinhaeuser\\_laendlicher\\_raum\\_1\\_original.pdf](http://www.online-zfa.de/media/article/2013/01/787ECA7D-5266-458B-BC5E-CDF35A73A91F/787ECA7D5266458BBC5ECDF35A73A91F_steinhaeuser_laendlicher_raum_1_original.pdf).

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## Places for social interaction

### Focal points of local community life

Places for social interaction such as community centres make an important contribution to the quality of life in rural areas, in particular with regard to the fostering and supporting of local communities and social processes in villages. To some extent, this is also reflected by the names of the working groups in the model regions of the programme of action that dealt with this topic: "Provision of basic public services within a reasonable distance of people's homes/Municipal Community Facilities", "Liveable Villages and Cities", "Communication Facilities", "Community Life" or "New Anchors".

Most of the facilities that were looked at in a number of model regions of the programme of action are municipal community facilities, for example citizens' houses, clubs' rooms, community centres, multi-purpose halls, meeting facilities, multi-generation houses and restaurants with event halls. Here, the focus is on their function as local communication points or meeting places. These facilities are often used by clubs and other voluntary initiatives and, as a result, they are the linchpin of social life and voluntary commitment in the villages and municipalities. They have the potential to counteract negative developments in town and village centres and make a contribution to the strengthening of life in the local communities.

For most of these facilities, a decline in the population – while the scope of services remains unchanged – means a decline in demand. If there is a high number of such facilities, this effect is even increased. As a consequence, communication facilities in some towns or villages are closed. Elsewhere, such community facilities, which are often run by the municipalities, are not fully used, have high fixed costs and are no longer equipped to contemporary standards. As people in the villages get older, the demands on the accessibility of facilities change, too. Often, there is an accessibility problem for people with handicaps.

The situation of clubs changes, too, and it is often clubs that run or use such municipal or community facilities. Moreover, semi-public communication locations, for example stores, cafes or bars that are run by private individuals are increasingly withdrawing from villages.

### What is to be achieved?

Due to the importance of community facilities as key focal points of togetherness in the individual communities, it may be an objective to maintain one lively communication facility per village as is the case in the collective municipality of Daun. The ability of the existing facilities to meet the challenges of the future in terms of sustainability, contemporary facilities and target group-specific services must be analysed in a timely fashion.

Possible objectives are: move rate of use closer to capacity, stabilize number of users with new purposes of use and generation-friendly services, analyse services offered in the individual communities and accessibility of facilities including barrier-free access as well as identify hints to excess capacities and corresponding scope for savings. Awareness of the diversity, number and maintenance costs of the existing communication facilities is to be raised among constituent municipalities and policy makers. Corresponding studies can provide interesting ideas and help with the taking of required decisions in the constituent municipalities. Moreover, investment decisions related to communication facilities can be underpinned and justified with specific figures.

### What needs to be done?

Initially, comprehensive analyses with regard to existing facilities are to be carried out in all municipalities and communities and the status quo is to be identified. Next, an overview of the number of community facilities/buildings can be established – including their site or location – which are available for use and operated by different providers (municipalities, clubs, churches, private sector). Building on this, specific site analyses are to be established.

#### OBSTACLES

Basic data, for example information on capacity utilization or costs of community facilities, may be difficult to obtain and possibly require burdensome follow-up research.

For facilities that are funded or supported by municipalities, in particular, it is a good idea to collect especially data on the capacity utilization (chronologically, i.e. for the course of the year/single days), the nature of services provided, the current and future demand (differentiated user structure, user groups), the cost structure (revenues, expenditures) as well as the accessibility (e.g. barrier-free access). For example, in order to determine the capacity utilization of community centres, citizens' and generations' centres, family centres and multi-purpose halls, it would be necessary to identify the type and number of facilities, the number and age structure of persons participating in events at regular or random intervals as well as the rhythm, duration and hours of regular events. These site analyses could also include accessibility analyses (by passenger car, local public transport, bicycle or on foot).

However, experience from the model regions shows that, to date, there is hardly any research, guide values or recommended procedures on topics such as capacity utilization, costs or requirements. As a consequence, collecting corresponding data has sometimes proved to be difficult. For example, there was often no data (on booking figures, energy costs, etc.) available for public buildings. There were hardly any postal addresses of community facilities available, and the capacity utilization data showed great gaps. Often, capacity utilization data was not detailed enough, for example information related only to days, not to hours. There was also very little information on maintenance costs available or it was difficult to obtain such data as, for data protection concerns, they were made available only reluctantly or not at all. When dealing with the issue of places for social interaction/community facilities, it is necessary to take account of such aspects and plan sufficient resources for the collection of corresponding data. As enquiries for specific sites may require considerable effort it will usually not be possible to do this in a comprehensive manner. It is therefore recommended to concentrate detailed location analyses on model municipalities.

#### TIP

Concentrate detailed location analyses on model municipalities/built-up areas.

For example, a possible approach to collect such data in a comprehensive manner would be to enquire them from municipal administrations or mayors as well as from the operators of institutions. It is a good idea to develop and use standardized questionnaires for this purpose. Such analyses should also include qualitative user surveys of their current and future requirements with regard to communication and community facilities. In a community of the collective municipality of Daun, a village workshop was held for that purpose. It also included a site inspection in the sense of a qualitative accessibility analysis of communication facilities with the objective of identifying barriers and accessibility problems.

In the context of the detailed investigations, "building portfolios" or "community facility portfolios" may be developed which include an overview of revenues and expenditures.

For example, the community facilities' profiles from SPESARTregional for the verification of the ability of the existing facilities to meet the challenges of the future contain a number of parameters such as per-capita cost, property cost, capacity and capacity utilization as well as other capacities of local community facilities. The parameters are complemented by information on the accessibility of other facilities as well as by factors that show if there is a "willingness to change". In each case, the result of a community facility profile is a table and a graphic representation.

The building portfolios of the collective municipality of Daun, in addition, contain information on the building stock, interior fittings and energy supply. Also included is a table of revenues and expenditures. Revenues are shown divided by origin: public and private funds, revenues from letting and other revenues. Expenditures are divided by type of cost: fixed and variable cost.

In order to assess the identified values properly, it is important to compare them to reference parameters and define average values. However, unlike in other areas related to the provision of public services, there are no generally recognised or standardized values in this field. For this reason, in the SPESARTregional region, average regional values were used. The corresponding working group in the collective municipality of Daun defined a use of 100 % of the nominal capacity as reference framework for the evaluation as follows: The citizens' house is used daily from 8 to 22 o'clock. 30 % capacity utilization was considered as a good utilization rate, and 10 % capacity utilization was considered a poor rate.

Based on the analysis of regions and locations, on the one hand, the overall situation with regard to the provision of public services in the region and in the individual municipalities and, on the other hand, the specific situation of the individual facilities can be assessed. From this, spatial and locational requirements of action can be derived. In the collective municipality of Daun, alternative scenarios for the communication landscape were considered in a model village and compared on the basis of verbal reasoning.

- Type 1: Status quo scenario: What will happen if there are no changes to the communication landscape?
- Type 2: Age-appropriate development scenario: What will happen if there are no changes to today's communication landscape, but buildings are developed in an age-appropriate manner (barrier-free access)?
- Type 3: Concentration scenario: What will happen if there is a consolidation of communication facilities? Here, a number of different scenarios are possible which deal with different variants of concentration of the communication landscape.

These scenarios can be assessed by an accompanying working group or by the town council. A presentation during a public meeting can also be an appropriate assessment method.

### **Which options for action are there?**

In the model regions, it was realized that today's data and today's control mechanisms are by far insufficient. Therefore, inter alia, the following was proposed:

Develop and try a building and energy management for community facilities in terms of content and organization on part of the municipality which includes a capacity utilization concept.

This implies also questions of organizational development at the municipal level with regard to the administration of community facilities. Competencies and responsibilities for public buildings should be consolidated or better connected.



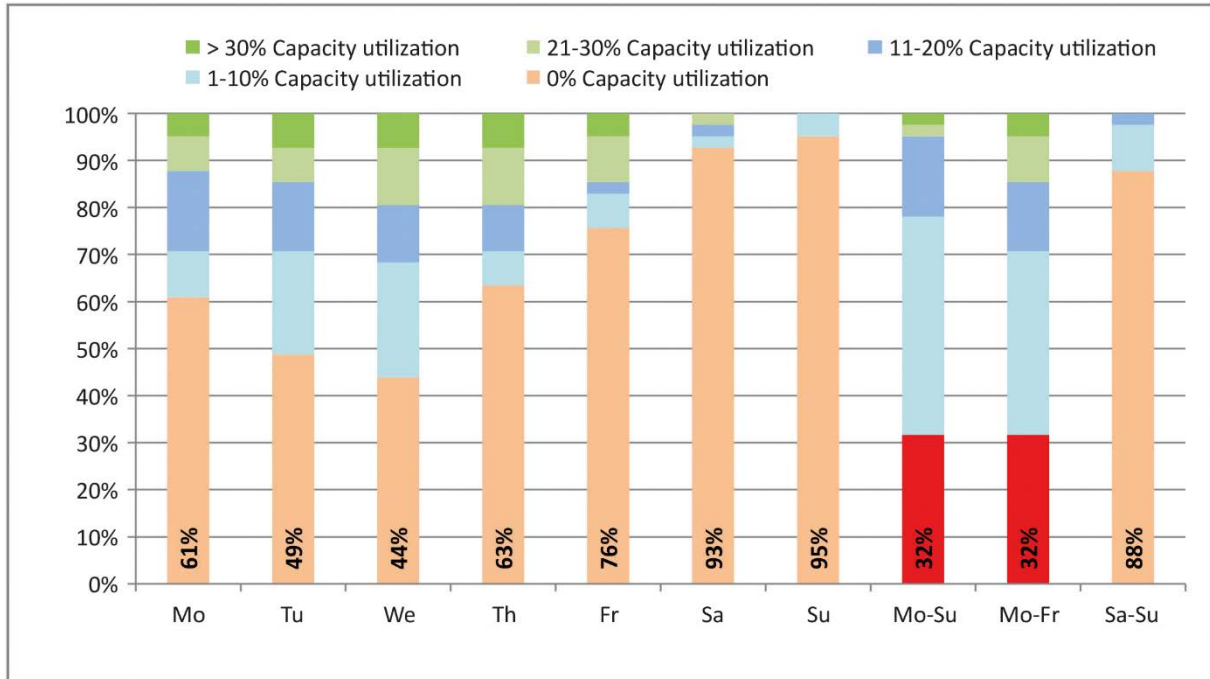


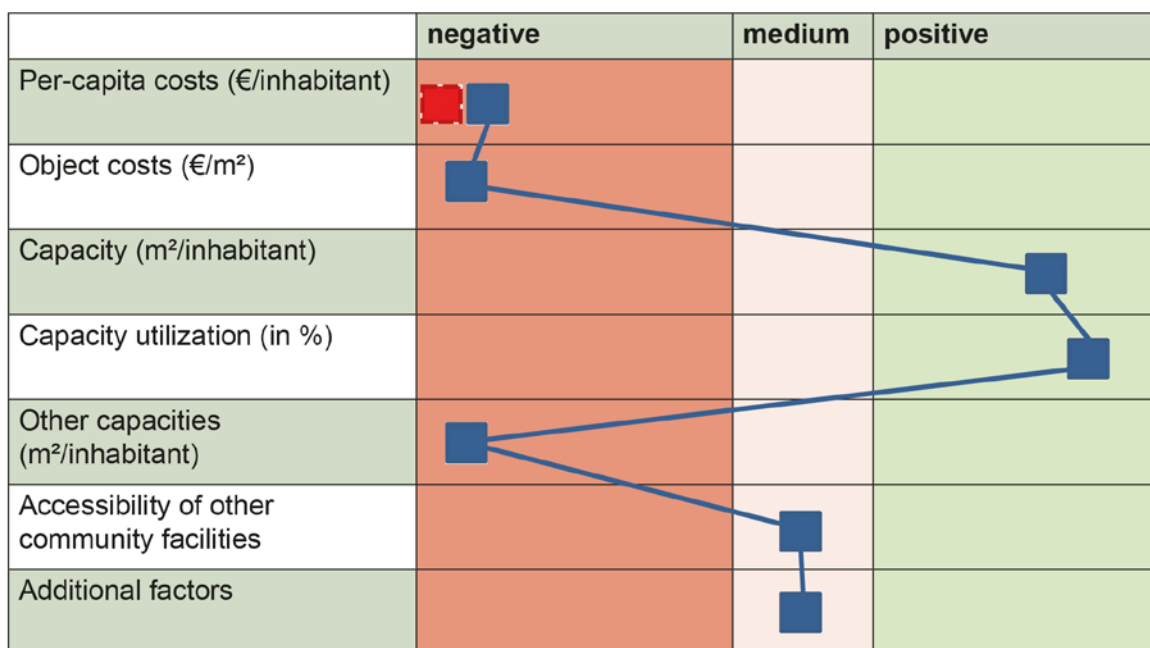
Fig. 22: Citizens' houses in the collective municipality of Daun, clustered by capacity utilization (regular events), from 8 to 22 o'clock

Source: Master plan for communication facilities in the collective municipality of Daun (IfR/MoREData), p. 41.

Building on the established fundamentals and using the developed instruments, a de-emotionalized discussion process in the municipalities is to be initiated to raise awareness with regard to the ability of facilities to meet the challenges of the future and discuss the chances of optimization with regard to existing facilities.

**Community center profile**

Indicator	Average value	Value for object
Per-capita costs (euros per inhabitant)	€ 14,40	€ 36/ € 46
Object costs (euros per square meter)	€ 67,26	€ 128
Capacity (square meter per inhabitant)	0,16 m <sup>2</sup>	0,28 m <sup>2</sup>
Capacity utilization (degree in percent of maximum time of utilization)	10%	38%
Other capacities of local community facilities (square meters per inhabitant)	0,19 m <sup>2</sup>	0 m <sup>2</sup>
Accessibility of other facilities	positive = same community medium = next community negative = further afield community	medium
Additional factors	Assessment of municipalities	medium



■ Current situation  
■ Future situation

Fig. 23: Profile of a community centre

Source: Report on the results of the SPESART regional strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level, p. 52.

**EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Communication facilities masterplan for the collective municipality of Daun including a comprehensive description of a perfect approach with regard to the integrated development of the communication landscape in villages. A publication of IfR and MoReData GmbH (2013). Download in German available at [http://www.daun.de/wege/images/MORO\\_Masterplan\\_Kommunikationsorte](http://www.daun.de/wege/images/MORO_Masterplan_Kommunikationsorte).

Report on the results of the SPESART regional strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level including a representation of the methodological approach and the instruments for an expanded analysis of the ability of community facilities to meet the challenges of the future. A publication of SPESART regional (2013). Download in German available at [https://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum\\_Daseinsvorsorge.html](https://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum_Daseinsvorsorge.html).

Multiple houses are multi-use houses: A multiple house can be used every day in a different way. On Mondays, the doctor comes, on Tuesdays, there are consultation hours of the savings bank, on Wednesdays the physiotherapist provides help, in the evenings and on the weekends, people come for coffee klatsch, to play skat, dance, sing in the choir or attend internet courses, etc. With a multiple house, it is not residents but service providers that are required to be mobile. Like in a car sharing concept, they all use the facility and share the costs of basic rent and usage between them. Another advantage is that a place for social interaction in the town is preserved. Existing buildings in the town are modified and turned into multiple houses. Besides their multiple use character, multiple houses are also characterized by innovative energy and accessibility concepts. Further information as well as aids and project examples in German can found at [www.multiples-haus.de/](http://www.multiples-haus.de/).

Meeting facilities in villages – ideas on sustainable operation. Leaflet in German from the federal state of Saxony with success factors and good examples at <https://publikationen.sachsen.de/bdb/artikel/13557>.

A community centre operated by a citizens' cooperative: Dalwigksthäl school citizens' cooperative. Further information in German available online at <http://schule.dalwigksthäl.de> and at [http://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/beispiele/projektdatenbank/?no\\_cache=1&projektId=748&aktion=details](http://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/beispiele/projektdatenbank/?no_cache=1&projektId=748&aktion=details).

## Local amenities

### Is Tante Emma about to return?

Concentration processes in the field of local amenities have been observed for many decades now. As a consequence, many villages in rural areas no longer have an own amenities facility. Moreover, the decline in the population results in traditional supermarket or management concepts being no longer sustainable for many villages. Some places were forced to accept the fact that the provision of local amenities in the village was no longer economical. What makes this issue particularly explosive is the fact that, in the rural villages of many regions, there is a large number of business successions pending with small food service distributors in the next years.

As a result, and this is of major importance to the attractiveness of rural areas, meeting points of the local population are eliminated. Because also in the model regions local amenities are considered more than just retail food trade. Besides everyday basic goods, they are also thought to comprise services (e.g. bank, post office, acceptance of prescriptions or copier) and represent a place where people can meet and that is located near to where they live. For a population that is ageing successively, this generally means that it may sometimes be necessary to accept very long ways to satisfy daily needs. Already today, the situation with regard to the provision of everyday basic goods is considered bad or very bad in more than half of the communities and neighbourhoods of some model regions.

However, the last years have also seen a renaissance of small village shops where services are offered that go way beyond those of traditional local amenities and, not least, the opportunity of meeting other people plays a central role. Facilities such as "Markttreff" in Schleswig-Holstein, "Kommln" in Baden-Württemberg or "Lädchen für alles" are examples of this.

### What is to be achieved?

Municipalities have more options for action and control at the municipal level than districts. Moreover, local amenities is a field that is dominated by private enterprises. Successful examples like that of the Werra-Meißner district show that success requires a high level of civic engagement on the ground as well as support by key players such as mayors or clubs' presidents.

The objective in the model regions is to preserve existing local amenities structures and ensure a provision of basic services at the local level by combining food and service offers with meeting opportunities and social-counselling services near peoples' places of residence.

To support discussions, analyses were performed in the model regions which show what the current situation in terms of service structures and the accessibility of local amenities is like and where gaps or bottlenecks with regard to services already exist or are to be expected in the future. Areas where the provision of services is not adequate or endangered are considered potential or search areas where additional local amenities could be established and existing ones preserved. This makes it possible to provide the municipalities, communities and authorities in question with ideas for action on the ground.

In the working groups, inter alia, the following questions were dealt with:

- In which areas, in particular, is the provision of services not adequate?
- Is it possible to identify attractive sites for village shops or other similar facilities?
- What operator models are promising?

A broad spectrum of actors should be involved in the working groups, i.e. representatives of municipal administrations, specialized departments or district facilities (e.g. Office for Rural Areas, Public Health Office, Coordination Centre for the Elderly, Economic Promotion Office) or of the regional association as well as mayors or representatives of villages. Actors from the field of rural development (LEADER action groups, regional management, rural women) and, of course, actors from the field of local suppliers, e.g. EDEKA, tegut or REWE, need to be involved. Moreover, bodies representing the interests of economy and commerce, such as the chambers of industry and commerce, business associations, trade associations, farmers associations, associations for the direct marketing of farm products, chambers of skilled crafts or chambers of agriculture as well as representatives of relevant consulting agencies and high schools should be involved. Citizens, too, can be involved, in particular with regard to the concrete implementation of shop projects on the ground.

### **What needs to be done?**

First of all, the initial situation should be analysed, and an assessment of the provision of basic public services or local amenities in the municipalities should be carried out, i.e. the relevant facilities should be registered. Above all, these are food retailers, but also bakers, butchers, postal and bank services or pharmacies.

A survey among municipalities in the form of written questions posed to the mayors can provide a central data basis. In the model regions, the questions primarily related to the following issues:

- location of the facility (spatial situation, parking situation, catchment area, role of local public transport);
- description of the nature of the service (service category, size of the sales area, opening hours) as well as
- diversity and quality of the goods offered (e.g. areas where fresh fruits, vegetables, meat or cheese are sold).

Such surveys make it possible to register a great many amenities sites which, however, still need to be adjusted for, depending on the definition of the working group. For example, facilities which are not relevant in terms of the basic provision of foodstuffs and other everyday basic goods should be eliminated from the list of locations. This applied to the kiosks and filling stations as well as to facilities from the category "Sonstige" ("Other"). Moreover, a classification on the basis of the sales areas was established. Facilities with a sales area below 200 m<sup>2</sup> were classified as village shops; facilities with a larger sales area were classified as supermarkets. Temporary mobile services in the field of foodstuffs, for example, mobile supermarkets were handled in different ways. Some model regions have also registered these services and included them in their strategy development. Against the background of the broadened concept of local amenities provision, i.e. the creating of meeting opportunities, other model regions have excluded such services from further considerations, because mobile services often remain on the ground for a limited time, generally less than 15 minutes.

As a result of the stock-taking, outline maps and lists of the locations of local amenities or municipal profiles of the situation in terms of local amenities are created. It would be a good idea to include also temporary services as well as mobile traders in the status quo analyses.

Qualitative surveys, i.e. public surveys should complement the location-related data collections. The surveys in the model regions primarily dealt with the shopping behaviour, i.e. the questions asked were "Where do you buy?" and "Do you buy from local shops, on the way to or from work or from mobile merchants?"

### *Accessibility analyses*

In the next working step, accessibility analyses are used to identify current and future gaps with regard to the provision of services. For this purpose, accessibility standards were defined. The SPESART regional model region has defined an accessibility standard of 15 minutes using a passenger car for full-range providers. In the Coburg

district, five minutes of travel time by passenger car for a minimum of 60 % of the persons living in a community was defined as a guide value; otherwise it was assumed that the provision of services was not adequate. The surveys in model regions show that, in terms of local amenities, local public transport only plays a very minor role because there are only very few or even no customers who use local public transport to buy foodstuffs. Therefore, accessibility analyses that relate to local public transport are expendable.

However, against the background of societal developments and, in particular, demographic development, it must be assumed that, for example for reasons of age, a growing number of households will no longer be willing or able to use a passenger car. Therefore, the question of how to ensure the spatial accessibility of local amenities without (an own) passenger car rises. This is important, in particular, with regard to the "meeting function" of locally available amenities. Therefore, it is indispensable that the accessibility on foot and by bicycle is also analysed. Here, too, the working groups in the model regions have defined different standards. While local amenities with a limited range are to be reached within ten minutes of walking in the SPESARTregional region, the Werra-Meißner district has defined a limit of 15 minutes.

Different scenarios were developed in SPESARTregional. In this context, sites with the highest probability of closure by 2030 were identified using existing data on locations already endangered today and assuming that at least 750 persons would need to live in the corresponding villages. Based on this, trend scenarios were calculated that show in which spatial areas the situation of local amenities would deteriorate in terms of accessibility on foot or by passenger car. In other model regions, the hazards posed to the locations were derived from the age structure of operators and assessments of the mayors.

*Identify areas where the provision of services is not adequate or potential or search areas*

As a next step, the communities in a region need to be identified where there are already gaps in terms of the provision of services and/or that are threatened with closure. These areas, where it is or will be impossible for the majority of the population to access local amenities on foot, are depicted on a map, e.g. in the form of white spaces. These are the search or potential areas for preserving existing or establishing new non-mobile local amenities. For these facilities which are to guarantee accessibility on foot or by passenger car, concepts of action are developed and measures are started.

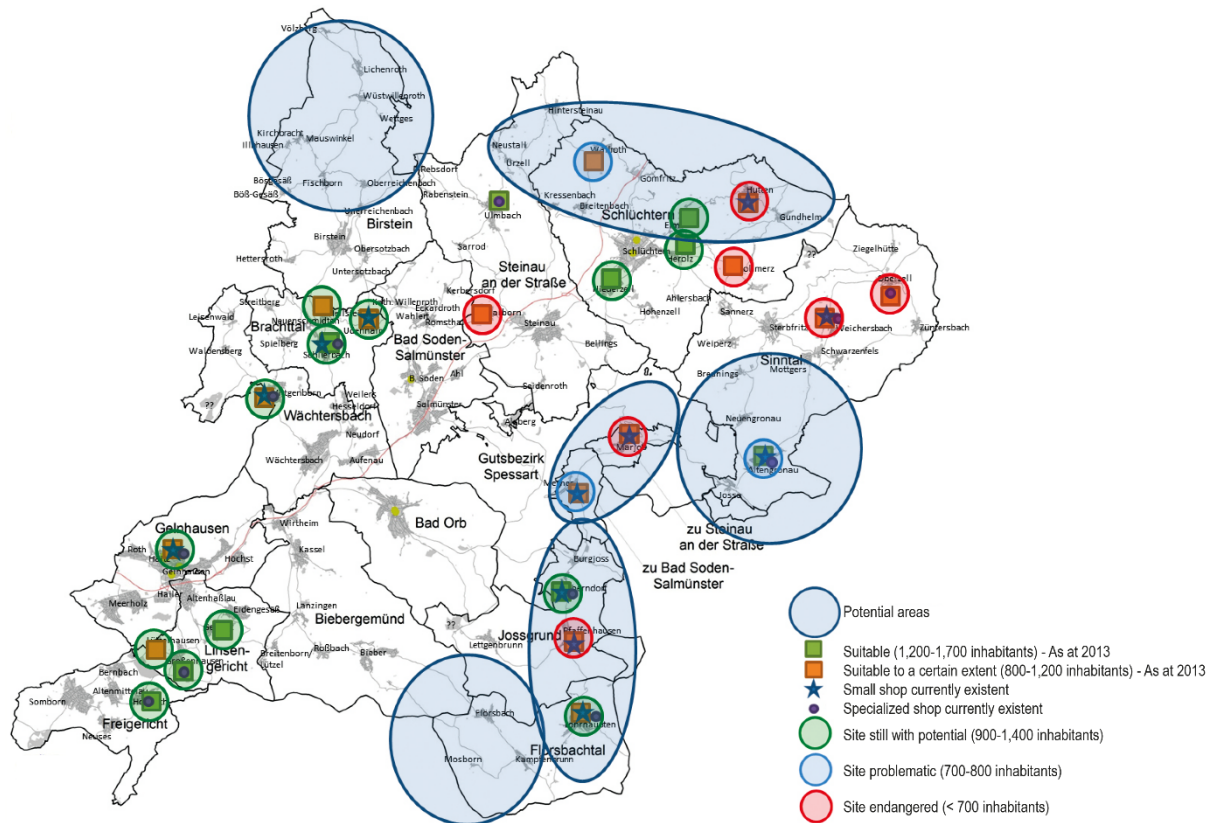


Fig. 24: "Potential areas" for village shops to guarantee on-foot and preserve passenger-car accessibility  
 Source: Report on the results of the SPESART regional strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level, p. 31.

In the Ostwürttemberg region, existing examples of best practice of local amenities in rural areas in and beyond the region were prepared, including a cost assessment of the approaches. A demand estimate or a calculation of the purchasing power potential was carried out for all villages, i.e. also below the municipal level. As a result, all municipalities and interested investors have a rough estimate of the purchasing power in the villages at their disposal which can support investment considerations already at an early stage. In addition, a workshop on the preservation of retail locations was held in smaller villages. In the working group, strategies were discussed with regional market operators, wholesalers and experts and a variety of innovative retail or village shop concepts was presented. This gave birth to the idea to hold a kind of fair where different retail concepts would be presented and establish an independent caretaker as contact person for interested retailers and municipalities. By preparing and teaching good examples, people in areas where the provision of services is not adequate are to be encouraged to follow the example, and caretakers are to support the implementation of such efforts. Such a caretaker could be an expert that was commissioned by the district or municipality.

In the Spessart model region, a proposal for an organizational structure to implement the strategy for action in the field of local amenities was developed. A strategic alliance of the chamber of industry and commerce, retailers, trade association, customer representation, Main-Kinzig district sheltered workshop and the SPESART regional union is to ensure coordination and preservation of existing information. The operational business is to be conducted by continuing the work in the working group which acts as advisory council. Moreover, every two years the work is to be evaluated by the chamber of industry and commerce and by the municipalities. The

SPESSART regional union is responsible for networking. In addition, it serves as an information platform which also gives advice to the providers of services.

The result of dealing with the issue of local amenities in the context of the regional strategy is an integrated local amenities strategy for a region or several local authorities which contains the necessary information with regard to the current situation in terms of the provision of services, shows areas where the provision of services is not adequate or endangered, proposes solution approaches and identifies sites with a potential for small shops. It is a good idea to closely align the local amenities concept with the issue of the management of vacant properties in order to make use of synergies.

