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Implementing sustainability locally and regionally

by

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Analysis of local and regional reports in Germany on the implementation of the
2030 Agenda, SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda

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Photo: Jürgen Schulzki

Dear Readers,

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, is crucial for sustainable urban planning and development as well as spatial planning and development worldwide. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) listed in the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities”, aim to support the ecological, social and economic development of cities and regions, make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable in order to improve the quality of life of their citizens.

This analysis is the first systematic, data-based evaluation of locally and regionally available reports in Germany oriented towards the principles of 2030 Agenda and SDG 11, as well as those of the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations. It indicates that municipalities, towns, cities and counties of different sizes and geographical locations in Germany are already successfully implementing the goals anchored in 2030 Agenda. For this, they use the formats of the Voluntary Local Review and sustainability reports, which both provide local authorities with the opportunity for self-analysis. To this end, they select data-based analytical approaches that are oriented towards the guiding principles and compatible with reporting formats at a national and international level and aimed at specific planning, construction and urban development tasks. The analysis integrates all 16 federal states and local authorities of all types of municipalities. This is based on our city and municipality typology, which includes large cities, medium-sized towns, smaller-sized towns, small towns and rural municipalities, as well as counties and associations of municipalities.

Thanks are owed here to all 37 municipalities, towns, cities, counties and associations of municipalities. We evaluated their reports in cooperation with employees from the German Institute for Urban Affairs (in German *Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik [Difu]*) and a master's degree student from the Institute of Geography at Heidelberg University. The locally and regionally conducted self-analyses, based on practical experience, clearly show how sustainable development goals are incorporated into urban development, urban planning and integrated municipal development concepts as well as spatial planning, and how they are implemented in specific projects.

Germany is making this report available to UN-HABITAT, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. Together with other Voluntary Local Reviews and sustainability reports as well as Voluntary National Reviews, it forms the basis for the global progress reports, which UN-HABITAT regularly prepares on the implementation status of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda from a global perspective and submits to the United Nations General Assembly.

I hope you find it an inspiring read.

Dr Peter Jakubowski

Deputy Director of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR)

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1 Introduction to the framework conditions for the evaluation of local and regional self-analyses

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda form global guideposts for sustainable development in cities and regions. SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” pursues an interface function between the diverse United Nations agreements. In addition, this goal integrates local and regional authorities in the implementation of the decisions adopted by the global community. This also applies to the Paris Agreement as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

There are various reporting formats for local sustainable development paths that can be used as a basis for making decisions in planning and development. One format that is supported by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) is that of the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), (cf. UN-HABITAT 2025; UN DESA 2025; on the genesis of VLRs, cf. IGES 2025). Another format are sustainability reports, which make explicit statements relevant to cities and regions. These voluntary local and regional reviews and national-level sustainability reports enable the preparation of a Voluntary National Review (VNR) or Voluntary Subnational Review (VSR) as defined by the United Nations.

While the differentiation between a VLR and a sustainability report is rather uncommon in an international context, its justification in Germany is born of a long history of local and regional sustainability reporting as well as different reporting structures and orientations. Initial surveys of existing sustainable development paths were oriented to the predecessors of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, such as the Local Agenda 21, which was based on the Agenda 21 (1992) or the Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability (1994), also known as the Aalborg Charter.

The orientation towards these frameworks led to classification structures that are still discernible in some sustainability reports to this day. With the introduction of sustainability strategies in municipalities, towns, cities and counties, many sustainability reports are structured around the individual targets set by the respective local authority in order to systematically check the achievement of objectives and progress over time. In this context, the introduction of the Local Sustainability Reporting Framework 2021 (in German *Berichtsrahmen Nachhaltige Kommunen*) and its sequels by the German Council for Sustainable Development (in German *Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung*) pursue the maximum possible standardisation and vertical integration of the diverse reporting structures using a nationwide standardised framework. In addition, alternative reporting formats are enabled, which meet the structural requirements at the municipal level. The reporting format of the VLRs translates local and regional sustainability management into the universal language of 2030 Agenda, the 17 SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, and does not have a specified report structure. As long as these relations and integrability are guaranteed internationally, local and regional reports on sustainable development paths qualify as VLRs.

Various institutions analyse these formats on a regular basis, a number of which are already available (Bertelsmann Stiftung/Difu 2021, 2023; Difu 2025). However, until now, there has been no systematic evaluation of local and regional reporting formats in Germany, which are not only principle-oriented, data-based and act on the basis of specific planning, construction and urban development tasks, but also integrate all 16 federal states and local authorities of all types of municipalities. This is based on the city and municipality Typeology of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (in German *Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung [BBSR]*) (cf. BBSR n. d.): large cities (100,000 inhabitants and more), medium-sized towns (20,000 up to below 100,000 inhabitants), smaller-sized towns (10,000 up to below 20,000 inhabitants), small towns (5,000 up to below 10,000 inhabitants) and rural municipalities (less than 5,000 inhabitants) as well as counties or associations of municipalities.

This evaluation is based on the analytical multilevel approach of Hox et al. (2017). It is the result of a co-production by researchers from the BBSR and the German Institute for Urban Affairs (in German *Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik [Difu]*) and a master's degree student from the Institute of Geography at the Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg. The sources of analysis are the VLRs of municipalities, towns, cities and counties as well as associations of municipalities in Germany available to date, as well as sustainability reports with a corresponding local or local-regional orientation (status 31/12/2025).

Apart from a few exceptions, the local authorities are the municipal signatories to the 2030 Agenda Resolution and undertake by resolution of the respective city or county council to implement the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs (cf. Engagement Global/SKEW 2025a). The main analysis group therefore consists of two subgroups considered as one group for procedural reasons, these being VLRs (the subgroup first listed of the 22 subgroups below) and sustainability reports (the second listed subgroup of the 15 subgroups below), each in their current version (status 31/12/2025). The following local authorities and municipal associations, sorted by population, are the authors of these reports. Occasionally, they were supported in the preparation of the VLRs and sustainability reports by the BBSR (2021; 2025) and Difu (2025) as well as other institutions (cf. Engagement Global/SKEW 2025b):

Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)

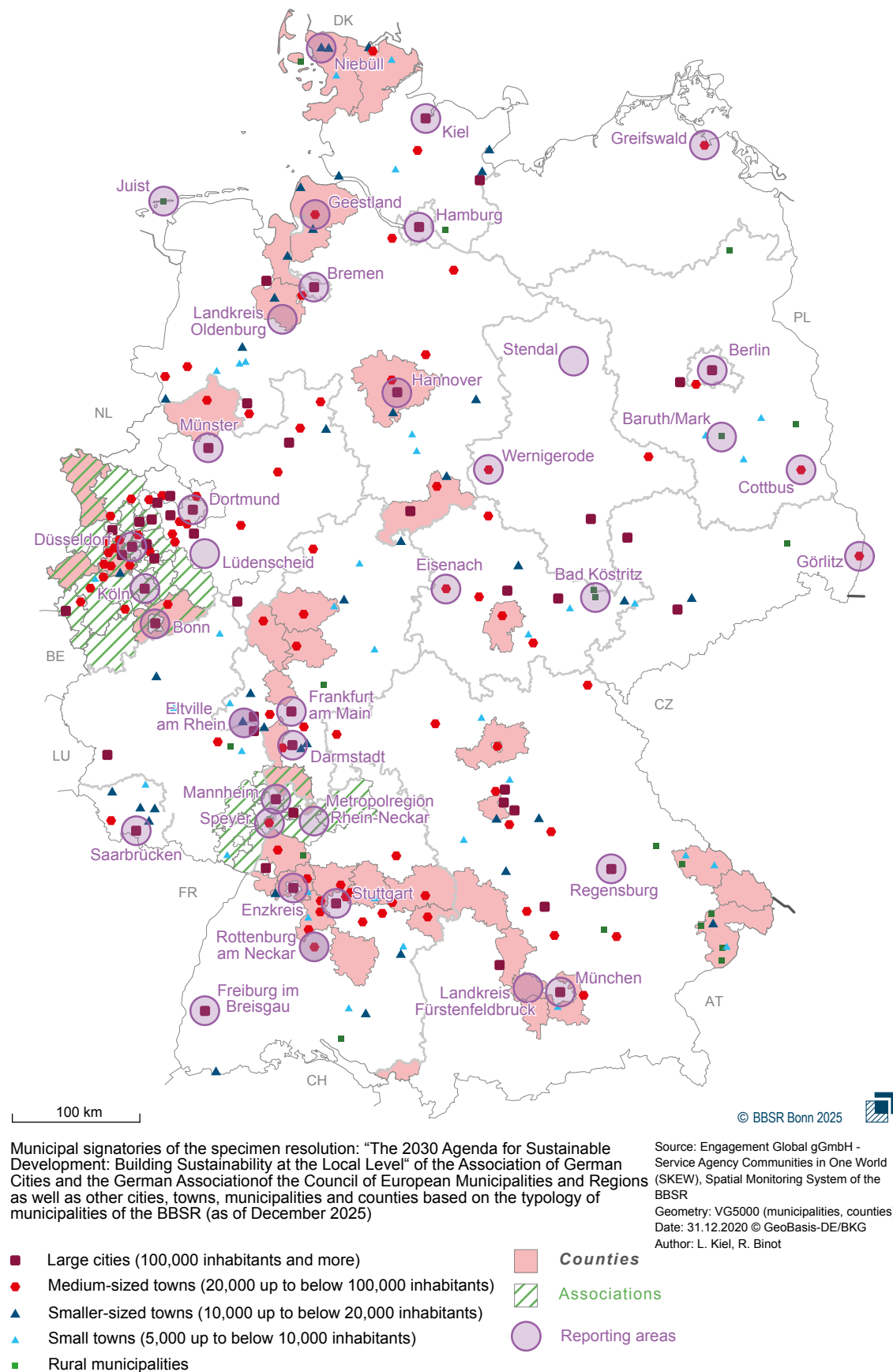
- Rhein-Neckar (metropolitan region) (population approx. 2,419,800; Baden-Württemberg/Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate; reporting year 2024)
- Hamburg (population approx. 1,862,600; Hamburg; reporting year 2023)
- Köln (population approx. 1,024,600; North Rhine-Westphalia; reporting year 2023)
- Düsseldorf (population approx. 618,700; North Rhine-Westphalia; reporting year 2022)
- Stuttgart (population approx. 612,700; Baden-Württemberg; reporting year 2025)
- Dortmund (population approx. 603,500; North Rhine-Westphalia; reporting year 2022)
- Hannover (population approx. 522,100; Lower Saxony; reporting year 2020)
- Bonn (population approx. 323,300; North Rhine-Westphalia; reporting year 2022)
- Mannheim (population approx. 318,000; Baden-Württemberg; reporting year 2023)
- Münster (population approx. 308,300; North Rhine-Westphalia; reporting year 2024)
- Kiel (population approx. 252,700; Schleswig-Holstein; reporting year 2024)
- Freiburg im Breisgau (population approx. 237,500; Baden-Württemberg; reporting year 2023)
- Fürstentum Bruck (county, population approx. 218,200; Bavaria; reporting year 2023)
- Enzkreis (county, population approx. 199,700; Baden-Württemberg; reporting year 2024)
- Regensburg (population approx. 151,400; Bavaria; reporting year 2024)
- Oldenburg (county, population approx. 132,000; Lower Saxony; reporting year 2024)

- Cottbus (population approx. 95,100; Brandenburg; reporting year 2024)
- Lüdenscheid (population approx. 71,200; North Rhine-Westphalia; reporting year 2024)
- Rottenburg am Neckar (population approx. 45,700; Baden-Württemberg; reporting year 2023)
- Geestland (population approx. 31,100; Lower Saxony; reporting year 2019)
- Niebüll (population approx. 10,200; Schleswig-Holstein; reporting year 2025)
- Bad Köstritz (population approx. 3,650; Thuringia; reporting year 2023)

Sustainability reports

- Berlin (population approx. 3,685,300; Berlin; reporting year 2021)
- München (population approx. 1,505,000; Bavaria; reporting year 2022)
- Frankfurt am Main (population approx. 756,000; Hesse; reporting year 2020)
- Bremen (population approx. 586,300; Bremen; reporting year 2023)
- Saarbrücken (population approx. 183,000; Saarland; reporting year 2024)
- Darmstadt (population approx. 167,000; Hesse; reporting year 2021)
- Greifswald (population approx. 56,100; Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania; reporting year 2022)
- Görlitz (population approx. 55,200; Saxony; reporting year 2023)
- Speyer (population approx. 49,600; Rhineland-Palatinate; reporting year 2023)
- Eisenach (population approx. 41,000; Thuringia; reporting year 2022)
- Stendal (population approx. 37,900; Saxony-Anhalt; reporting year 2024)
- Wernigerode (population approx. 32,200; Saxony-Anhalt; reporting year 2022)
- Eltville am Rhein (population approx. 17,000; Hesse; reporting year 2022)
- Baruth/Mark (population approx. 4,170; Brandenburg; reporting year 2021)
- Juist (population approx. 1,140; Lower Saxony; reporting year 2021)

Figure 1
Municipalities of the analysed local-regional reports



Ideally, the VLRs and sustainability reports, as local-regional reports, form the analytical basis for local urban land use planning, urban development and specific urban development projects in the local authorities, or are linked to these. A few municipal case studies (see Chapter 4) show that this ideal scenario is not so far off.

As part of the analysis, all 22 VLRs and 15 sustainability reports are subjected to a three-stage text analysis process:

1. Assessment of the underlying guiding principles related to the four central definitions characterising SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda (see Chapter 2)
2. Assessment of the indicators and data used (see Chapter 3)
3. Review of 12 individual reports analogous to the city and municipality Typeology of the BBSR (n.d.) already referred to, in order to determine whether and in what form locally and regionally oriented analytical reporting is used as the basis for land use, development planning and urban development in the respective municipality or municipal association (see Chapter 4).

All VLRs and sustainability reports dealt with here are publicly available – either via the platform managed by UN-HABITAT (UN-HABITAT 2025), as part of online publications by the BBSR (2021, 2025) or via the websites of the municipalities and associations of municipalities or supporting third-party institutions (see Chapter 7; the corresponding institutions are stated in the respective imprint).

2 Analysis of locally and regionally available reports based on their guiding principles

2.1 General use of guiding principles

SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda are characterised by four central definitions as guidelines or targets for the development of cities and regions worldwide (cf. United Nations 2015; German Federal Government 2025; BMZ 2025):

- Inclusion
- Safety
- Resilience
- Sustainability

These constitute the central guiding principles of the analysis. Furthermore, the New Urban Agenda also comprises the concepts of “Leave No One Behind” and “The Right to the City” (United Nations 2017), based on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The targets based on these guiding principles are determined individually by the municipalities, towns, cities, counties and association of municipalities in Germany.

Figure 2
Sustainable Development Goal 11



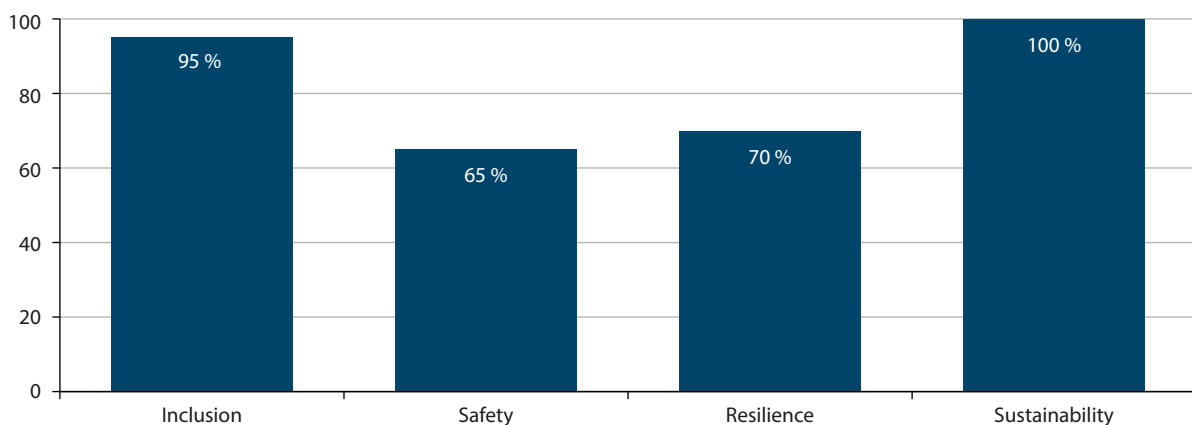
Source: UNO 2020

Despite the individual definitions, generally formulated objectives can be derived for SDG 11: “What do we want to achieve with SDG 11? All people should have access to **adequate housing and basic supplies**. All people should have **access to safe, affordable and sustainable transport systems**. **Inclusive and sustainable urban planning** should be strengthened. **World cultural and natural heritage** should be better protected. The number of people affected by disasters should be reduced. **The disaster management competencies of local authorities** should be expanded. **The environmental pollution** of cities should be reduced, focussing particularly on **air quality** and **waste treatment**. General **access to safe green spaces and public spaces** should be guaranteed” (German Federal Government 2025: 1; BMZ 2025: 1).