### **Which options for action are there?**

First of all, mobile service structures can be established and supported to eliminate problems with the provision of services that are not adequate or endangered. However, with a view to the communication and meet-up function of facilities, the model regions generally focus on maintaining existing local amenities or establishing new ones.

There is no ideal solution for implementing a successful local amenities strategy. However, a number of different options or recommendations for action can be derived from the experience with two projects that were started successfully in the Werra-Meißner district („marktwert Datterode“ and „Dorfladen Gertenbach“), from the experience from other model regions and from the experience with other nationwide villa shop schemes:

#### *Initiate and support model projects*

There are probably only very few cases where a district, authority or municipality themselves are responsible for the operation of local amenities or meeting facilities. However, it is their responsibility to initiate and support projects which serve as models for other facilities of this kind. For example, it is possible to identify deficiency or potential areas, directly address local actors or possible providers and operators and provide them with expert advice, teach examples of good practice, initiate solutions with a particularly cooperative and integrative character, show access to sources of funding such as LEADER or support the exchange of information between different providers and operators.

#### *Local amenities and more*

Local amenities facilities in sparsely populated rural areas will no longer be able to survive in the future by providing foodstuffs alone. It will be necessary to connect the provision of services with meet-up possibilities for people living in the village, for example in the form of a café, as well as with additional medical or social services, with bank or postal services, with the district's or municipality's social, long-term care or family counselling. As a result, the village shop will become an integrated centre for the provision of services in the village. The advantages of links to the planning activities of other areas of the provision of public services are evident. Existing or planned local amenities will be supported if key facilities for the provision of public services, such as schools, child day care centre or residents' office are located nearby or even in the same building.

#### *Bind local demand*

In order to guarantee a sufficient level of demand for newly opened or planned village shops, it is important to bind local demand (daily shopping, celebrations, clubs) to the respective facility and turn them into something more than just a stopgap solution. Revenue is and will remain the most important pillar of local amenities. It is a good idea to use events with the potential to raise public awareness at the beginning (e.g. "Opening of the BBQ season"), but also during operations and remind the village community that it is "their" shop.



*New cooperation*

Successful village shop ideas depend on specific and unique cooperation between providers, operators and suppliers. For example, in Gertenbach (Hesse) and Datterode (Hesse) it was possible to attract large retailers as suppliers who are able to keep prices at a competitive level. Unconventional paths can also be followed with regard to the issue of facility operators. For example, the "Marktwert Datterode" is operated by a non-profit association for the support of people with psychological disorders which, at the same time, creates jobs for its clients.

*Local commitment*

Commitment and active participation on the ground by mayors, village clubs, historical societies and other clubs, church congregations and citizens is also indispensable.

*Support by the municipality*

In terms of local amenities, the municipality, in fact, has some control potential. For example, it can initiate processes to ensure the provision of local amenities, invite to citizens' events, work together with consultants and have a feasibility study carried out. The municipality can also provide advice on construction issues and possible funding programmes, make buildings available at low prices or put up money for the operating society. Another option is that the municipality pays a certain amount per month for a limited time as a contribution to the rent of shop where local amenities are offered.

*Local amenities and mobility services*

Another element is the combination of such facilities with new local mobility services that is already being tested at some locations. A new mobility strategy based on the idea of the community bus service can help to improve the accessibility of the village centre where services are provided for people living in other communities and make centres more sustainable. A transfer service for customers with impaired mobility is more promising in terms of success than a delivery service.

**FURTHER READING AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Ensuring the provision of local amenities in rural areas. Impetus for the practice. A publication of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (2014). Download in German available at [http://www.bmub.bund.de/fileadmin/Daten\\_BMU/Pool/Broschueren/nahversorgung\\_laendl\\_raeume\\_broschuere\\_bf.pdf](http://www.bmub.bund.de/fileadmin/Daten_BMU/Pool/Broschueren/nahversorgung_laendl_raeume_broschuere_bf.pdf).

Tante Emma's successors. Buying foodstuff and meeting people. A success story. A publication of Verein für Regionalentwicklung Werra-Meißner e. V. (2011). Download and further information in German can be found at [www.vfr-werra-meissner.de/modell2.html](http://www.vfr-werra-meissner.de/modell2.html).

Village shops in Bavaria. A guideline to establishment and operation. A publication of the Ministry of Economics, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology of the State of Bavaria (2013). Download in German available at [www.stmwi.bayern.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/stmwivt/Publikationen/2014/Der\\_Dorfladen\\_in\\_Bayern.pdf](http://www.stmwi.bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/stmwivt/Publikationen/2014/Der_Dorfladen_in_Bayern.pdf).

Local amenities today. Best practices from Baden-Württemberg. A publication of the trade association of Baden-Württemberg and the Ministry of Economy and Public Finance of Baden-Württemberg (2015). Download in German available at <https://wm.baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/redaktion/m-wm/intern/Publikationen/Wirtschaftsstandort/EHV-Nahversorger-Broschuere.pdf>.

*Examples of village shops*

- Dorfladen-Netzwerk – Federal Association of multi-functional village shops. Further information in German can be found at [www.dorfladen-netzwerk.de/](http://www.dorfladen-netzwerk.de/).
- Practice forum on the provision of local amenities of the service point Vitale Orte 2030 (Federal state of Hesse). Further information in German can be found at [https://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum\\_Nahversorgung.html](https://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum_Nahversorgung.html).
- Dorv\_Konzept – Services and local all-round service. Further information in German can be found at [www.dorv.de/](http://www.dorv.de/).
- MarktTreff Schleswig-Holstein. Further information in German can be found at [www.markttreff-sh.de/](http://www.markttreff-sh.de/).
- tegut shop for everything. Further information in German is available online at [www.tegut.com/aktuell/artikel/das-laedchen-fuer-alles.html](http://www.tegut.com/aktuell/artikel/das-laedchen-fuer-alles.html).

## Mobility/local public transport

### From scheduled bus services to mobility management and flexible services

As mobility is based on the accessibility of technical and social infrastructures, it is considered the key link or foundation for the provision of public services. Consequently, the continuing existence of the facilities is dependent on their accessibility. Today, in rural areas, the passenger car is essential in terms of everyday mobility, i.e. to get to the doctor, supermarket or hairdresser. Those who are not yet or no longer able to drive their own car rather use private ride sharing provided by family members or friends than recurring to local public transport as it is considered less attractive. Surveys in the model regions confirm this. However, in view of demographic change, a growing share of elderly people and the rural migration of young people, in particular, this private form of mobility service is increasingly threatened. Autonomous access to facilities related to the provision of public services cannot be ensured in this form.

Therefore, especially for persons who do not have a motorized vehicle at their disposal, a public and accessible transport system is a requirement of an autonomous life and social inclusion, even more so in the future. That is why the accessibility of facilities on the basis of local public transport is often used as an indicator for the equivalence of living conditions embodied in Basic Law.

### The challenge

Local public transport is a field of the provision of public services that is being strongly subsidized and, in times of tight funds, faces great pressure with regard to the need for action. A major problem that was identified in the model regions is the fact that heavily subsidized school transport services play a very important role in terms of local public transport services in rural areas. Mostly, journeys to central places where schools are located take place early in the morning and return journeys take place in the afternoon. If there is no school, the number of scheduled journeys is significantly lower and the accessibility of smaller towns poor. Moreover, as a result of the growing number of elderly people, there is a significantly different and heterogeneous demand for mobility services. Regions are faced with the challenge to meet the new requirements in view of declining school children numbers and subsidies being eliminated.

### What is to be achieved?

The objective in the model regions is to generally assure mobility in rural areas and corresponding sub-regions as well as improve the accessibility of central places and other infrastructure sites also outside school hours. The focus here is on accessibility without an own car, i.e. using public means of transport.

Such accessibility can be achieved by a number of measures, for example by

- developing future-proof mobility strategies;
- integrating and trialling alternative forms of services;
- developing solutions that are specifically geared toward target groups;
- better connecting and coordinating mobility elements (scheduled transport operations, community buses, shared-use taxis, etc.);
- increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of local systems (e.g. community buses) through regional focus and expansion;
- analysing the neuralgic points more in-depth, i.e. towns where people usually need to or want to come to, as well as gaps in mobility and
- developing measures for areas where the level of provision is not sufficient.

### Who needs to be involved?

As there are interdependencies in terms of making infrastructure services available, setting them up at the local level or consolidating facilities in a central location, problems of accessibility of facilities for the provision of public services cannot be solved by adapting local public transport alone. Moreover, a broad spectrum of participation is desirable in order to facilitate interconnections and synergies, for example with regard to school development planning. Ideally, it is not only the districts as local public transport authorities that are involved. The working groups on mobility/transport in the model regions primarily comprised representatives of the city and municipal authorities, the districts, the planning associations, the local and regional transport operators as well as mayors and representatives of some chambers of industry and commerce and competent federal state authorities. In many regions, in terms of numbers, these were the biggest working groups.

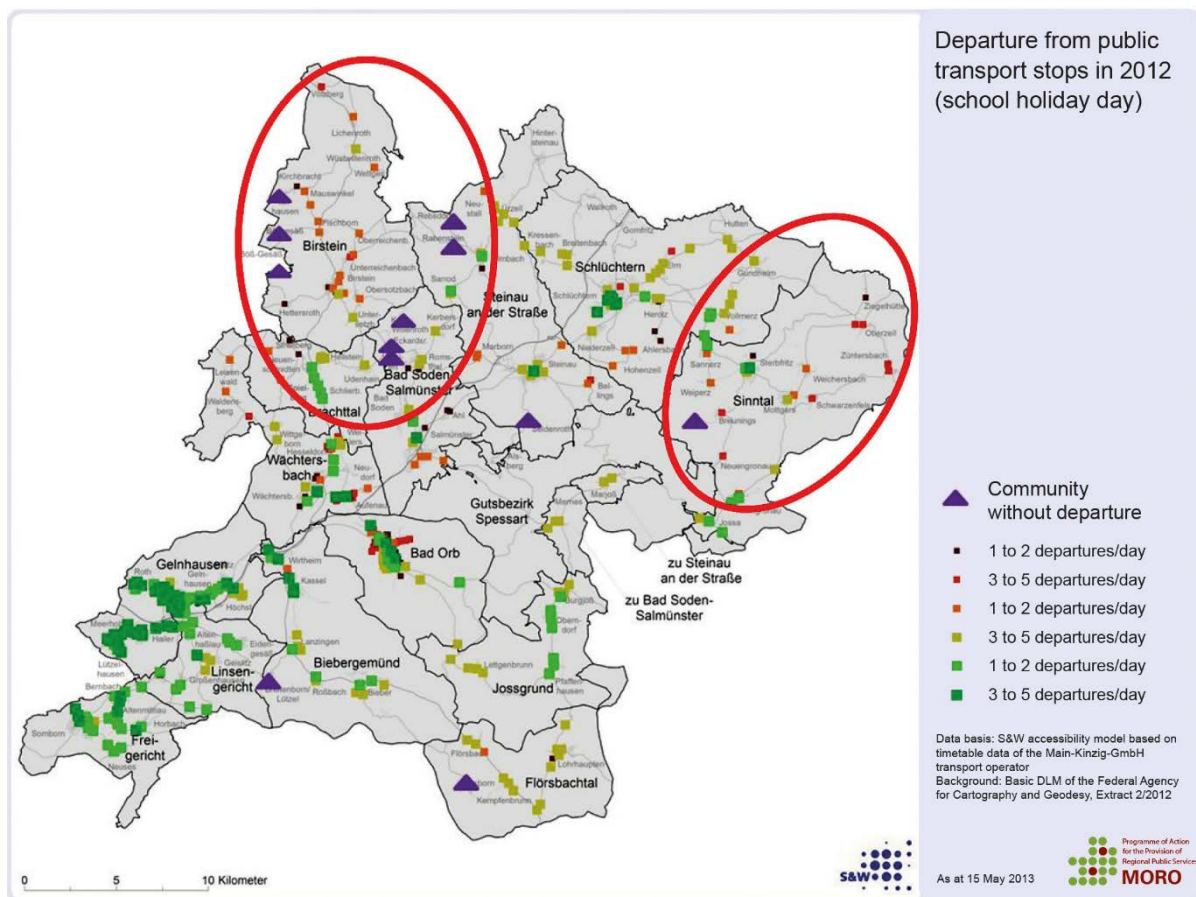


Fig. 25: Bus departure intervals in the SPESSART regional region on school closing days in 2012

Source: Report in German of the Results of the Strategy for the Provision of Public Services at the Regional Level in the SPESSART regional region; p. 54.

## What needs to be done?

Considering the fact that individual services already today can hardly be sustained any longer for economic reasons, there is no question that the existing local public transport services need to be analysed. In the long term, it will no longer be possible to ensure a comprehensive scheduled service.

Accessibility analyses are a fundamental part of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level and, therefore, an important basis for dealing with questions of mobility. However, just as important as model calculations are discussions, qualitative surveys, the collection and analyses of examples of best practice as well as the development and trialling of modified solutions. As the issue of mobility comprises more than just a technical or site-specific infrastructure sphere, there are a number of approaches conceivable.

### *Data collection*

Valuable basic information is available in the form of federal state-specific traffic forecasts, railways' passenger numbers and local public transport data, for example georeferenced stops and digital transport timetables. Such information can also be used to develop accessibility analyses.

### *Surveys and community workshops*

Specific questions on mobility or local public transport can be included in surveys among citizens or households on the issue of the provision of public services at the regional level. For example, the questionnaire of the Merzig-Wadern district contains questions on the availability of vehicles, the number of local public transport users in the household, the quality of the accessibility of public transport of the place of living, the use of private help in the field of transport, modification options in local public transport from a user's perspective (fares, services) and the interest in using alternative transport services. Community workshops are another way of obtaining a differentiated opinion on current mobility services from the point of view of target groups.

### *Analyses*

On the basis of the data collections, it is possible to carry out analyses of the status quo and of strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, overviews of existing alternative service types in the region and on how people make use of them can be established, or activities in ILE/LEADER regions can be combined and presented. The analyses of the present availability of mobility services should also include accessibility analyses for different infrastructures or corresponding sites as well as higher- and middle-order centres within and beyond the region. Taking a look at such neuralgic points, i.e. towns where people usually need to or want to come to, can help to set priorities. In the Mitte Niedersachsen region, access to all facilities that are required to organize one's life in the region was taken as a basis for assessing the quality of mobility in the context of the provision of public services. For example, accessibility analyses were used to develop maps with the departure times from stops at a maximum distance of 75 minutes from middle-order centres, differentiated by working days as well as by school and holiday periods.