Due to their interface function, particularly between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs as well as the New Urban Agenda, all VLRs and sustainability reports refer to SDG 11, either to the goal as a whole or to individual parts of it. SDG 11 is either explicitly stated in the text or referred to implicitly. The analysis of the 22 VLRs and 15 sustainability reports results in the following overview:

- 35 of the 37 VLRs and sustainability reports (95%) report about inclusion in municipalities.
- 24 of the 37 VLRs and sustainability reports (65%) refer to safety in municipalities.
- 26 of the 37 annual reports and sustainability reports (70%) focus on the resilience of municipalities.
- All 37 VLRs and sustainability reports address sustainability in municipalities.

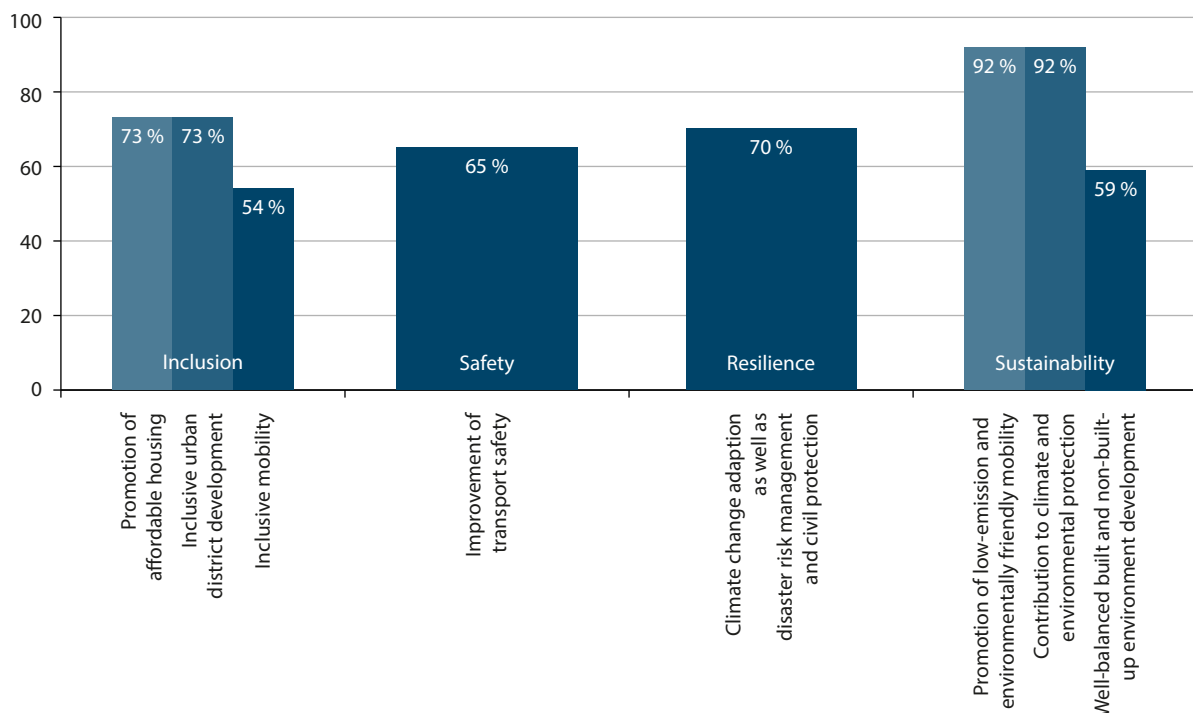
Figure 3
Priority topics covered in the reporting frameworks for SDG 11 in %



Source: BBSR

This overview is not representative of the overall situation in Germany, but does enable an estimation of the significance of SDG 11 and the four key concepts for the implementation and achievement of this goal at the local and local-regional level. In connection with inclusion, the VLRs and sustainability reports predominantly mention the promotion of affordable housing and inclusive urban district development (73 % each of all 37 report frameworks) and, to a lesser degree, the achievement of inclusive mobility (54 %). In the field of safety, the improvement of transport safety is the main issue mentioned (65 %). Resistance, or rather resilience, covers climate change adaptation and disaster risk management and civil protection in the broadest sense (70 %). In the context of sustainability, the VLRs and sustainability reports almost exclusively mention the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility and a contribution to climate and environmental protection (92 % of all 37 reporting frameworks). In 59 % of the reporting frameworks, priority is placed on a well-balanced built and non-built-up environment.

Figure 4
Detailed topic priorities covered in the reporting frameworks for SDG 11 in %



Source: BBSR

When considering individual cases in particular, it is imperative to consider growing or dwindling developmental trends for the respective Typee of a city. This results in the picture outlined in the following subchapters, which follows the respective size of a municipality or an association of municipalities from the largest to the smallest unit.

2.2 Detailed use of guiding principles

In their VLRs and sustainability reports, municipalities, towns, cities and counties or associations of municipalities consider the four central definitions of SDG 11 (inclusion, safety, resilience and sustainability) in various levels of detail. In these levels of detail, they concentrate on several subdefinitions and areas of focus, as well as objectives and the current status, each with positive and negative connotations. Sorting takes place according to the population size and Typee of city or municipality in the reporting areas. The long version of the guiding principle analysis can be found in the appendix to this publication.

2.2.1 Guiding principle of inclusion

Under the guiding principle of inclusion, the various Typees of cities and municipalities mention very different issues as their priorities. While large cities (including metropolitan regions and counties) pursue all three priorities (promotion of affordable housing, inclusive urban district development, inclusive mobility), the smaller-sized town of Eltville am Rhein only pursues the topic of "inclusive urban district development". All other Typees of cities and municipalities (medium-sized towns, small towns, rural municipalities) focus on the promotion of affordable housing and inclusive mobility.

Table 1
Priorities of Types of cities and municipalities under the guiding principle of inclusion

Type of city and municipality	Guiding principle of inclusion			
	Promotion of affordable housing	Inclusive urban district development	Inclusive mobility	Special measures
Large cities (including metropolitan regions and counties)	X	X	X	
Medium-sized towns	X		X	Integration of newly settled citizens and people with a migration background
Smaller-sized town		X		
Small town	X		X	
Rural municipalities	X		X	

Source: BBSR

2.2.2 Guiding principle of safety

Apart from the three Typeological rural municipalities examined, all Types of municipalities, towns and cities mention transport safety as an important challenge under the guiding principle of safety. Measures include traffic calming, the promotion of cycle and pedestrian traffic and the reduction of motorised individual transport. Rural municipalities do not prioritise this topic, evidently due to the size of this Type of municipality.

Table 2
Priorities of Types of cities and municipalities under the guiding principle of safety

Type of city and municipality	Guiding principle of safety	
	Road safety	Special measures
Large cities (including metropolitan regions and counties)	X	Traffic calming, promotion of cycle traffic
Medium-sized towns	X	Promotion of cycle and pedestrian traffic
Smaller-sized town	X	Reduction of motorised individual transport
Small town	X	
Rural municipalities		

Source: BBSR

2.2.3 Guiding principle of resilience

Under the guiding principle of resilience, all Types of municipalities, towns and cities stated that measures are being pursued in the field of climate change adaptation as well as disaster risk management and civil protection. This includes in particular measures against extreme weather events, but also against extensive soil sealing. Among rural municipalities, the relevance of these aspects is only partially addressed (see Appendix).

Table 3

Priorities of Types of cities and municipalities under the guiding principle of resilience

Type of city and municipality	Guiding principle of resilience	
	Climate adaptation and disaster management	Special measures
Large cities (including metropolitan regions and counties)	X	against extreme weather events
Medium-sized towns	X	against extreme weather events
Smaller-sized town	X	against extensive soil sealing
Small town	X	
Rural municipalities	X	

Source: BBSR

2.2.4 Guiding principle of sustainability

Under the guiding principle of sustainability, all Types of municipalities, towns and cities commit to three factors: “promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility,” “contribution to climate and environmental protection,” and “well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development”. However, the mention of these issues is case-specific among rural municipalities (see Appendix).

Table 4

Priorities of Types of cities and municipalities under the guiding principle of sustainability

Type of city and municipality	Guiding principle of sustainability			
	Promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility	Contribution to climate and environmental protection	Well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development	Special measures
Large cities (including metropolitan regions and counties)	X	X	X	Promotion of electromobility as well as cycle and pedestrian traffic; expansion of renewable energy sources; increase in land use intensity and proportion of green spaces
Medium-sized towns	X	X	X	Long-term change in modal split; reduction in dependence on fossil fuels; strengthening of the green space system
Smaller-sized town	X	X	X	Expansion of the footpath and paved walkway network; energy savings; containment of land consumption
Small town	X	X	X	Improvement of air quality; municipal waste management; competitions such as city cycling; adaptation of land use
Rural municipalities	X	X	X	Expansion of cycle path and hiking trail networks as well as traffic-free municipalities; expansion of renewable energy sources; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; (densified inner-urban development instead of outer-urban development)

Source: BBSR

3 Data-based analysis of locally and regionally available reports

3.1 General use of data

The application of the SDGs at local and local-regional level (cf. Kanuri et al. 2016: 16) not only includes the adoption and adaptation of the global goals to the respective local and local-regional conditions, but also the use of indicators to monitor these goals. Indicator-based sustainability reporting at the municipal level is also recommended by the German State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development (2021). Amongst other things, the use of indicators is intended to enable municipalities to identify where and to what extent they are failing to meet their set goals, in order to enable them to take appropriate measures. At the municipal level, this results face the challenge that the integrative approach of the extremely wide-ranging and holistically oriented SDGs is often incompatible with the legally stipulated scope of action and the individual normative approach of the municipalities (cf. Bunselmeyer 2024: 7). Furthermore, as a fusion of the United Nations' development and sustainability agendas, the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs address in parts challenges that are more relevant for the Global South than for the Global North. Municipalities meet these challenges via "reframing" (Bunselmeyer 2024: 29), by comprehending and adapting the SDGs as a continuation of existing endeavours towards sustainable development, and through "filtering by removal" (ibid.), by concentrating on aspects that are relevant to their municipality and that in their opinion are acceptable for the city administration and urban society (cf. ibid.: 34).

The localisation of the SDGs is taking place according to a sort of counterflow principle: The 17 global sustainability goals serve as a structuring and orientation yardstick for municipalities. With a top-down approach, local authorities make a contribution to meeting global and national goals. At the same time, bottom-up municipal initiatives to sustainable solutions are providing impetus at other levels (Butzer-Strothmann/Ahlers 2024: 440). Due to the combination of both approaches, the indicator-based measurement concepts often differ: The data sources for indicators defined at a higher level (subnational, national, global) are often missing at the local level. In addition, global concepts frequently do not include specific local indicators (Milbert/Müller/Schmidt-Seiwert 2021; Milbert et al. 2023).

In order to meet this challenge in a solution-oriented manner, after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an interinstitutional working group in Germany began to adjust the global SDGs to the requirements of the local level and to develop appropriate data sources – in particular for local authorities without their own statistical offices (cf. Assmann et al. 2018; Riedel et al. 2020; Peters/Neu 2024). The 17 SDGs were specified based on the task list and voluntary contributions of municipalities, towns, cities and counties in Germany and indicators were defined that can be illustrated using generally available data sources. The data sources are accessible online via the SDG Portal (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2025 n. d.) and INKAR (BBSR n. d.). In the following, these are referred to as municipal SDG indicators.

3.2 Detailed use of data

Which sustainability indicators are used for the 22 VLRs and 15 sustainability reports, and to what extent are the available multilevel indicators used? How are the indicators used in the VLRs and sustainability reports? Analogously to the guiding principle analysis (see Chapter 2) and the case study presentation (see Chapter 4), the indicator analysis refers only to SDG 11.

The framework for the indicator analysis is formed by the 17 SDG indicators relevant to local authorities from SDG 11 (cf. Peters/Neu 2024: 14). Type I indicators are those that can be comprehensively provided to local authorities via available statistics. Type II indicators, on the other hand, are desirable target indicators for which comprehensive data provision is not guaranteed. A total of 11 of the 18 indicators belong to Type I and 7 to Type II.

Table 5
The 17 municipal SDG indicators for SDG 11

Indicator designation	Calculation	Type
Rental prices	Average net 'cold' rent per m ²	Type I
Excessive financial burden due to housing costs	Proportion of households receiving housing benefit in relation to the total number of households	
Living space	Living space per inhabitant in m ²	Type I
Basic close-to-home services – supermarket	Inhabitant-weighted linear distance to the nearest supermarket or dis-counter in metres	Type I
Car density	Number of cars per 1,000 inhabitants	Type I
Electric cars	Proportion of registered electric cars in relation to the total number of registered cars	Type I
Traffic accident victims	Number of persons injured or killed in road accidents per 1,000 inhabitants	Type I
Land use	Proportion of settlement and road traffic spatial footprint in relation to the total area	Type I
New land use	Change in settlement and road traffic spatial footprint in relation to the previous year based on the total area	Type I
Land use intensity	Settlement and road traffic spatial footprint per inhabitant	Type I
Local recreational areas	Recreational area per inhabitant	Type I
Completed residential buildings with renewable heating energy	Proportion of completed residential buildings with renewable heating energy in relation to the total number of completed residential buildings	Type I
Basic close-to-home services – public transport stops	Population-weighted linear distance to the nearest public transport stop with at least 20 departures per day	Type I
Modal split	Proportion of pedestrian, cycle and public transport traffic in relation to the total traffic volume	Type II
Cycle path network	Length of the cycle path network per 1,000 inhabitants	Type II
Index of "Mobility in an urban-rural context"	Summated index of dichotomous variables, based on a standardised questionnaire on mobility in an urban-rural context	Type II
Rate of energy-efficient renovation of buildings	Proportion of energy-efficient renovated buildings in relation to the total number of buildings	Type II

Source: Peters/Neu 2024

A total of 21 of the 22 VLRs and 7 of the 15 sustainability reports explicitly refer to indicators relevant to SDG 11. The range of indicators used and their number varies from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 21 indicators. In all reporting areas, large cities and medium-sized towns tend to work with more indicators than small towns and rural municipalities. Sustainability reports tend to include fewer indicators than VLRs.

Many local authorities rely on the municipal SDG indicators stated above. Of the total of 28 explicitly indicator-oriented reports, Cottbus/Chósebus, Kiel, München and Niebüll as well as the Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion, use municipal SDG indicators only, while 14 other municipalities primarily use municipal SDG indicators and 9 municipalities primarily use their own SDG indicators.

Table 6
Number and type of SDG 11 indicators by reporting areas

VLR or Sustainability report	Type of city and municipality	Name	Number of SDG 11 indicators			
			Type I	Type II	Own	Total
VLR	Large city	Hamburg	9	2	7	18
VLR	Large city	Freiburg im Breisgau	7	2	7	16
VLR	Large city	Düsseldorf	11	1	2	14
VLR	Large city	Köln	9	1	4	14
VLR	Large city	Stuttgart	6	3	5	14
VLR	Large city	Bonn	8	3	2	13
VLR	Large city	Dortmund	10	-	1	11
VLR	Large city	Mannheim	2	-	9	11
VLR	Large city	Kiel	10	-	-	10
VLR	Large city	Regensburg	3	1	5	9
VLR	Large city	Münster	3	1	4	8
VLR	Large city	Hannover	-	-	2	2
VLR	Medium-sized town	Rottenburg am Neckar	7	-	14	21
VLR	Medium-sized town	Lüdenscheid	10	1	5	16
VLR	Medium-sized town	Cottbus	7	1	-	8
VLR	Small town	Niebüll	7	-	-	7
VLR	Rural municipality	Bad Köstritz	2	-	3	5
VLR	County	Fürstfeldbruck	9	1	9	19
VLR	County	Oldenburg	10	-	1	11
VLR	County	Enzkreis	2	1	1	4
VLR	Metropolitan region	Rhein-Neckar	3	-	-	3
Sustainability report	Large city	Berlin	3	1	-	4
Sustainability report	Large city	Frankfurt am Main	6	1	7	14
Sustainability report	Large city	Saarbrücken	8	-	3	11
Sustainability report	Large city	Bremen	8	-	-	8
Sustainability report	Large city	München	2	1	4	7
Sustainability report	Large city	Darmstadt	-	-	-	-
Sustainability report	Medium-sized town	Speyer	3	1	1	5
Sustainability report	Medium-sized town	Görlitz	-	-	5	5
Sustainability report	Medium-sized town	Greifswald	1	1	1	3
Sustainability report	Medium-sized town	Eisenach	-	-	-	-
Sustainability report	Medium-sized town	Geestland	-	-	-	-
Sustainability report	Medium-sized town	Wernigerode	-	-	-	-
Sustainability report	Medium-sized town	Stendal	-	-	-	-
Sustainability report	Small town	Eltville am Rhein	-	-	-	-
Sustainability report	Rural municipality	Baruth/Mark	-	-	-	-
Sustainability report	Rural municipality	Juist	-	-	-	-