The result of the analyses in the Mitte Niedersachsen region was that what is required is not an expansion of traditional forms of local public transport but rather new models and interconnections that allow for meeting the needs of the changing framework conditions. There will also be a significant shift with regard to the focus of local public transport, away from pupils and towards elderly people, trainees, the poor and dissidents. Moreover, supra-regional connections need to be ensured, and new complementary mobility models are required to provide access to poorly connected areas at a small scale in particular. To this end, on the one hand, a network of strong regional public transport routes was defined. On the other hand, regional fields of action in the sense of areas for action to

ensure and complement mobility were identified and are to be used in the context of the pilot projects to develop detailed accessibility and connectivity options, taking particular account of the resource sharing approach.

### *Scenarios*

For a more profound analysis, it is also possible to make use of scenarios in the working groups. For example, in the Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge region, three scenarios for the future development of mobility services have been established:

- status quo scenario (= keep up existing system of routes)
- optimized scenario (= optimization existing system of routes)
- modernized scenario (= changeover to interval system with routes as demand requires)

The framework conditions for all three scenarios are identical: population figures in the model regions are declining and, at the same time, there is a change in the distribution of the population. The number of elderly persons is increasing, and the number of pupils is declining.

### **Which options for action are there?**

On the one hand, sound mobility services need to be developed on the basis of the analyses and scenarios which take account of demographic developments and are based on needs; on the other hand, modern mobility strategies are required that include all modes of transport and make use of the advantages of new media.

Most of the strategies and solution approaches can be classified according to one of four priorities:

- strong network of basic routes,
- expansion of complementary mobility services,
- linking-up different services inclusive of mobility management and
- developing new user groups.

The addressees of the recommendations for action are primarily the districts as responsible bodies and the transport operators as service providers. But there are also other addressees: the municipalities, the federal states and voluntary initiatives who play an increasingly important role when it comes to the development of new mobility services.

### *Accessibility of centres/strong routes*

A basic network of powerful regional public transport bus and train routes is to guarantee fast access at the supra-regional and internal level, for example also between regional centres, and ensure connections with regional centres. In the Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge region, apart from high-speed links, reliable and centrally-located transfer points are to be established in the municipalities' main villages. In these villages, a range of public services is to be consolidated and provided to the people in community centres/multi-purpose houses. In the strategies, the basic or main networks with fast routes and frequent as well as regular services are enriched by complementary networks, potential areas or areas for action to ensure and complement mobility where different forms of alternative services are trialled and other standards are to be applied, e.g. with regard to the frequency of services. In addition to the regular main and complementary networks, the ServiceBus principle can help to optimize capacity utilization and improve the services offered. School transport services can also be optimized by coordinating school hours with local public transport. One option in this context would be regular meetings between schools and transport operators where service schedules are discussed.

### Complementary mobility services

Complementary mobility services are to be established and trialled to make also poorly connected areas at a small scale accessible. This can be achieved by making use of the well-known flexible services that are already established in many places: scheduled dial-a-bus, dial-a-bus or shared-use taxi services. As regards the new types of multi-purpose transports, e.g. combination buses, voluntary or privately organized community buses or local and regional ride share platforms, it is recommended to seek their deliberate integration or transfer experience from (model) projects in the region or other places. The federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalen, for example, offers competent advice in the form of a registered association (Bürgerbus e.V.).

The role of civic engagement, e.g. neighbourly help, ride share or voluntary mobility services, is increasingly emphasized when it comes to ensuring mobility. The idea of the sharing economy, e.g. in the form of car sharing, is becoming increasingly popular also in rural areas. For example, in some rural areas the private web-based agency service "flinc" already cooperates with local public transport services by road.

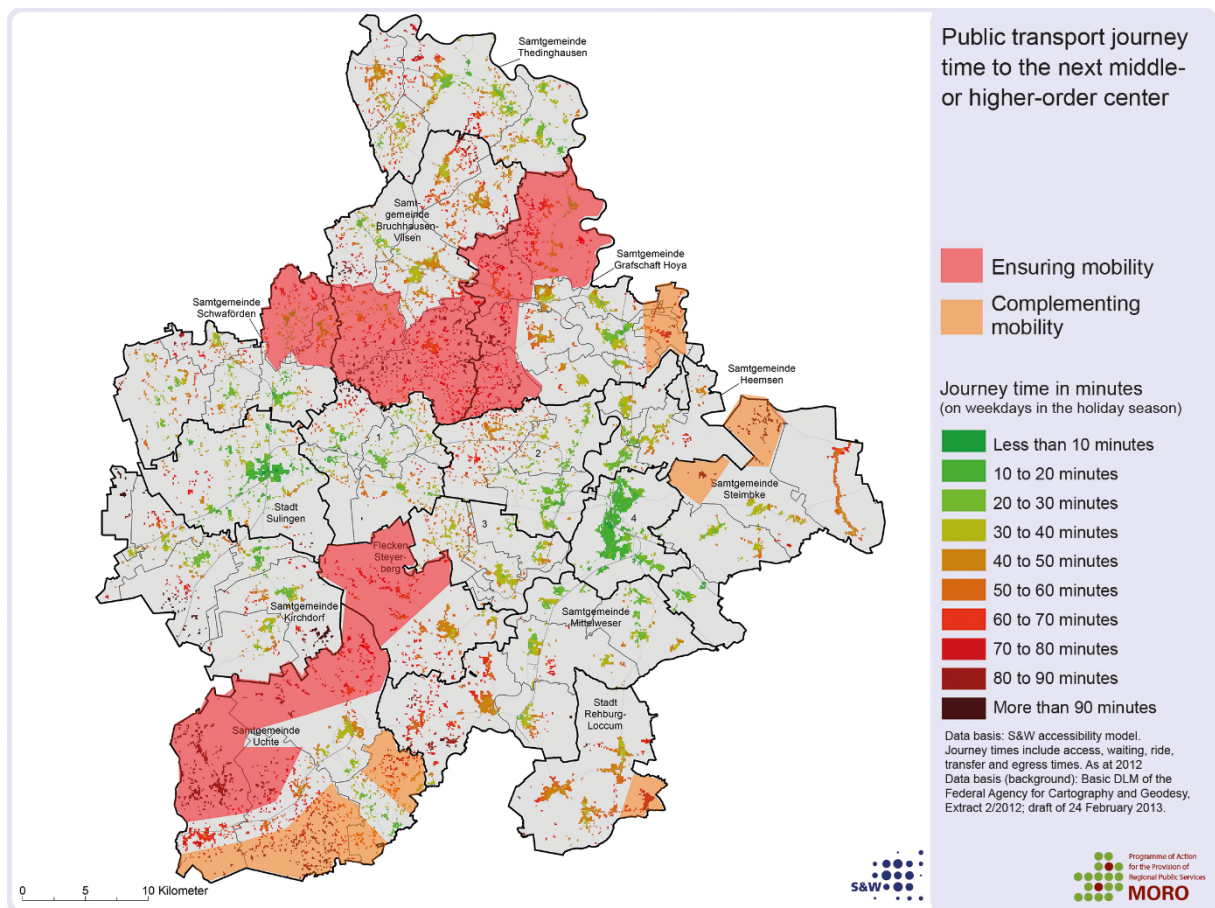


Fig. 26: Fields of action to ensure and complement mobility services in the Mitte Niedersachsen region

Source: Mitte Niedersachsen strategy at the regional level (S&W), p. 33.

Depending on the topographical and climatic conditions, an increased use of bicycles or electric bicycles and their closer integration in the mobility chain may be an objective. Recommendations for action, for example, are to complement bus/shared-use taxi services with bicycles, make it possible to take bicycles with you in buses, create electric bicycle parking and charging facilities, establish electric bicycle rentals or expand bicycle lanes along major transport routes.

*Connect different services*

Coordination of individual services, connecting different modes of transport, integrated intervals, establishing points of connection and mobility management are of particular importance in this context. It will be necessary to establish mobility platforms, advice centres or local mobility managers for this purpose and take account of new forms of mobility such as car sharing, village cars, carpooling, ride sharing, community bus services and electric bicycles. The provision of mobility advice can be combined with other facilities, e.g. family centres or citizens' aid centres.

*Develop new user groups*

Another accompanying measure to improve the capacity utilization of local public transport is the development of new groups of users, e.g. tourists and elderly persons. When the number of users of local public transport is to be raised, alternative forms of mobility are to be established or a mobility platform is to be developed, the importance of motivating public relations work and the provision of information cannot be underestimated. Often, suitable measures are required to make local public transport an option for elderly people. An important aspect of the development of new user groups is also to make transport infrastructure accessible to or improve the accessibility of transport infrastructure for user groups with different levels of handicaps, for example people with disabilities, elderly people or families with prams.



## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

### *Resource-sharing*

The aim of the project was to improve and strengthen public mobility services in the sense of alternative local public transport services in the Mitte Niedersachsen region by making more efficient use of the capacities of public or semi-public vehicles which are not used to full capacity or not used at all; in addition focus was to be shifted to incident-related journeys and the establishment of a new kind of service to complement existing scheduled transport. In a feasibility study, the corresponding potential was analysed and business as well as legal aspects were clarified. Some new mobility services based on the idea of resource-sharing have already been trialled in practice, for example the "pool bus", where the local fire brigade would offer a transport for young people to the pool in the neighbouring town in summer time. Using a coordination software, the approach might be further developed into an overall intermodal system at the regional level.

### *Mobilfalt and Garantiert mobil!*

"Mobilfalt" and "Garantiert mobil!" are two model projects from the federal state of Hesse where unused capacities of private passenger cars are integrated in public transport services as an alternative form of service and help to make public transport services available at any time, at a comprehensive scale and in a cost-covering manner. While the Odenwald district's "Garantiert mobil!" system features a single standard fare that is applicable to all means of transport and the integration in the area-wide service has been realized with PBefG (Personenbeförderungsgesetz, Carriage of Passengers Act) authorization, persons using the "Mobilfalt" service of the Transport Association of Nordhessen are required to pay a comfort surcharge of 1 Euro per ride with a private service provider. The guarantee of mobility is to be upheld by means of commercial substitute transportation if there is no private service available. Both approaches make extensive conceptual preliminary considerations necessary, legal obstacles are to be overcome and, in some cases, exemption permits are required. More information in German is available online at [www.mobilfalt.de](http://www.mobilfalt.de) and at [www.odenwaldmobil.de](http://www.odenwaldmobil.de).

## TIP

Many regions and initiatives, when developing new mobility services, are exploring intermediate areas of private ride services and commercial passenger transport. According to the expert working group on mobility of the programme of action, it is important to remain very determined in approval procedures and make full use of the regulatory framework. In addition, federal state ministries may be asked to support an idea or project. It is very much recommended to take due account of the long periods required to implement and establish new mobility services as well as to integrate such services in a targeted manner in the time windows which are created by updating the local transport plan. For the new services to become known and adopted by potential users, extensive efforts are required to promote their acceptance, and enough time and resources need to be planned for.

**FURTHER READING**

Ensuring the provision of goods and services by means of regional coordination of local public transport and service strategies. An online publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (10/2015). Download in German available at [www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/dl-bmvi-online-10-15.pdf](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/dl-bmvi-online-10-15.pdf).

Ensuring the long-term provision of services as well as mobility in rural areas – a strategy for implementation taking the Nordfriesland district as an example. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2013). Download in German available at <http://www.bmvi.de/SharedDocs/DE/Artikel/G/versorgung-und-mobilitaet-in-laendlichen-raeumen.html>.

Adaptation strategies for the provision of public services at the regional level. Recommendations by specialist working groups on mobility, general practitioners as well as age and education. MORO Praxis 2/2015. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2015). Download in German available at [www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556).

Everyday mobility of families – challenges and recommendations for action. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2015). Download in German available at <https://www.bmvi.de/SharedDocs/DE/Publikationen/LA/familienmobilitaet-im-alltag-herausforderungen-und-handlungsempfehlungen.html>.

Manual on flexible service planning in local public transport. A contribution to ensuring the provision of public services in low-demand areas. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (2009). Download in German available at [http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVBS/Sonderveroeffentlichungen/2009/DL\\_HandbuchPlanungNeu.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVBS/Sonderveroeffentlichungen/2009/DL_HandbuchPlanungNeu.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2).

Ensuring mobility in times of demographic change. Innovative approaches for action and practical examples from rural areas in Germany. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (2012). Download in German available at <http://www.bmvi.de/SharedDocs/DE/Publikationen/G/mobilitaetssicherung.html>.

Active and mobile – guideline on the mobility of elderly people. A publication of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Planning of the State of Brandenburg (2013). Download in German available at [www.mil.brandenburg.de/media\\_fast/4055/Aktiv-und-Mobil\\_2013\\_Internet.pdf](http://www.mil.brandenburg.de/media_fast/4055/Aktiv-und-Mobil_2013_Internet.pdf).

## Settlement development/vacancy rates

### Revitalization of town centres vs. demolition

Empty buildings, deserted town centres, unattractive town views – these are phenomena that are experienced more and more often in rural communities as a direct consequence of population decline. At the same time, there is a lack of space for new developments and buildings that can be adapted to the needs of young families. Despite vacancies in town centres, new construction sites are often designated at urban fringes. As a consequence, land take is increased and additional functions in town centres are lost.

Demographic change has an immediate impact on settlement development. Less people in municipalities and villages lead to a decrease in the demand for residential property and, in particular, existing properties. If there are no adjustments or if they fall short,

- the result is a growing surplus of residential property which, because of the designation of additional building sites, is increasing even more and causes prices and houses values to drop immediately.
- This threatens to start downward spirals. If property values are falling, certain investments in rehabilitation schemes are no longer worthwhile in financial terms. The result is a further increase in residential building vacancies as well as in commercial and junk real estate and, ultimately, unattractive town views are created.
- Moreover, as a result of vacancy rates, municipalities need to pay more for maintaining technical infrastructures such as canal networks that are no longer used to the originally planned extent.

These phenomena are evident in varying degrees depending on the municipality of a region. However, vacancy rates can still be considered a regional problem. Against this background it is only logical to deal with the issue of settlement development also in the context of a strategy for the provision of public services at the regional level. Therefore, the working groups in the model regions of the action programme, inter alia, dealt with the following topics: “strategic management of vacant properties”, “settlement and site management”, “development of settlement areas” or “inner urban development”. Aspects of living in old age or age- or senior citizen-appropriate living are dealt with in the chapter on “long-term care/senior citizens/living in later life”.