Source: BBSR

The most frequently used indicators are those of Type I: car density (mentioned in 19 reporting areas), land use, local recreational areas and traffic accident victims (each mentioned in 18 reporting areas), living space (mentioned in 17 reporting areas), rental prices (mentioned in 16 reporting areas), land use intensity (mentioned in 13 reporting areas), electric cars (mentioned in 12 reporting areas), new land use (mentioned in 10 reporting areas) and basic close-to-home services (mentioned in 9 reporting areas). These indicators are usually calculated in the same way.

Conversely, the indicator “Housing with renewable heating energy” counts completed residential buildings in 7 reporting areas, completed dwellings in 4 reporting areas and existing residential buildings in 2 reporting areas. Similar differences can be found in the calculations for modal split, which is a Type II indicator and is mentioned in 12 reporting areas: In 10 reporting areas, all means of transport are considered, while in 1 reporting area only public transport and cycle use are considered.

Indicators that can be subsumed under the headings “Housing subsidies” and “Housing initiative” are also of great significance in the reporting. These include indicators that measure subsidised new rental housing construction, subsidised homes, occupancy rates, housing with occupancy commitment, subsidised housing modernisation and housing provision. In some reporting areas, several of these indicators are clustered under the heading “Housing initiative”, including rental prices and rental price burden rates. In the broadest sense, this concerns affordable and accessible housing.

The use of indicators in the field of environmentally friendly transport use also varies greatly. In addition to the modal split (see above), cycle traffic, public transport and alternatives to car ownership, such as the use of car sharing and cycle rental schemes are measured in many reporting areas. Some count the road users based on the number of passengers, job bike agreements or rentals, the respective offer with the help of the vehicle kilometres offered in public transport, the number of regularly scheduled services, the number of car-sharing vehicles or the cycle path network, or the traffic volume based on the distances travelled in car-sharing mode.

Some indicators, all of which are assigned to SDG 11 in the reporting areas, refer to different measurement parameters such as air quality (greenhouse gas emissions, particulate matter and nitrogen oxide pollution), civic engagement, neighbourhood work, municipal waste and recycling, playgrounds and sports areas, as well as individual vacant plots and unused properties. In a total of 7 reporting areas, the indicator “Settlement density in flood-prone areas” is also used, but assigned to different SDGs: SDG 11 (3), SDG 13 (3) and SDG 15 (1). The set of municipal SDG indicators subsumes this indicator under SDG 13.

3.3 Special aspects in the use of data and indicators

The indicators used in the VLRs and sustainability reports are most commonly presented in a chronological comparison. Using a time series, it can be determined whether the change in the indicator value is trending in a positive or negative direction and which degree of target achievement has been reached in the respective reporting area. In some reporting areas, a superordinate comparative value, such as that of a federal state, is added. The SDG Portal and INKAR offer values from comparative reporting areas for this purpose, but these are more rarely used in the analysed VLRs and sustainability reports. A comparison with the average value of a federal state or the national level is often less suitable than a comparison with a similarly structured municipality, town, city or county.

Achieving overarching goals using stable indicators depends on action taken in a municipality, individual behaviour, broad constellations of actors and trends in national and global development. The direct influence of a local authority ranges from its own contribution, such as sustainable sourcing, to services, such as housing subsidies, or the construction of barrier-free public transport stops and interventions in market segments, such as the enforcement of rent controls. These measures are usually only effective in the medium to long term, although longer-term trends may also be characterised by short-term variations.

The origin of these indicators lies in social reporting and in the monitoring of economic development progress (cf. Milbert et al. 2021). This offers the advantage of operationalisation at the smaller-scale level with the help of official statistics. However, the assessment of the indicators stated in connection with sustainability and the SDGs does not necessarily correlate with the purpose of their collection. For example, the calculation of living space is an established indicator in housing planning. From a historical perspective, the increase in living space per person indicated a social improvement in the housing situation, however, this is assessed differently in the context of sustainability, the increasing consumption of living space and the rising demand for space and energy (cf. Weber 2020). The average living space per person is determined by a wide range of influencing factors, such as the vacancy rate and the household and ownership structure of the available living space. An interpretation of the situation based on the relevant SDG indicators therefore always requires an analysis of the framework conditions at local and local-regional level as well as corresponding developmental trends.

Particularly in the case of municipal SDG indicators (Type II), data is often collected by the local authorities themselves or by institutions commissioned by them. Here, too, the modal split serves as an example. In some cases, local authorities can fall back on research work such as the investigation entitled “Mobility in Cities – SrV” (Gerike et al. 2020), in which surveys were conducted in selected cities and regions. However, this data, which is intended to indicate sustainable transport choices, is not available to the majority of local authorities. The “Mobility in Germany” survey (infas n.d.) has been offering data since 2017 and since 2023 also at a smaller-scale level, thanks to a so-called Small Area Estimation. However, only municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more are included (cf. infas 2025). Consequently, smaller communities and those belonging to counties cannot make use of the data provided in official statistics or only to a very limited extent.

Finally, some of the indicators – whether they can be operationalised using data or not – are not really suitable for the assessment of municipal processes. In this case, local authorities develop their own indicators, such as the proportion of electric buses in the vehicle fleet of the municipal utility company, neighbourhood work and involvement in a regional advisory council and local procurement including sustainability criteria. Such indicators require separate data collection and preparation as well as critical reflection. They exclusively serve the respective local process management and rarely form a basis for comparison between municipalities.



Sustainable municipal budgets

In general, local authorities play a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs. In this context, the alignment of municipal budgets with sustainability indicators and the use of sustainable finance are of vital importance (cf. Bertelsmann Stiftung 2023: 7). In addition to drawing up municipal budgets according to sustainability criteria, Green Bonds and Social Bonds are increasingly gaining importance for local authorities. As sustainable bonds, they are based on the SDGs and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) specific to the finance sector (cf. Bertelsmann Stiftung/Difu 2025). The cities of Essen, Hannover, Köln, München, Münster and Offenbach are the first municipalities in Germany to use these instruments for investment measures in urban planning and development. In Finland and France, local authorities have for some time been subject to regulations that link municipal expenditure and investments to sustainability criteria. In Finland, municipal budgets are drawn up according to the phenomenon-based budgeting principle (cf. NAOF 2022). In France, the M57 regulations apply, which require all municipalities with over 3,500 inhabitants to draw up municipal budgets on the basis of sustainability criteria (cf. AMF 2025).

4 From the analysis of locally and regionally available reports to urban land use planning and urban development

4.1 Large cities and counties

Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg

In 2023, the Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg published its first VLR, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. The preparation of the report was coordinated by a specialist sustainability unit. The report covers all 17 SDGs. The target achievement of SDG 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (BMZ 2025: 1), was addressed interdepartmentally, both as part of strategic concepts for urban land use planning, urban design and urban development and with the help of guidelines, also in specific projects. Examples of the city strategies are:

- the “Hamburger Maß” guideline for achieving urban planning solutions and compatible urban densities
- the “PAUL” state planning instrument for land monitoring
- the “Masterplan Magistralen” plan dedicated to the sustainable and climate-friendly development of arterial roads
- the Framework Integrated Urban Development (in German *Rahmenprogramm Integrierte Stadtteilentwicklung [RISE]*) programme that bundles urban development measures (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2023)

The Centre of Competence for Construction (in German *Baukompetenzzentrum [BKZ]*), which was founded in 2021, coordinates key aspects of the city's building industry in line with SDG 11 for sustainable urban, urban district and neighbourhood development, for example in the fields of climate action, digitalisation and accessibility. In line with SDG 11, the Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg attaches importance to the participation of citizens. The Digital Participation System (in German *Digitales Partizipationssystem [DIPAS]*) has been available to the local administration and municipal companies since 2016, in order to perform participation procedures digitally using interactive planning touchscreens. In addition, residents have the option of mobile digital participation in planning processes. Furthermore, since 2012, the Urban Workshop (in German *Stadtwerkstatt*) has been supporting participation processes in urban planning and development as a specialist unit and serves as a contact point for citizens as well as district and specialist offices (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2023). Specifically, instruments and resources were used for the future development of the urban area of Horner Geest. Based on a digital and analogue participation process, Horner Geest is being upgraded, the public infrastructure is being modernised and, in the long term, up to 3,000 new dwellings will be built (cf. *ibid.*).

Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau

The large university city of Freiburg im Breisgau in Baden-Württemberg looks back on a long tradition of sustainable urban planning and development as well as a corresponding monitoring system. The VLR published in 2023 explicitly links the topic of the sustainable city with the SDGs and corresponding indicators. With a view to planning oriented towards this goal and an adequate land management system, the city is aiming towards “(...) space-saving built environment development, accompanied by the creation of compact neighbourhoods and urban districts with plenty of open spaces (mainly through moderate, suitable inner-city development, taking into consideration the provision of green and open spaces)” (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2023: 82).

This orientation addresses SDG 11.3 “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (BMZ 2025: 1). Even though the proportion of settlement and transport areas of the total area of Freiburg im Breisgau at 32.2% in 2021 was significantly above the German average of 14.5%, (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2023: 92), the situation is comparable to that of other large cities in Germany. The city links built and non-built-up environment development with its 2030 Perspective Plan. The plan serves as the basis for preparatory and legally binding land use planning (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2017). This approach has been and continues to be implemented in various projects: As part of the Weingarten-West Project, an existing high-rise housing complex was converted to meet standards of a passive house (in German *Passivhaus*) and, at the same time, the public open spaces were redesigned to provide a higher quality of life (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2024: 1).

Landkreis Fürstenfeldbruck

In 2023, the Bavarian Landkreis Fürstenfeldbruck published its first VLR, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. The county, consisting of 23 municipalities, towns and cities, is therefore contributing to the implementation of the SDGs at the regional level. Apart from SDG 11, the following SDGs also assume a role in the report:

- SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”
- SDG 7 “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”
- SDG 9 “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation”
- SDG 17 “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development” (BMZ 2025: 1)

The orientation to SDG 11 correlates with the guiding principle drawn up for the county in 2022, which formulates the following goal under the key objective “Population and built environment development”: “We support climate-friendly and resource-saving built and non-built-up environment development that is socially just and fair to all generations and its constructional implementation. The planning processes should be carried out in intermunicipal cooperation and with the involvement of citizens (Landkreis Fürstenfeldbruck 2023: 32).” It is thus based on SDG 11.3: “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (BMZ 2025: 1).

One measure to achieve this goal on the analytical basis of the VLR is the “Housing for Help” Project. The county initiated the project based on a population forecast for 2035, which outlines a rising number of residents and at the same time identifies the over-65s as by far the county's largest future age group. In addition, housing rents in the county are rising, from €7/m² in 2011 to €11/m² in 2020. With this project, the participants want to confront the challenges of the demographic change and the shortage and increased costs of housing. The project organises housing partnerships, mediating between the owners of residential property and people seeking accommodation. Instead of paying rent, tenants provide support in everyday life according to the principle of exchange of “1 m² of living space = 1 hour of help per month”. The support provided as part of the project for senior citizens, families, single parents or people with disabilities does not include care, but includes household chores and gardening, accompanying people to medical appointments or help with child-raising. Young people, particularly those who are in apprenticeships or studying, therefore receive access to affordable housing. The project is intended to contribute to foster respect, solidarity and inclusion. Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic, 28 partnerships had already been concluded by 2022. The demand for affordable housing was considerably greater than the supply (cf. Landkreis Fürstenfeldbruck 2023: 105).

4.2 Medium-sized towns

Stadt Cottbus/Chóšebuz

In 2024, the medium-sized (and university) town and city of Cottbus/Chóšebuz in Brandenburg published its first VLR, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. The city makes use of this analytical basis, in particular with a view to the potentials of residential building land and climate protection, for preparatory land use planning processes and thus legally binding land use plans as well as urban development projects (cf. Stadt Cottbus/Chóšebuz 2024: 20). This orientation is based on SDG 11.1 “By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums” (BMZ 2025:1). Various urban development projects support the implementation of this orientation “(...) yesterday, today, tomorrow (...)” (Stadt Cottbus/Chóšebuz n. d.: 1). Specific construction and redevelopment projects in the Urban Development Programme East (in German *Stadtumbau Ost*) are based on analytical principles, as presented in the VLR of Cottbus/Chóšebuz with a view to planning and building law, in order to permanently stabilise and sustainably improve the quality of life at the local level (cf. Stadt Cottbus/Chóšebuz n. d.).

Stadt Lüdenscheid

In 2024, the medium-sized town and city of Lüdenscheid in North Rhine-Westphalia published its first VLR, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. The city uses local self-analysis and the associated sustainability strategy to regulate the development of open space in the interests of a well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development and at the same time to renovate the historic old town – ultimately with the following aim: “Together with all the residents of Lüdenscheid, we want to work towards a liveable and sustainable environment” (Stadt Lüdenscheid 2024: 3). This objective is pursued in SDG 11.3 “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (BMZ 2025:1). Some measures towards achieving this objective have already been implemented. For example, as part of the city centre development, central squares and public open spaces are being redesigned to create public spaces with a high liveability as well as modern and representative functions. Examples of these urban development projects are Sternplatz and Rathausplatz as well as the Rosengarten. The remodelling of the Rosengarten in particular shows how by installing fountains and enabling a wide range of gastronomy offers in the periphery next to the Art Nouveau “Schillerbad”, a previously barely used public open space, can contribute to enhancing the liveability for people of all generations in a historic setting, while at the same time supporting sustainable urban transformation (cf. Stadt Lüdenscheid 2025).

Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald

In 2022, the medium-sized Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, published its sustainability strategy for the first time, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. Recognised as the national cycling capital and as a compact city of short distances, it states the “promotion of intermodal and environmentally friendly mobility concepts” (Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald 2022: 44) as a key traffic-related strategy for the sustainable planning and development of the city. The strategy is based on SDG 11.2 “Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety” (BMZ 2025: 1). This strategy is gradually being implemented by means of various concepts and specific measures. For example, the inner-city transport concept comprises urban planning and structural measures for “(...) comprehensive traffic calming with priority for public transport, pedestrian and cycle traffic (...)” and “(...) comprehensive accessibility (taking into consideration all user groups and sections of the population) (...)” (Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald 2021: 3). In this context, car-sharing has been promoted since 2014. There are currently 4 car sharing parking spaces available to all citizens and guests (Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald n. d.: 1).

Stadt Speyer

In 2023, the medium-sized town and city of Speyer in Rhineland-Palatinate, which has been publishing sustainability reports since 2013, presented its third sustainability report for the period 2017–2022. This explicitly links the topic of sustainability with the SDGs and corresponding indicators. In the local administration, sustainability and climate protection management tasks are performed by the environment department. The position of a sustainability manager has been in place there since 2011 and the position of a climate protection manager since 2012. Since 2022, the local administration has also had a specialist unit for strategic urban development and future issues, which, among other things, coordinates measures for the adaptation to climate change. The climate protection concept of the city therefore also implements ecological sustainability. Building applications, for example, are assessed on the basis of the so-called Greening Statute. Several specific measures, some of which have already been implemented while others are still in progress, are designed to address SDG 11.3 “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (BMZ 2025: 1). Various conversion projects in Speyer are creating new and sustainably developed residential and working space: For example, a new residential district is currently being built on a former industrial brownfield area at the banks of the Rhine – including a new park. The Normand Neighbourhood is also providing new housing on former areas and may possibly also be expanded in the future to include an urban biotope. After the withdrawal of the French Armed Forces at the end of the 1990s, the former and now listed complex of barracks, was redesigned as a mixed-use, energy-efficient neighbourhood with housing for families, senior citizens and people with disabilities as well as corresponding open spaces. Social facilities were provided by the “Haus der Vereine”, “Lebenshilfe”, the “Diakoniezentrum” and the “Jugendförderung”, among others (cf. Stadt Speyer 2023: 81).