### What is to be achieved?

The working groups on settlement development, inter alia, deal with the following questions:

- What can be done to revitalize city or town centres and reinforce inner urban development in a targeted manner (also with a view to other sectors of infrastructure such as water/waste water, education, medical care)?
- How can solutions for the conversion of vacant properties be designed in terms of concept, legal framework and funding?
- What are the criteria for demolition, how can this be implemented and funded?

The objective is to maintain or restore the attractiveness of places and make towns and villages livable also in the future.

One objective of the working groups can be to strengthen inner urban areas and counter potential or increasing vacancy rates. This means that existing properties are used for a specific purpose or are reused by converting them, that they are redeveloped – but also demolition, make available land and use former wasteland for the new construction of residential and commercial buildings based on needs as well as complementary infrastructure development (gardens, free space, parking facilities, etc.). The objective is to ensure that the best chances with

regard to inner urban development are seized in the form of local points of identification, meeting and/or provision of services. The shrinkage process should be based on plans. This includes also cross local authority collaboration with a view to the development of building land and settlements, a cross local authority strategy in terms of land development and promotion as well as the reinforcement of inner urban development that is to be prioritized over the development of outer areas.

### **Who should be involved?**

Obviously, it is in particular actors from the local government level that should be involved in the working groups as the majority of issues is closely linked to municipal planning competence. In addition, it is a good idea to include

- representatives of the district administrations (e.g. the special service for rural areas, the special service for building codes, the department for transport/building, the department for district development and the office for land management),
- representatives of the regional planning offices,
- actors with construction and planning knowledge (regional companies from the construction sector, architects, urban planners, housing companies, property agents),
- representatives of federal state authorities (e.g. Federal State Office for Spatial Information and Rural Development),
- representatives of local banks and savings banks as well as of economic development agencies and
- representatives of the federal state ministries responsible for regional planning or of the regional commissioner's office.

### **What needs to be done?**

In order to address this issue, make analyses and develop strategies, a systematic approach at the regional and municipal level is recommended. With regard to the development of strategies and the determination of specific measures, in particular, it is a good idea to work at community or object level. To this end, the model regions have chosen model municipalities or communities. In terms of basic methodological elements, it is probably the small-scale population forecast and the development of scenarios that are most suitable.

#### *Regional level:*

- Determining vacancy rate of the entire region
- Assessing current vacancy situation in the region/district
- Scenario "future development of vacancy rates" at the regional level
- Developing strategies and options for action at the regional level
- Providing assistance to municipalities

#### *Municipal level:*

- Determining vacancy rate/assessment of current vacancy situation in the municipality and in the communities
- Scenario "future development" of vacancy rates at municipal/community level
- Registering individual buildings with registration form
- Assessing utilization options of individual buildings
- Strategies, options for action and instruments for the municipal level and the individual communities
- Specific measures at the community level and at the level of individual buildings

*Determination of vacancy rates at the regional/municipal level*

To register vacancy rates, present utilizations of properties and gap sites in a uniform manner and with regard to the extrapolating of the data, own instruments and methods can be developed or existing instruments of federal state institutions such as the "Gap Sites and Vacancy Inventory" can be used. Another option is to adapt such instruments and methods to specific individual needs. For example, it would also be possible to identify buildings that might become available in the future by determining the buildings where elderly persons are living (e.g. persons of more than 70 years of age). However, the integration of data from the residents registration office, for example the age of people living in a house, for reasons of data protection, should only be allowed for internal administrative purposes of the corresponding municipality. Another option with regard to the determination of vacancy rates would be to create data overlaps of residents' registration office information and water consumption figures.

*Determination of municipal vacancy rates, determination of individual buildings with registration form*

To register individual buildings on the ground, a registration form is a well suited measure. It can comprise the following categories: Space characteristics, site properties, building fabric (refurbishment requirements), social indicator (ownership situation), heritage conservation and overall assessment of utilization potentials.

*Assessment of current vacancy situation in the region/district*

By registering the situation on the basis of uniform criteria, a comparison for the whole region can be made; for example, the towns and/or villages can be identified where problems are currently worst.

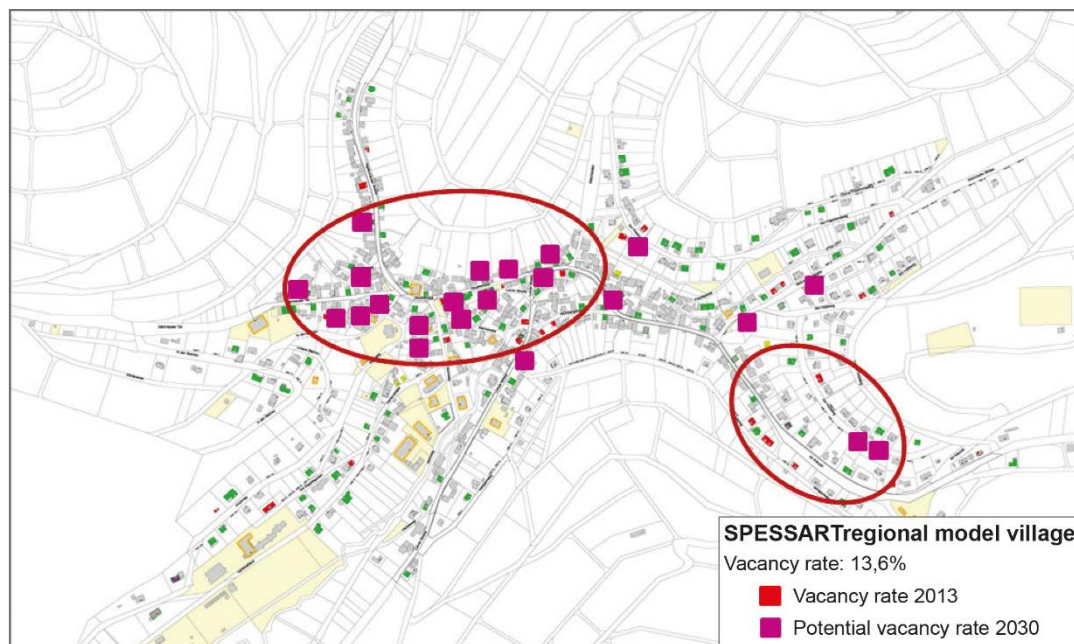


Fig. 27: Forecast of vacancy rates in a model town of the SPESART regional region

Source: Report in German of the Results of the Strategy for the Provision of Public Services at the Regional Level in the SPESART regional region (Office of Land Management), p. 68.

To achieve this, a vacancy rate can be established by comparing the number of empty and inhabited objects or households, and, on this basis, an early warning system can be established. With a "traffic light system", the need for action can be visualized: from a normal vacancy rate (< 5 %) without an imminent need for action to an alarming vacancy rate (> 20 %) with an urgent and extensive structural need for action.

### *Assessment of use options for individual buildings*

Based on the registration forms, the objects can be assessed with regard to their conversion potential. Possible categories are:

- High potential of conversion/preservation,
- inherent potential,
- further information might be required,
- hardly convertible.

### *Scenarios*

Through superimposing current vacancy rates and the small scale population forecast (in particular: the age structure), the risk of future vacancies can be forecast and depicted in a cartographic illustration by means of a scenario for the "future development of vacancy rates". Another possibility would be to compare different options for action (see below), where certain parameters in categories such as problems, framework conditions and elements are represented, with one another and compare these possibilities with the trend scenario of "business as usual", as was the case in the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district.

## **What options for action are there?**

Following the strategies and recommendations for action that were formulated for the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district, there are four core fields:

### *Inner development before outer development*

This means that the development of existing building stock, i.e. inner urban development, is to be prioritized over the designation of new construction areas, and new construction areas that are absolutely essential to meet requirements are to be designated in inner areas.

### *Coordinated land development*

In order to avoid competition, the land development of neighbouring municipalities is to be coordinated in the future. To this end, a pool of commercial and residential areas including problematic properties can be set-up and the corresponding promotion activities can be coordinated. It is also important to establish a continuous monitoring of the development of vacancy rates which allows forecasting vacancy rates or settlement development costs. Cross local authority collaboration would also be conceivable with regard to industrial areas.

### *Manage demolition*

Urban development objectives should be set to make use of the chances arising from the reduction in needs, for example the development of free space in inner areas, and, as a consequence, upvalue the neighbouring stock of existing properties. Moreover, framework plans for managing demolition should be developed, if necessary in the form of model framework plans. At the municipal level, conversion measures or measures aimed at the demolition of buildings, the reshaping of green space and the course of routes should be initiated. An overview of the available instruments and funding programmes for municipalities can facilitate the implementation. Moreover, it is helpful to identify development and funding concepts suitable for the implementation of the measures.

*Availability of land*

To develop towns and villages, urban development and building law instruments should be used to make available real estate sites, and funds for compensatory measures should be used to acquire real estate sites with the objective of converting them.

In the municipalities, an overall objective with regard to settlement development should be set. Using the potentials of the individual objects and vacancy rate forecasts, a masterplan for the development of the overall inner urban in the individual communities can be developed. As regards the development of concepts for (follow-up) use, in particular of public buildings with a key visual impact on the town or city, besides municipal representatives, representatives of villages, potential users and investors, but also citizens should be included. Community workshops with experts, for example architects and urban planners, like those held in the sense of workshops to generate ideas in the Nordeifel model region, can be a suitable instrument for the participation of citizens. The special challenge is that properties are usually owned by private persons, and, therefore, the potential for action and development needs to be analysed for each individual case. What could be a meaningful follow-up utilization needs to be determined based on the conditions on the ground. There is no one-fits-all solution.

*Raise awareness*

Mayors, but also the general public, should be made aware of the issue of settlement development and its consequences. This can be achieved by making use of early warning systems on the problem of vacant properties or a "consequential costs calculator" for new building sites. Further options are taking part in relevant events, such as the 30 Hektar day, or realizing own campaigns to raise public awareness. Besides raising awareness, they can also contribute to a marketing or conversion campaign. Campaigns such as the series of events entitled "Freiraum gestalten" in the Spessart model region direct awareness also to existing potentials: The campaign day "Leerstand in Bad Orb" featured a number of activities that related to the issue of empty commercial premises along the former pedestrian precinct. As a result, the number of empty shops could be reduced and social cohesion between neighbours, owners and traders was increased. To raise awareness, an extensive media coverage which accompanies the whole process is also very important.

*Assistance*

Municipalities are responsible for managing vacant properties and developing inner urban space. However, districts can assume responsibilities with regard to the area-wide monitoring and can provide assistance to municipalities to help them deal with the issue of vacancies in a future-oriented way. For example, knowledge about a systematic approach can be transmitted (as happened in the Spessart region), or a catalogue with instruments used to make properties available online can be provided (like in the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district).

Web-based platforms, such as a property or building gap exchange, which was used in the Nordeifel region, are another instrument. This is also a good way to provide examples of good practice of the conversion of properties, options for the conversion of empty buildings in village centres as well as information on contact persons, advisers, craftsmen, architects, funders, etc.

Setting up a central point of contact on part of the federal state or district is another option to provide professional support to municipalities with regard to the promotion and conversion of buildings and space.

Moreover, rent payments for formerly unused commercial properties can be arranged flexibly, or young entrepreneurs can be supported by offering a probationary period in spatially delimited areas of village centres.

## FURTHER READING AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

### *Selected land management tools*

- Gap sites and vacancy inventory of Lower Saxony. A guideline for the development of a gap site and vacancy inventory with registration forms and practical examples. A publication of the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung (LGLN) (2013). Download in German available at [http://www.lgln.niedersachsen.de/geodaten\\_karten/bauluecken--und-leerstandskataster-111411.html](http://www.lgln.niedersachsen.de/geodaten_karten/bauluecken--und-leerstandskataster-111411.html).
- Land management tool for municipalities of the State Institute for the Environment, Measurements and Nature Conservation of Baden-Württemberg. Information in German available at <http://www4.lubw.baden-wuerttemberg.de/servlet/is/218260/>
- Follow-up cost calculator – what is the price of my building site? A publication of Gertz Gutsche Rümenapp (GGR). Information in German available at [www.folgekostenrechner.was-kostet-mein-baugebiet.de](http://www.folgekostenrechner.was-kostet-mein-baugebiet.de).

### *Manuals*

- Manual on active inner urban development. Results of the model project “Conversion instead of growth”. A publication of Regionale Entwicklungskooperation Weserbergland plus (2012). Download in German available at [www.rek-weserbergland.de/uploads/media/Handbuch\\_aktive\\_Innenentwicklung\\_01.pdf](http://www.rek-weserbergland.de/uploads/media/Handbuch_aktive_Innenentwicklung_01.pdf).
- Catalogue of potential instruments on the activation of inner-urban construction potential with a particular focus on decaying properties. A publication of the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district (2013). Download in German available at [www.hef-rof.de/images/demographie/2013-Katalog\\_Instrumente\\_Innenentwicklung.pdf](http://www.hef-rof.de/images/demographie/2013-Katalog_Instrumente_Innenentwicklung.pdf).
- Decaying properties – a guideline on the use of legal instruments for the dealing with decaying properties – “junk real estate”. A publication of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (2014). Download in German available at [http://www.bmub.bund.de/fileadmin/Daten\\_BMU/Pool/Broschueren/verwaerloste\\_immobilien\\_broschuere\\_bf.pdf](http://www.bmub.bund.de/fileadmin/Daten_BMU/Pool/Broschueren/verwaerloste_immobilien_broschuere_bf.pdf).

### *Projects*

There is a number of nationwide competitions and model projects that dealt with vacancy rates and inner urban development in rural municipalities. The respective data bases contain a whole range of good examples of projects:

- Competition “People and success. Actively improving rural infrastructures.” Further information in German can be found at [www.menschenunderfolge.de](http://www.menschenunderfolge.de).
- Competition “Vital villages! Shaping the Conversion.” Further information in German can be found at [www.asg-goe.de/wettbewerb.shtml](http://www.asg-goe.de/wettbewerb.shtml).
- WerkstattStadt – A project database of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development featuring innovative projects from urban development practice in Germany. The database can be searched by urban development areas for action, types of area and types of measures. Further information in German can be found at [www.werkstatt-stadt.de/de/projekte/](http://www.werkstatt-stadt.de/de/projekte/).
- “Active city and neighbourhood centres” and “Smaller towns and communities” programmes. German project databases are available at [www.staedtebaufoerderung.info](http://www.staedtebaufoerderung.info).