Stadt Wernigerode

In 2022, the medium-sized town and city of Wernigerode in Saxony-Anhalt published its first sustainability report, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. In addition to tourism-oriented urban development, the city considers accessibility to be an important matter in urban planning, because “accessibility affects not only people with physical disabilities, but also children and older people. Accessibility also plays an important role as part of the demographic change and an ageing society.” (cf. Stadt Wernigerode 2022: 14). This urban planning and urban development orientation is based on SDG 11.3 “By 2030, make urbanisation more inclusive and sustainable and strengthen the capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” and SDG 11.7 “By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities” (BMZ 2025: 1). Some measures to implement this orientation have already been initiated. As a result, the senior citizens’ city map, also entitled the Silver Map, is being developed with the active involvement of local senior citizens and in cooperation with universities in Saxony-Anhalt as well as with analytical support (cf. Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg 2021: 1). This is a digital and sometimes a printed city map, which brings together the wide range of support services available to older persons in the vicinity of their residential environment and makes them available via QR codes. In the long term, this aims to network local provision of services across neighbourhoods and encourages the digital participation of senior citizens.

4.3 Smaller-sized town

Stadt Eltville am Rhein

In 2023, the smaller-sized town and city of Eltville am Rhein in Hesse published its sustainability strategy for the first time, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. It identifies the following goals as central to the sustainable planning and development on the local level:

- Strengthening and promoting local mobility
- At least equal rights for all road users (cf. Stadt Eltville am Rhein 2022: 50)

Both targets are oriented towards SDG 11.2 “Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety” (BMZ 2025: 1). Some measures of this strategy have already been implemented. For example, numerous one-way streets have already been opened for two-way traffic and a charging and parking infrastructure has been provided for cyclists. The high volume of motorised individual transport during peak hours is to be counteracted by allowing cycles to be carried free of charge on the rail network throughout the Rhine-Main Transport Association (in German *Rhein-Main-Verkehrsverbund [RMV]*) (cf. Stadt Eltville am Rhein 2022: 50).

4.4 Small town

Stadt Niebüll

In 2025, the small town and city of Niebüll in Schleswig-Holstein published its first VLR, which is explicitly oriented towards the SDGs and corresponding indicators. As a 2030 Agenda Municipality, it therefore relates to former sustainability activities. The VLR concentrates on SDG 11 and, in addition to corresponding indicators, considers urban planning instruments such as the Master Plan 2030 and the Future Concept for Public Services. For this purpose, Niebüll is currently implementing the “ClimatePol” Project in the cross-border context between Germany and Denmark (cf. Stadt Niebüll 2025) and is therefore guided by SDG 11.5 “By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations” (BMZ 2025: 1). The project, which is funded by EU Interreg funds, is intended to foster cooperation, coordinate measures and develop learning and training formats in the field of climate change adaptation on both sides of the border. Based on climate plans, specific measures will be implemented by 2027 and various groups of actors, such as utility companies, local authorities and citizens, will be actively involved. The project-related so-called Climate Micro-Commissions comprise quantifiable measures such as dealing with rainwater and the prevention of local flooding events in coastal areas and particularly in residential areas.

4.5 Rural municipalities

Stadt Bad Köstritz

In 2023, the small Thuringian rural municipality and city of Bad Köstritz published its first VLR and is known, among other things, for its more than 200 years of dahlia cultivation and corresponding urban green spaces. With the development of the existing building stock and the utilisation of existing structures jointly operated by the local council and the urban society (cf. Stadt Bad Köstritz 2023: 68), the topic of sustainability is explicitly linked to the SDGs and corresponding indicators. A few specific measures, some of which have already been implemented while others are still in progress, are dedicated to SDG 11.3 “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (BMZ 2025: 1). In order to reduce land consumption and impervious sealing as well as the development of vacant plots and integrated inner-city instead of outer-city development, in 2021 the local council decided to amend the land use plan. This involved an examination of all existing potential building land. Specifically, a former supermarket building was converted into the new location for the Bad Köstritz Voluntary Fire Brigade (cf. Stadt Bad Köstritz 2023: 68). The same applies to open spaces and parks: The Rosarium Park, known for its dahlia cultivation, was secured as an open space that characterises the local urban landscape, restored in line with conservation principles and protected for the long term in the urban structure by means of a statute (cf. *ibid.*: 71).

Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist

The Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist in Lower Saxony feels itself under a natural obligation to sustainability due to being part of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site. This obligation applies equally to residents and visitors. Juist is a municipal signatory of 2030 Agenda (cf. Engagement Global/SKEW 2025a). Most recently, the local administration actively participated in the National Progress Report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda with a local self-analysis of sustainable development (cf. BBSR 2021). This self-analysis explicitly links the topic of sustainability to the SDGs and corresponding indicators. It particularly addresses SDG 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (BMZ 2025: 1). A series of integrative concepts and initial practical projects are being used to implement sustainable development in the daily life on the island. The starting point for this is the desire to be a car-free island. The basis for this will be an energy and climate action concept. Initial sustainable and climate-friendly measures in the field of mobility are already taking effect: For instance, electric cars, e-scooters and e-bikes are being rented out to residents and tourists. An app provides information about shared ride opportunities and the accessibility of roads and paths (cf. BBSR 2021: 92 f.).



Approaches of other countries

In the Nordic Countries, the active integration of local authorities into national or supranational analyses of the sustainable development of cities and regions, as well as corresponding higher-level reporting, have a long tradition. The Nordic Voluntary Subnational Review (Nordregio 2024), which was published in 2024, underlines this particularly well. Although there are also differences in sustainability between all Nordic Countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) and their autonomous territories (Åland Islands, Greenland, Faeroe Islands, Spitsbergen), the majority of people are of the general opinion that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs is not possible without active local participation (cf. *ibid.*: 5). The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs are being implemented comprehensively and holistically in the Nordic Countries; only in individual cases do local authorities set individual priorities, for example, in the fields of quality of life and climate action (cf. *ibid.*). Implementation takes place in many areas of everyday local work, such as in local and regional planning systems, in the preparation of local budgets and in public procurement law (cf. *ibid.*). However, a certain amount of translation work is frequently necessary in order to implement the globally formulated goals at the local and regional level and to consolidate their use (cf. *ibid.*: 6). Some local authorities complain that in many cases there is a lack of (human) resources to permanently anchor the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs in the day-to-day administrative work of local authorities and to ensure an appropriate monitoring (cf. *ibid.*). The Nordic Countries and their local authorities seek mutual cross-border cooperation rather than outside their common Northern European cultural area (cf. *ibid.*). While in Finland and Iceland universities and the private sector in particular are involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs, it is the civil society in Norway and Sweden. In Denmark, the civil society and the private sector lead the list of priorities for cooperation partners (cf. *ibid.*).

5 Conclusions

5.1 Guiding principles

SDG 11 brings together many urban and spatially relevant aspects of sustainability. Even though other SDGs (e.g. SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 9) also define sustainable development in cities and regions, it is clear that the analysed reporting frameworks primarily refer to SDG 11.

Regardless of the size of a municipality, town, city or county, the four central definitions that characterise SDG 11 (inclusion, safety, resilience and sustainability) serve as guiding principles for all local authorities with regard to local and local-regional development and the use of appropriate planning instruments. Naturally, in doing so, local authorities set their own priorities, but they are all oriented to these definitions.

Inclusion is broadly defined in terms of equality and inclusiveness, thus supporting the corresponding development of a neighbourhood or an urban district and the provision of an appropriate mobility infrastructure. The promotion of affordable housing finds its natural anchor point here. In the context of SDG 11, it is also easy to understand why safety is perceived by local authorities as being primarily associated with improving transport safety. The resilience a city or region is also demonstrated by its spatial and urban planning measures as well as through its urban development and construction projects for climate change adaptation as well as disaster risk management and civil protection. Finally, it is evident that sustainability is primarily connoted by its ecological aspects due to the fact that VLRs and, above all, sustainability reports have traditionally been coordinated and composed in local and local-regional authorities by sustainability officers, who are often based in environmental units. In this respect, it is also understandable that municipalities, towns, cities and counties locate their climate action and environmental protection measures as well as relevant planning processes here. A well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development is inherently ecologically oriented (see also Spatial Planning Acts), although social and economic considerations also play a role in planning decisions.