## Water supply and waste water disposal

### Concentration vs. decentralization

In Germany, the provision of potable water is an obligatory responsibility of cities and municipalities. Either the cities and municipalities assume the responsibility themselves under public law or they transfer it to companies which are organized under private law. Smaller cities and municipalities in rural areas have often established a joint authority for the provision of potable water.

Besides an increasing environmental awareness and new developments in domestic and sanitary technology, demographic change and, in particular, the decline in the population, are responsible for the continuing decline in the consumption of potable water.

Decreasing sales volumes of potable water and long supply and transport pipes (which are found in almost every part of Germany) in combination with oversized cross sections result in ever slower flow velocities, in particular in areas affected by population decline, and the potable water remains in the network for a longer period of time. As a consequence, the risk of odours or germs hazardous to health increases sometimes significantly.

In rural areas, it is more and more common that several days pass between the feeding-in of potable water at the water works and its use in households. As a consequence, additional or more frequent cleaning intervals as well as other measures are required, e.g. chlorination to disinfect potable water or rinsing of pipes. The wastewater infrastructure faces similar problems. As a result of a central waste water disposal system (compulsory connection and use), in rural and sparsely populated regions, in particular, the required effort per user for maintaining the pipes is increased. To prevent technical problems and odours because of below-capacity utilization, here, too, providers must take additional cost-relevant measures. The problem is aggravated by the decline in the population.

As a result of the current development in the area of potable water supply and waste water disposal, many municipalities are faced with great pressure to act. The reason for this is what is designated as "cost stickiness", i.e. the interdependency between a decline in the population and a pipeline infrastructure that is not very flexible which, in turn, leads to an increase in costs.

In some sub-regions, the potable water supply and wastewater disposal systems are already used below capacity. However, as a consequence of depreciations, interest payments, personnel costs and services purchased, for example energy, the water industry is characterized by a very high share of fixed costs between 75 % and 85 % – independent of the number of users connected to the system. Accordingly, less and less people must fund the same infrastructure while the consumption is declining, i.e. the per-capita amount or the per-capita length of infrastructure increases.

Adaptations and the need for reform are not just caused by demographic change, but also by increasing requirements made on part of the EU (e.g. Water Framework Directive), the federal government and the federal states. As a result, adaptations, refurbishments, modernization or different disposal systems are necessary. Because depreciation periods are long, there are generally no short-term options for action; the same applies to contract life cycles with the respective disposal companies.

In the model regions of the action programme that dealt with the wastewater issue, it was found that it would not be possible to maintain the current comprehensive system of centralized disposal, in particular because of economic aspects. Structurally weaker rural areas, which are particularly affected by demographic change, have reached their technological and economic limits in terms of wastewater disposal, and some have already them.

### **What needs to be done?**

The focus of the working groups on the issues of potable water supply and wastewater disposal was on the ability of the corresponding infrastructure to meet the challenges of the future and on optimizing this infrastructure. For example, strategies are to be developed how, on the one hand, the required waste water disposal services can be adapted to a changing population structure and how, on the other hand, the standards required to protect the environment can be maintained and possibly even upgraded.

Accordingly, the working group in the Uckermark district was asked to come up with possible actions to remedy the existing and increasing below-capacity utilization of pipes and installations and counteract an explosion of costs. Questions raised were:

- Where do semi-central/decentral structures in rural areas offer the chance to maintain the water supply and disposal in a cost-effective manner?
- How is the current connection rate in the different settlement structures to be assessed in quantitative and qualitative terms?
- Where are installations that need to be refurbished or converted?
- Where does the development of the population impact the operation of the installations?
- How do fixed costs for consumers develop in view of an increasing below-capacity utilization?
- What alternative funding models are conceivable?
- Will it be possible to uphold current quality standards also in the future?

### **Who should be involved?**

In the working groups, representatives of the competent municipal and district authorities, mayors, operators of installations, for example joint authorities for the provision of potable water or the disposal of wastewater and the local lower water authority should be involved. It is also a good idea to cooperate with institutions from the field of housing, for example municipal and other housing companies, the registered association of German land users or tenants associations. Moreover, banks or universities with corresponding chairs might be involved.

### **What procedure should be chosen?**

The ideal-typical procedure from the strategy at the regional level is only partially suitable for application with grid-bound infrastructures. As regards methodological elements, it is especially the small-scale population forecasts, site surveys, adaptation scenarios and cost considerations that can be applied. Moreover, case studies (awarded to external service providers) can be used. Putting the focus on exemplary sites has proven its worth in this context, in particular with regard to strategy development and scenarios. Here, a number of approaches is conceivable.

For two (or more) municipalities, different strategies – a concentration model (expansion of the wastewater catchment area) and a decentralization model – are to be considered, together with model calculations and cost-benefit analyses.

However, it is also possible to take a look at the respective district as a whole, for example with a view to the waste water disposal challenges of the future. Apart from the location of public sewage plants, the corresponding catchment areas, population figures/capacity of the installation, the year of manufacture, type of treatment or oxygen-nutrient requirements from the last two years can be established.

Or, like in the Spessart region, an integrated status analysis can be carried out which comprises the infrastructure installations in the model region as well as the individual price models of the provision of potable and the disposal

of waste water in the municipalities. A survey among the local lower water authority, municipal administrations or competent enterprises for the provision of potable and the disposal of wastewater can be a good idea to do this. Other data sources used are the analysed self-control reports of 2011, the overview of potable water and wastewater costs in the federal state of Hesse of the years 2005 to 2012 as well as the charges monitors of the municipalities. The locations of sewage treatment plants can be georeferenced and represented cartographically. This makes it possible for a municipality, for example, to establish the length of the canals or the development of prices for the provision of potable or the disposal of wastewater. In a second step, a forecast can be established that takes account of the expected demographic changes and incorporates the results of the small-scale population forecast.

On this basis, different exemplary calculations and trend scenarios can be established. For example, the development of canal meters per inhabitant between today and 2030, the development of the capacity utilization of sewage treatment plants between today and 2030 or the development of prices for the provision of potable or the disposal of wastewater per m<sup>3</sup> can be forecast taking account of demographic change (e.g. cost increases, development of capacity utilization degrees).

In the field of waste water disposal, different adaption options were compared by means of scenarios in the districts of Uckermark, Hersfeld-Rotenburg and Vogelsbergkreis, for example semi-central or decentral structures, withdrawal from rural areas at certain sites, flexibilization of standards or concentration and decentralization of specific sites.

The perfect process sequence for dealing with this issue step by step is presented in a guideline that has been established based on experience gained in the model regions of the federal state of Hesse:

- 1) Analyses of the status quo from the perspective of urban development (settlement, usage and population structures) as well as from the perspective of water supply and waste water management (e.g. types and quantities of waste water, condition of canal network, waste water treatment installations)
- 2) Data analysis
- 3) Forecast models "urban development/water supply and waste water management", scenarios (adaptation, demolition, etc.)
- 4) Comparison of forecast models "urban development/water supply and waste water management" based on different criteria
- 5) Minimum criterion "meeting the requirements with regard to the protection of the aquatic environment"
- 6) Identification of greatest conformance
- 7) Development model (element-based development strategy for adapting the waste water disposal infrastructure to the expected decline in the population in the analysed municipality)
- 8) Catalogues of measures (specific to the fields of urban development/water supply and waste water management for the implementation of the strategy)

### **Approaches, possibilities for action, examples of good practice**

On the one hand, the recommendations for action of the model regions are directed towards regional actors and municipalities, on the other hand, they also address the legislative level, i.e. the federal states, the federal government or the EU.

In general, it is important to raise or increase awareness among policymakers and the population. Moreover, because of long contract terms and very long depreciation periods, possibilities for action arise only after longer periods of time which is why they need to be identified and used early in time at the municipal level. From the

perspective of the model regions, there is no solution in principle with regard to the decentralization or centralization, for example of wastewater treatment plants in rural areas. The best solution will always depend on the requirements and boundary conditions on the ground. Every individual case needs to be reviewed thoroughly from a legal and economic point of view. Possibilities for adapting the potable water or wastewater infrastructure exist in terms of collaborations between local authorities, institutions or small-scale solutions.

With regard to the cooperation approach, where, for example, one or more consortia are established or a pool of several wastewater associations is formed, the following elements can be distinguished:

Analyses of the possibility of establishing a concentration model with neighbouring municipalities for all sites with a modernization backlog or investment needs,

Municipalities with larger facilities and corresponding personnel can provide competencies and services to neighbouring municipalities, for example in terms of monitoring and maintenance of sewage treatment plants, or an informal exchange and transfer of knowledge between actors can be initiated.

Small-scale solutions, for example, mean that communities with a low wastewater share are disconnected and small size sewage treatment plants established which are administered by the municipalities. In this case, it must be analysed to which municipalities and communities these solutions might possibly be transferred. Where households are not yet connected to a central wastewater disposal system, it could be assessed whether connecting households makes sense at all. In rural regions and areas where depopulation for demographic reasons comes into effect, infrastructure planning should include a demographic check aimed at inverting the logic of compulsory connection by first verifying possible decentralized options for each household that has not yet been connected.

Urban demolition scenarios

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Criterion					
Preserve local identity	1	2	1	2	2
Account for heritage conservation areas	1	1	1	2	2
Account for state of buildings	-2	2	2	1	2
Preserve neighborhoods	-2	1	1	2	1
Preserve minimum number of inhabitants	-2	2	2	2	2
Possibility for self-development	-2	2	2	2	2
Comparison with population development	-2	2	0	-1	-2
Improve aquatic environment protection	2	2	2	-2	-2
Advance urban density	2	1	1	1	-2
Ranking	-4	15	12	9	5

Fig. 28: Example of a value in-use analysis of urban development variants as a basis for decision with regard to the planned development of a village

Source: A guideline on strategies for adaptation of the waste water infrastructure to declining population figures in rural areas in the framework of the MORO spatial planning pilot project in the Vogelsbergkreis district, Full version (Peter Jahnen, Ulf Theilen/Mittelhessen Institute of Technology, TransMIT-GmbH), p. 100.  
> Graphical representation of five alternative scenarios, list of decision-making criteria, assessment of individual criteria, assessment of scenarios (without weighting of criteria).

Potential models are:

- decentralized separating system with decentralized downward rain water movement and decentralized sewage treatment plant (micro sewage treatment plants < 50 inhabitants and small waste water treatment plants > 50 inhabitants)
- Non-conventional sanitary systems (NASS) in a part of the village with dual material flow separation systems
- Group solutions, i.e. several neighbours share one small size sewage treatment plant. One approach might be the "central operation of decentralized installations", for example by a third party such as the joint authority for wastewater disposal (e.g. Treptitz).

Another option would be to make use of synergies with the energy sector. This would make it possible to analyse the potential of sewage treatment plants in terms of energy generation (e.g. use of waste heat or fermentation gas) and possibly make use of that potential. However, this is often associated with high investments costs, which is why solutions of this kind – against the background of possible changes of the legal framework conditions (e.g. Renewable Energy (Amendment) Act) – need to be pondered carefully.

### **Barriers, obstacles, standards**

In view of demographic change, a broad strategic change from a centralized to a decentralized system makes sense from a technical as well as from an economic point of view. However, there are several obstacles to such change. For example, compulsory connection and use very considerably limit the choice of alternative disposal variants such as small size sewage treatment plants or soakaways. This problem does not occur when new residential areas are designated and houses need to be connected for the first time. Here, disposal at their own responsibility could be made a requirement for property owners to be granted planning permission. It would also be an option to preferably set up innovative systems, for example waste water separation systems. Moreover, high levels of investment in wastewater infrastructure (pipes and installations) often prevent short-term system changes because of still ongoing depreciation periods.



**DOCUMENTS**

A guideline on strategies for the adaptation of the wastewater infrastructure to declining population figures in rural areas in the framework of the MORO spatial planning pilot project in the Vogelsbergkreis district. A publication of the Office of the Regional Commissioner of Hesse (2014): Download in German available at <http://www.lautertal-vogelsberg.de/fileadmin/uploads/pdf/2014-11-30-Leitfaden.pdf>.

- Annex to the guideline: Alternatives to waste water disposal taking the communities of Dirlammen and Eichelhain in the municipality of Lautertal as an example (Vogelsbergkreis)
- Specific example of the methodology described in the guideline, with detailed calculations

Demographic change. Wastewater concepts for the future. A publication in German of DWA Deutsche Vereinigung für Wasserwirtschaft, Abwasser und Abfall e.V. (2014)

Practice forum on the provision of local amenities of the service point Vitale Orte 2030 (Federal state of Hesse). Further information in German can be found at [https://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisform\\_Abwasser.html](https://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisform_Abwasser.html)

Guideline on the modernization of wastewater infrastructure in rural areas in the face of demographic change. A publication of the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district (2013). Download in German available at <https://www.hef-rof.de/images/demographie/2013-Leitfaden-Demografischer-Wandel.pdf>.

## Non-police security

### Ensure a high level of security also in rural areas!

“Woe betide if there is a fire!” – “Fires on Saturdays only!” – “Many fire brigades in the district are not well-enough prepared for disaster operations in biogas systems.” These headings from as different publications as SpiegelOnline, Behördenspiegel or Nordkurier make one thing clear: In rural areas, the municipalities as operators of fire brigades are increasingly unable to meet the requirements of comprehensive fire protection. Already today, many places would be lost without properly functioning neighbourly help. The rendezvous principle has been applied for a number of years now: Several brigades are alerted simultaneously and their members unite at the scene in order to ensure the required minimum number of fire fighters.

Establishing, equipping and maintaining an efficient fire brigade that is adapted to the local situation is an obligatory responsibility of municipalities. The districts have a coordinating function and operate a control centre. In view of these issues, this coordinating function becomes more and more important, also because the protection of the population as well as that of public and private facilities is a necessary prerequisite for the further regional development of the economy and the quality of life of locals and potential immigrants. Districts are called upon to address this issue!

### What are the challenges?

In rural regions, fire protection is almost exclusively an issue of voluntary fire brigades, i.e. it is provided by volunteers. The main problems are difficulties which exist already or may arise with regard to ensuring the operational readiness of many brigades. During the day, many volunteer fire fighters cannot be deployed at the place of residence because of their regular jobs. The problem is worsened by demographic change, in particular in small villages in rural areas. Already today, voluntary fire brigades suffer from a lack of members. In the years to come, an increasing number of fire fighters will retire from active service for reasons of age.

At the same time, there are not enough young people in youth fire brigades to compensate for the shortage in an adequate manner. Moreover, the challenge is to keep persons from the youth fire brigades on board in the medium term. For example, the number of members in active departments in the Stettiner Haff region will decrease by about one third until 2025.

What is more, the requirements to be met during training are becoming more and more complex, which is why there is a lack of persons with a corresponding education in order to form the necessary intervention forces.

For personal reasons or because of their training level, many fire brigade members cannot be deployed as breathing apparatus carrier or engine operator. The problems are acute in all rural regions to a similar extent.

The situation of voluntary fire brigades has a direct impact on the situation in the field of civil protection. Model calculations of the analysis case “road accident involving dangerous goods vehicles” show that the target arrival times of required units cannot be met in all places of the Stettiner Haff model region in civil protection either. It may therefore be an option to analyse the infrastructure sectors of fire protection and civil protection together in a single working group. However, in the model regions the focus was on the issue of fire protection.



### **What is to be achieved?**

The competent experts in the fire brigades and the district administrations as well as in the municipalities are well aware of the problem as they are dealing with it every day. However, to date policy makers, members of the public and administrative personnel of other specialist areas have focused on this issue only rarely.

Therefore, it is very important to raise awareness among the actors of municipal policy with regard to current challenges. In the context of a strategy on this issue at the regional level, comprehensive analyses may be undertaken, visual representations may be established, for example in the form of cartographic representations, and solution variants may be developed. For example, during information events with the district commissioner and the management level of the district administrations the results may be introduced in the discussion at district level; at the level of municipalities, mayors' consultation rounds may serve that purpose. At the same time, the results should be discussed in the organizational structures of fire brigades at the municipal and district level.

### **What needs to be done?**

In order to achieve suitable results, the regional problem should first be described in a detailed and differentiated way.

#### *Status quo analysis of fire protection*

To deal with this issue, as a first step a suitable analytical model needs to be developed and the required data need to be collected and prepared:

- Voluntary fire brigade locations (in the districts as well as in neighbouring districts);
- material resources of the locations (vehicles, breathing apparatus, etc.);
- current number of members (in absolute terms, actually available during the day);
- staffing level and qualification level of fire brigade members (e.g. engine operators, breathing apparatus carrier);
- age structure of fire fighters (by age classes) ;
- operational readiness (reaction time, reaction scope) at the level of individual locations and depending on the operation period (day = 6-18 o'clock, night = 18-6 o'clock, weekend (Saturday, Sunday, public holiday));
- journey time between all fire brigade locations and all settlement areas in the model region;
- operational statistics (times of operation, day operations).

To collect the data, it is a good idea to carry out a survey among the individual fire brigades. This can be done by the competent administrative unit of the district, supported by the commander of the fire brigade, or planning offices can be commissioned with the task. In some federal states, such as Hesse and Schleswig-Holstein, it is the responsibility of municipalities to establish plans related to fire protection and fire brigade requirements or carry out security and risk analyses; generally, these plans and analyses contain the necessary data.

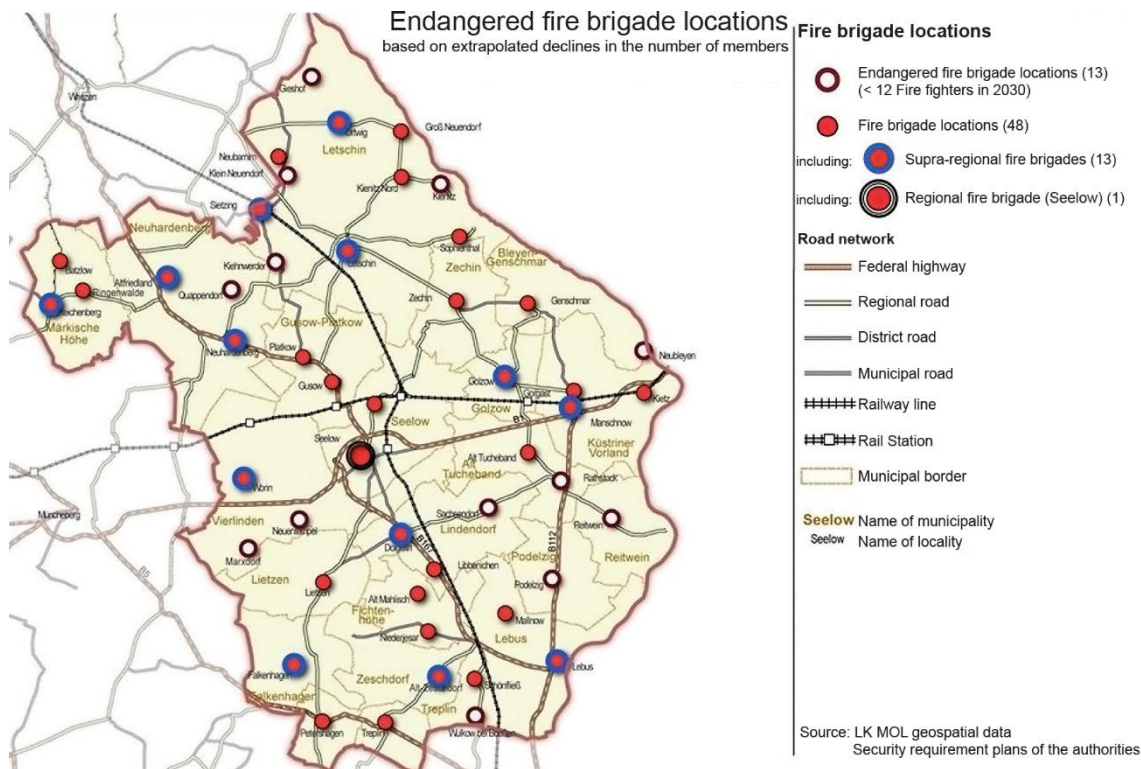


Fig. 30: Fire brigade locations in the Oderland region threatened with closure

Source: Strategy for ensuring the provision of public services in the Oderland region (Büro für Stadtplanung, -forschung und -erneuerung (PFE), p. 34.

Now, if this data is used in conjunction with small-scale population forecasts, on the one hand, the degree to which an individual location is threatened can be identified. If the data is used in conjunction with accessibility models, on the other hand, the level of regional security can be identified, i.e. it can be determined what settlement area or how many people can be reached within a certain time period by a fire brigade that – in terms of personnel and material – is equipped for a certain case of operation. In order to assess the degree to which a location is threatened, model regions need to define minimum numbers of available operational staff. In the Oderland region, there should be at least one operational squadron available at each location with two members per post; this corresponds to twelve officers with different qualifications.

In order to map the regional level of security, it is necessary to determine the response coverage of a fire brigade unit and specify which arrival time is set as a benchmark. The standards in terms of response coverage and with regard to response times vary between the federal states. In the model regions, the corresponding values were determined by the competent working group which, in turn, used federal state-specific response times or based their figures on values taken from the nationwide debate on the issue.

#### *Protection level criteria*

**Response coverage:** The quality criteria of the association of professional firefighters (AGBF) define a response coverage of ten fire fighters for first response. In the Stettiner Haff model region, in contrast, it was decided to calculate the arrival times for the fire brigade unit of a "squad". According to no. 3 of the fire brigade service regulations, a squad is an appropriate unit to fight a house or apartment fire where persons need to be rescued ("kritischer Wohnungsbrand") by means of an interior attack. It is, at the same time, also the smallest possible unit and comprises six fire fighters, at least four of them trained to carry and use breathing apparatus (attack and water

section). In the Oberes Elbtal model region, the requirements of the Ministry of the Interior of the State of Saxony (SMI) – response coverage of nine fire brigade officers at the location of the fire after 13 minutes and six additional fire brigade officers after 17 minutes – were used as a basis for model calculations.

Arrival time: Response times or arrival times of voluntary fire brigades are not legally determined in all federal states. Therefore, the working group of the Stettiner Haff model region defined an arrival time of 13 and/or 17 minutes as benchmark for an adequate level of protection of the population, i.e. voluntary fire brigades need to arrive at the location of a fire within the specified time period after the start of the fire. This value is based on sound scientific recommendations made by the AGBF.

### CRUCIAL PARAMETERS

*For the "critical apartment fire" case of operation*

- 13 minutes = maximum amount of time a person can stand fire smoke
- 17 minutes = time limit for reanimating a person that was exposed to fire smoke
- 18-20 minutes = flashover to be expected.

Source: Own summary based on data provided by the AGBF.

### Which options for action are there?

To address the identified issues, a number of options and strategies for action were discussed in the model regions, some of which have already been implemented. They relate to the different levels such as fire brigade, municipality, district or federal state and, according to Albrecht (2015), can be grouped in the following fields of action:

- Ensuring availability and recruitment of personnel and new recruits;
- ensuring day-time alert capabilities;
- optimizing response organization;
- optimizing self-protection and personal responsibility;
- ensuring availability and recruitment of personnel and new recruits;
- targeted recruitment through active officers in all age groups together with actors from local politics, administration and enterprises;
- poster and advertising campaigns;
- increasing retention rate of young fire brigade members by making active service more attractive;
- improving incentives for voluntary commitment (tax reliefs, retirement points, training loan, etc.);
- public appreciation of voluntary commitment;
- extending period of service in active sections, adapt age limits in fire protection regulations and
- increasing attractiveness of and by youth work.

*Ensure daytime alert capabilities*

- Establishing supra-regional or regional fire brigades (with advanced equipment) and concentrate funds on these locations;
- deploying part-time or full-time personnel to support volunteer fire brigades in insufficiently staffed periods at regional or supra-regional fire brigade locations;
- establishing joint pools of full-time civil protection response personnel between cities and their urban hinterland;
- introducing part-time fire brigades;
- professionalizing currently active officers through qualification;
- integrating commuting fire fighters, double memberships;
- obliging/qualifying employed persons in municipal enterprises or public institutions;
- simplifications with regard to fire brigade driving licences.

*Optimize response organization*

- Strengthening response-related planning over location-related planning;
- optimizing alarm and response regulations;
- coordinating alarming measures;
- optimizing rendezvous procedures (alignment, vehicle population, standardization of equipment and tactics, joint initial and continuing training);
- extending cross local authority collaboration;
  - planning requirements with regard to security and fire protection at the regional level between local authorities;
  - joint training pool;
  - common procurement strategies, coordinating larger investments;
- binding support structures (e.g. special purpose associations involving several local authorities);
- introducing technology with response option.

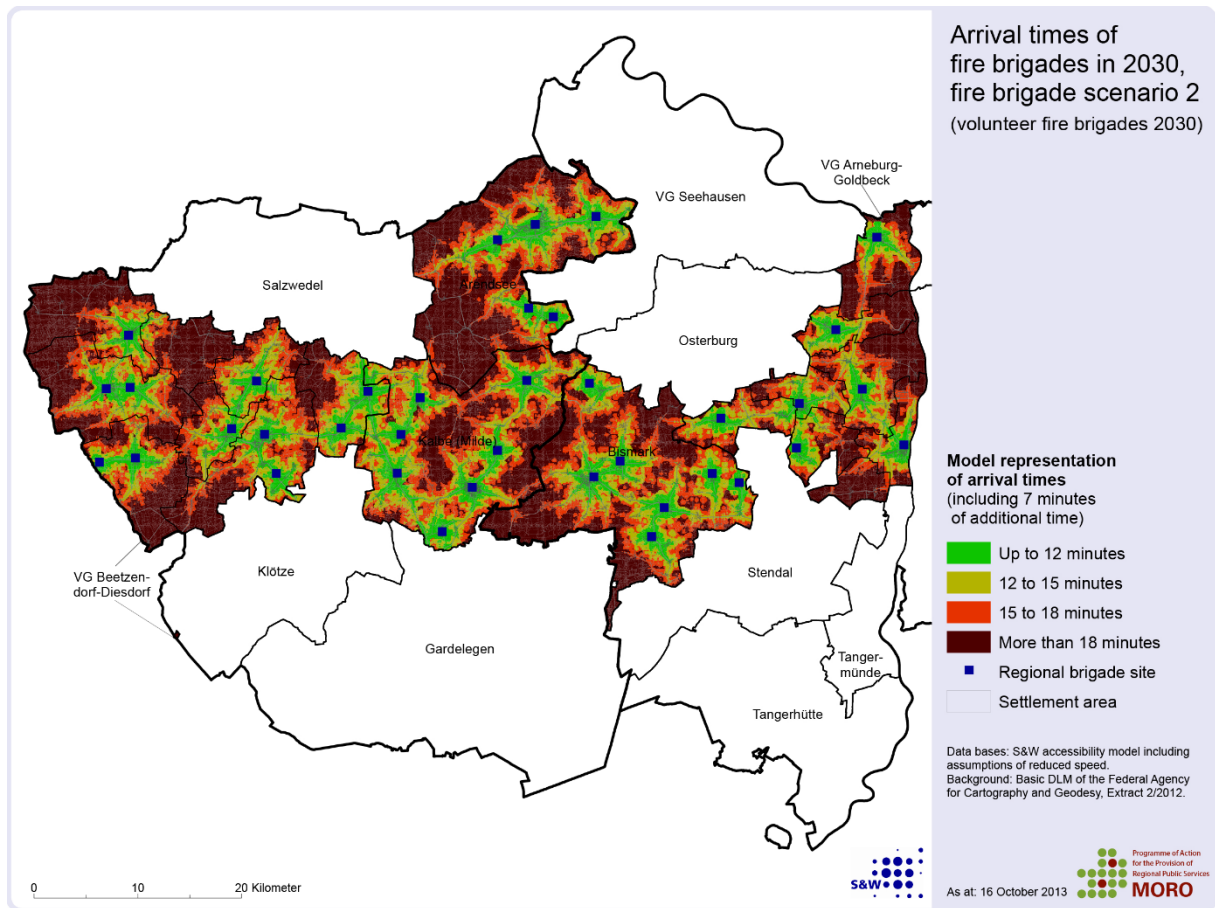


Fig. 31: Arrival time at the scene within 12 minutes after alerting in 2030 in selected unitary and collective municipalities of the Altmark region

Source: Strategy paper on the provision of public services for the Altmark region in 2030 (S&W), p. 37.

#### *Optimize self-protection and personal responsibility*

- Mandatory use of smoke detectors;
- mandatory provision of fire extinguishers in private households;
- teaching basic skills (e.g. in the context of driving licence education);
- fire protection education in general education schools (e.g. all-day sector) and child day care centres.
- There is ample scope to implement adaptation measures. In principle, there are no constraints presented by existing standards. However, there are obstacles in terms of the specific implementation and funding.

#### *Scenarios*

Based on the possibilities for action that were discussed, the members of the working groups formulated scenarios that were compared by accompanying research with regard to costs and efficiency. This step can be used as a “playing field” where solutions can be considered that, even though they might still be perceived as unusual or – in view of the current (legal) framework conditions – unrealizable today, promise to keep up and improve the regional security level. In the Stettiner Haff model region, for example, a helicopter shuttle was included in the considerations.

Next, the scenarios were jointly evaluated with model calculations. Apart from the impact on the regional level of protection, the costs of the individual scenarios were used. The objective was to include all costs which result from the assumptions of the corresponding scenario. This includes:

- vehicles (and possibly also aerial systems);
- other technical equipment (such as breathing apparatus) relevant to operations;
- full-time staff personnel costs;
- training and qualification costs.

In doing so, the cost relations between the individual scenarios and the status quo could be shown, and a sound basis for political and planning discussions could be provided.

In the Stettiner Haff model region, it became apparent that an increase of the regional level of security based on the standards that were defined in the working group would result in very high additional costs. For example, the most "effective" scenarios, such as "deployment of full-time staff at the locations of regional fire brigades (with advanced equipment) and supra-regional fire brigades (with advanced equipment)", due to the personnel costs, are also the most costly. However, also some the relatively cost-effective scenarios, such as "deployment of full-time staff only at the locations of supra-regional fire brigades" or "helicopter shuttle without or with two full-time staff members in the dispatch range" bring about considerable improvements with regard to the security level. Still, this cannot be achieved without costs in the millions. Parallel to the efforts of finding creative solution approaches aimed at improving the security level, it is also necessary to ensure the operational readiness at existing locations as well as in the region. Many of the aforementioned options for action are suited to achieve this objective. Particular potentials are inherent in increasing cooperation and coordination between municipalities like in the Oderland region.

**GOOD EXAMPLE**

*Oderland region – Joint action of local authorities*

*Employment of fire brigade coordinator as single point of contact*

“Joint Training Pool” project

- Optimizing joint training
- Uniform training material, equal standards and education levels
- Concentrating training at six locations in the region
- Uniform documents and technical equipment

“Establish management structures between local authorities for fire and civil protection” project

- Developing a security requirement planning between local authorities
- Coordinating investment needs between local authorities
- Jointly coordinating training
- Coordinating prevention work (starting in child day care centres/schools)
- Jointly coordinating alarming and dispatch times
- Ensuring day-time operational readiness by means of alarming several locations at once as well as municipal measures (e.g. municipal employees)
- Establish a joint storage facility to replace devices for several local authorities.

Further information in German can be found at [www.oderlandregion.de](http://www.oderlandregion.de)

**FURTHER READING**

Contributions to the technical conference "The future of fire protection – acting in view of demographic change" on 24 September 2015 in Seelow:

- Experience from other federal states. Challenges and options for action in the set of topics of fire protection. By: Albrecht, Martin. Download in German available at [http://daten2.verwaltungsportal.de/dateien/seitengenerator/03\\_ggr\\_zukunft-brandschutz\\_2015-09-24f.pdf](http://daten2.verwaltungsportal.de/dateien/seitengenerator/03_ggr_zukunft-brandschutz_2015-09-24f.pdf).
- Security requirements planning between local authorities. The future of fire protection – acting in view of demographic change. By: Bormann, David. Download in German available at [http://daten2.verwaltungsportal.de/dateien/seitengenerator/04\\_b471\\_oderlandregion\\_konferenz\\_2015september24.pdf](http://daten2.verwaltungsportal.de/dateien/seitengenerator/04_b471_oderlandregion_konferenz_2015september24.pdf).

Working paper on the future of fire protection of the Weißwasser fire brigade (2013). Download in German available at [www.demografie.sachsen.de/download/Arbeitspapier\\_Regionalkonferenz.pdf](http://www.demografie.sachsen.de/download/Arbeitspapier_Regionalkonferenz.pdf).

Final report of working group on the situation of volunteer fire brigades in Saxony by 2020 (2014). Download in German available at [http://feuerwehr.sachsen.de/download/feuerwehr/Abschlussbericht\\_der\\_AG\\_FF\\_Sachsen\\_2020.pdf](http://feuerwehr.sachsen.de/download/feuerwehr/Abschlussbericht_der_AG_FF_Sachsen_2020.pdf).



## Further information

### **PUBLICATIONS FROM ACCOMPANYING RESEARCH ON THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL**

Programme of action for the provision of public services at the regional level. Project assistance implementation phase. Final report. An online publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (04/2015). Download in German available at [www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/DL\\_BMVI\\_Online\\_04\\_15.pdf](http://www.bbr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/BMVIOnline/2015/DL_BMVI_Online_04_15.pdf)

Adaptation strategies for the provision of public services at the regional level. Recommendations by specialist working groups on mobility, general practitioners as well as age and education. MORO Praxis 2/2015. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2015). Download in German available at [www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/produkte-und-veroeffentlichungen/publikationen-aus-dem-aktionsprogramm/#c556).

Provision of public services at the regional level in Europe – examples from rural regions. MORO Praxis 3/2015. A publication of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (2015). Download in German available at [www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/MOROPraxis/2015/DL\\_MORO\\_Praxis\\_3\\_15.pdf](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVI/MOROPraxis/2015/DL_MORO_Praxis_3_15.pdf)

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Small-scale population forecast and regional accessibility modelling in the programme of action for the provision of public services at the regional level. Final results of accompanying research. Central data services. By: Björn Schwarze and Klaus Spiekermann (2014). Download in German available at [www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/FP/MORO/Forschungsfelder/2011/Aktionsprogramm/ZentraleDatendienste/RegDas\\_Endbericht\\_Datendienste.pdf?](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/FP/MORO/Forschungsfelder/2011/Aktionsprogramm/ZentraleDatendienste/RegDas_Endbericht_Datendienste.pdf?)

**STRATEGIES OF THE MODEL REGIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL**

"More than future. Act in concert. – A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public services in the Coburger Land region". Download in German available at [www.coburgerland-im-wandel.de/regionalstrategie-coburger-land/](http://www.coburgerland-im-wandel.de/regionalstrategie-coburger-land/).

Master plans for long-term care, multi-generation houses and places of communication in the collective municipality of Daun. Download in German available at [http://www.vgv-daun.de/vg\\_daun/Der%20WEGE-Prozess/Projekte/MORO%20-%20Regionalstrategie%20Daseinsvorsorge/](http://www.vgv-daun.de/vg_daun/Der%20WEGE-Prozess/Projekte/MORO%20-%20Regionalstrategie%20Daseinsvorsorge/)

A strategy at the regional level for the Elbe-Elster district: adapting the provision of public services to demographic change. Download in German available at [http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672373&hash=3a6450dca4632a9d942704d4bcd67fa8fe840933&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/Regionalstrategie\\_Elbe-Elster.pdf](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672373&hash=3a6450dca4632a9d942704d4bcd67fa8fe840933&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/Regionalstrategie_Elbe-Elster.pdf).

A strategy at the regional level to ensure and develop public services in the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district. Download in German available at [https://www.hef-rof.de/images/demographie/Regionalstrategie\\_Landkreis\\_Hersfeld\\_Rotenburg-2014.pdf](https://www.hef-rof.de/images/demographie/Regionalstrategie_Landkreis_Hersfeld_Rotenburg-2014.pdf).

A strategy for the provision of public services in the Merzig-Wadern district – political document requiring a decision. Download in German available at [http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672450&hash=fdce505b409d95d6f59ef9ee495114e77abc65b&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/Regionalstrategien/20140401\\_Politisches\\_Beschlussdokument.pdf](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672450&hash=fdce505b409d95d6f59ef9ee495114e77abc65b&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/Regionalstrategien/20140401_Politisches_Beschlussdokument.pdf).

A strategy at the regional level for the Mitte Niedersachsen region. Download in German available at [http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672740&hash=64e4d5f13342f8f2151f328b047744b2fdd3318f&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/131129\\_Regionalstrategie-Daseinsvorsorge\\_Fi.pdf](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672740&hash=64e4d5f13342f8f2151f328b047744b2fdd3318f&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/131129_Regionalstrategie-Daseinsvorsorge_Fi.pdf).

A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public service in the Nordeifel region. Download in German available at [http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672782&hash=bedcf4316a74cf60d999974749fc04f217b77e4&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/Nordeifel\\_Regionalstrategie\\_Daseinsvorsorge.pdf](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&q=0&t=1487672782&hash=bedcf4316a74cf60d999974749fc04f217b77e4&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/Nordeifel_Regionalstrategie_Daseinsvorsorge.pdf).

Nordfriesland district: master plan for the provision of public services – join forces and shape change. Download in German available at [https://www.nordfriesland.de/PDF/Masterplan\\_Daseinsvorsorge\\_.PDF?ObjSvrID=2271&ObjID=192&ObjLa=1&Ext=PDF&WTR=1&ts=](https://www.nordfriesland.de/PDF/Masterplan_Daseinsvorsorge_.PDF?ObjSvrID=2271&ObjID=192&ObjLa=1&Ext=PDF&WTR=1&ts=).

A strategy for the provision of public services in the Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge planning region. Download in German available at [www.rpv-elbtalosterz.de/index.php?id=234](http://www.rpv-elbtalosterz.de/index.php?id=234).

A strategy at the regional level for ensuring the provision of public services in the Oderland region. Download in German available at [http://daten2.verwaltungsportal.de/dateien/seitengenerator/moro\\_regionale\\_daseinsvorsorge\\_web1.pdf](http://daten2.verwaltungsportal.de/dateien/seitengenerator/moro_regionale_daseinsvorsorge_web1.pdf).

A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public services in the Ostwürttemberg region: cross-border cooperation for the region. Download in German available at [www.daseinsvorsorge-ostwuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/daseinsvorsorge/Flyeretc/Ergebnissbroschuere\\_MORO\\_D\\_Ostwuerttemberg.pdf](http://www.daseinsvorsorge-ostwuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/daseinsvorsorge/Flyeretc/Ergebnissbroschuere_MORO_D_Ostwuerttemberg.pdf).

A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public services in the Peenetal/Loitz authority. Download in German available at [www.loitz.de/Buergerservice/Ortsrecht/Regionalstrategie\\_Amtssauschuss%2025.02.2014.pdf](http://www.loitz.de/Buergerservice/Ortsrecht/Regionalstrategie_Amtssauschuss%2025.02.2014.pdf).

A strategy at the regional level for the Saale-Holzland district. Download in German available at <http://www.rag-sh.de/entwicklungsstrategie>

A strategy for the provision of public services – opportunity for innovation, Schleswig-Flensburg district. Download in German available at [www.schleswig-flensburg.de/media/custom/146\\_8694\\_1.PDF?1390388501](http://www.schleswig-flensburg.de/media/custom/146_8694_1.PDF?1390388501).

A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public services in the SPESSART regional model region. Report on the results. Download in German available at [http://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum\\_Daseinsvorsorge.html?file=files/Vital/downloads/praxisforen/kein\\_baecker\\_kein\\_arzt\\_kein\\_bus\\_was\\_tun/Endbericht%20SPESSARTregional.pdf](http://vitale-orte.hessen-nachhaltig.de/de/Praxisforum_Daseinsvorsorge.html?file=files/Vital/downloads/praxisforen/kein_baecker_kein_arzt_kein_bus_was_tun/Endbericht%20SPESSARTregional.pdf).

A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public services in the Spreewald triangle. Download in German available at [http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&t=1487673400&hash=09a68de19a69d47f75f51b19ff56b8380bee76ef&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/2014-02-26\\_Regionalstrategie\\_Daseinsvorsorge\\_Spreewalddreieck\\_Broschuere.pdf](http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&t=1487673400&hash=09a68de19a69d47f75f51b19ff56b8380bee76ef&file=fileadmin/files/pdf/2014-02-26_Regionalstrategie_Daseinsvorsorge_Spreewalddreieck_Broschuere.pdf).

Keeping an eye on the next 20 years! A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public services in the Trier-Saarburg district. Download in German available at [www.trier-saarburg.de/downloads/37/Regionalstrategie-Daseinsvorsorge-Trier-Saarburg.pdf](http://www.trier-saarburg.de/downloads/37/Regionalstrategie-Daseinsvorsorge-Trier-Saarburg.pdf)

Future of the Vogelsberg volcano region: results of and recommendations from the model project "A Strategy for the Provision of Public Services at the Regional Level (MORO)". Download in German available at [https://www.vogelsbergkreis.de/Ansicht.1066.0.html?&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=4350&cHash=728028ba61153e51b49502a7e651eaba](https://www.vogelsbergkreis.de/Ansicht.1066.0.html?&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=4350&cHash=728028ba61153e51b49502a7e651eaba).

"Facing change, shaping the future" – A strategy at the regional level for the provision of public services in the Westmecklenburg region. Download in German available at [www.westmecklenburg-schwerin.de/media//regionaler-planungsverband-westmecklenburg/absaetze/regionalstrategie-web.pdf](http://www.westmecklenburg-schwerin.de/media//regionaler-planungsverband-westmecklenburg/absaetze/regionalstrategie-web.pdf).

A master plan for the provision of public services in the Stettiner Haff model region. Download in German available at [www.kreis-vg.de/media/custom/2164\\_212\\_1.PDF](http://www.kreis-vg.de/media/custom/2164_212_1.PDF).

Werra-Meißner district: creating a future in the region. Results from the masterplan. Download in German available at [www.vfr-werra-meissner.de/Region%20schafft%20Zukunft%20-%20Masterplan%20M%C3%A4rz%202011.pdf](http://www.vfr-werra-meissner.de/Region%20schafft%20Zukunft%20-%20Masterplan%20M%C3%A4rz%202011.pdf).