5.2 Indicators

Generally speaking, most of the indicators used by municipalities, towns, cities and counties regarding SDG 11 refer to the subgoals: 11.3 “Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization”; 11.1 “Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services”; and 11.2 “Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all”. Since the Type I indicators described above are used in the majority of cases, vertical compatibility can be presumed.

Reference has been made to the different definitions and recording of indicators in the municipalities, towns, cities and counties, examples of which are housing with renewable heating energy and the provision of sustainable transport and local recreational areas. In order to improve both vertical and horizontal compatibility, it would be desirable for all municipalities, towns, cities and counties to use the set of municipal SDG indicators and their definitions. This does not exclude the “filtering by removal” of individual indicators, as the modular principle explicitly supports the use of customised indicators in order to respond to the structural characteristics of a local and local-regional level. Furthermore, it would be desirable if local and regional authorities that use only their own indicators would adopt the set of municipal SDG indicators to enable transparent communication of the municipal contribution towards the achievement of the SDGs, in line with the counterflow principle. Thanks to the SDG Portal and INKAR and their data, the effort required by local authorities would be kept within reasonable limits. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that smaller local authorities in particular still face immense challenges with regard to data if they want to comprehensively measure their sustainable development.

Finally, the use of indicators is not a part of the day-to-day routine in many municipalities, towns, cities and counties; it requires practice, especially in smaller local authorities, even if resources are frequently limited. For this reason, data should be made available in a limited volume and an opportunity should be available to learn how to use and interpret indicators appropriately, to understand the potentials and limitations of metrics and to practise how to draw appropriate conclusions. This work at the local level should be supported by feedback from the local level to higher-level authorities regarding possible systemic deficiencies and the need to specify the statistical data available more precisely. A small-scale and differentiated evaluation of data and information forms the basis for SDG-oriented urban planning and development. Ultimately, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs can only be jointly implemented in cooperation with municipalities, towns, cities and counties.

5.3 From analysis to planning practice based on case studies

Although the selection of the case studies took place in accordance with criteria based on the city and municipality typology of the BBSR and was able to map the spatial structure in Germany, municipalities, towns, cities and counties take very different approaches from analysis of their sustainable development paths to planning practice. In some cases, specific measures successively follow the analyses, while in others, both processes run parallel to one another. Some local and regional authorities have a long tradition of cooperation within local and regional governments, others only just start cross-departmental working and practising and using suitable working formats.

It is common to all case studies that the citizens of a municipality, town, city or county or an association of municipalities are included in the analysis and planning process, whether by contributing survey data and information, by communicating their concerns in participation procedures or by themselves becoming promoters of the respective actions in implementing a specific measure.

In their entirety, the case studies show that municipalities, towns, cities and counties are actively implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs and are setting their own priorities while doing so. An overall view of their reports, whether VLRs or sustainability reports, forms a reliable foundation for a nationally oriented synthesis and corresponding reporting.

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List of abbreviations

BBSR	Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (in German <i>Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung</i>)
BBR	Federal Institute for Building and Regional Planning (in German <i>Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung</i>)
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (in German <i>Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung</i>)
BKZ	Centre of Competence for Construction (in German <i>Baukompetenzzentrum</i>)
Difu	German Institute for Urban Affairs (in German <i>Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik</i>)
DIPAS	Digital Participation System (in German <i>Digitales Partizipationssystem</i>)
ISEK	Integrated Urban Development Concept (in German <i>Integriertes Stadtentwicklungskonzept</i>)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MIV	Motorised Individual Transport (in German <i>Motorisierter Individualverkehr</i>)
ÖPNV	Local Public Transport (in German <i>Öffentlicher Personennahverkehr</i>)
PKW	Passenger cars (in German <i>Personenkraftwagen</i>)
RISE	Framework Integrated Urban Development (in German <i>Rahmenprogramm Integrierte Stadtteilentwicklung</i>)
RMV	Rhein-Main Transport Association (in German <i>Rhein-Main-Verkehrsverbund</i>)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SKEW	Service Agency Communities in One World (in German <i>Servicestelle Kommunen in der Einen Welt</i>)
STEK	Urban Development Concept (in German <i>Stadtentwicklungskonzept</i>)
SUMP	Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VSR	Voluntary Subnational Review

Appendix: Long version of the guiding principle text analysis

Guiding principle of inclusion

Berlin, Land und Bundeshauptstadt of the Federal Republic of Germany (population approx. 3,685,300), focuses in particular on the promotion of affordable housing in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Land und Bundeshauptstadt Berlin 2021: 60 ff.). **The Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion** (population approx. 2,419,800) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on ensuring access for all people to sustainable transport systems (cf. Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion 2024: 37), the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 39), inclusive neighbourhood development with the help of accessible infrastructure, meeting places for social mixing and multigenerational living (cf. *ibid.*: 37), and civic engagement (cf. *ibid.*: 12). The status quo with regard to civic engagement is also described in positive terms (cf. *ibid.*: 12). On the other hand, the trend in rising rents (cf. *ibid.*: 37) is cited with negative connotations. The **Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg** (population approx. 1,862,600) focuses on inclusive mobility in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2023: 164). Inclusive mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 165) and the promotion of affordable housing as part of the housing construction programme adopted in 2011 and the associated promotion of 35% publicly subsidised rental housing in new buildings (cf. *ibid.*: 160) are also cited as positive aspects of the present situation. The **Landeshauptstadt München** (population approx. 1,505,000) focuses on the promotion of affordable housing in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. **Landeshauptstadt München** 2022: 31). The situation regarding inclusive neighbourhood development to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (cf. *ibid.* 2022: 28) is described with positive connotations. The **Stadt Köln** (population approx. 1,024,600) focuses on the promotion of affordable housing in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Stadt Köln 2023: 134). The current status with regard to the promotion of affordable housing is seen as positive due to the fact that, although the stock of subsidised rental housing increased in the period 2016–2020, it also declined in 2018, 2029 and 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 148), as well as inclusive neighbourhood development and intergenerational living in the neighbourhood (cf. *ibid.*: 138). The **Stadt Frankfurt am Main** (population approx. 756,000) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on inclusive local public transport and greater accessibility (cf. Stadt Frankfurt am Main 2020: 138) and the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 108). The **Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf** (population approx. 618,700) describes as positive the current state of inclusive neighbourhood development (cf. Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2022: 89) and the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 93). The **Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart** (population approx. 612,700) describes the current situation regarding inclusive mobility and the associated expansion of accessible bus stops in positive terms (cf. Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart 2025: 199). In the context of inclusive neighbourhood development, rent increases and the decline in the number of publicly subsidised housing units (cf. *ibid.*: 185 ff.) are cited as negative features of the current situation. The **Stadt Dortmund** (population approx. 603,500) describes the promotion of affordable housing on the basis of the 2021 municipal housing concept (cf. Stadt Dortmund 2022: 87) and inclusive neighbourhood development (cf. *ibid.*: 90) in positive terms. The rise in rents (cf. *ibid.*: 93) is cited as a negative development in connection with the promotion of affordable housing. The **Freie und Hansestadt Bremen** (population approx. 586,300) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on inclusive mobility to implement the Bremen 2025 Transport Development Plan (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Bremen 2023: 77), the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 15) and inclusive neighbourhood development to combat social inequality and promote equal opportunities in the education and labour market (cf. *ibid.*) and to support Bremen's engagement strategy with the aim of opening up the volunteer card for discounts (cf. *ibid.*: 105 f.). The current situation with regard to the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 113) is also described in positive terms. The increase in rents (cf. *ibid.*: 121) observed in the context of the promotion of affordable housing is cited as a negative development. The **Landeshauptstadt Hannover** (population approx. 522,100) focuses on the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Landeshauptstadt Hannover 2020: 18) and inclusive neighbourhood development to expand infrastructure suitable for

young people, families and older people, strengthen social participation, ensure equal access to high-quality education and enable everyone to take part in sport (cf. *ibid.*). The **Bundesstadt Bonn** (population approx. 323,300) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Mannheim** (population approx. 318,000) focuses its forward-looking and positively formulated objectives on inclusive mobility (cf. Stadt Mannheim 2023: 11) and inclusive neighbourhood development, particularly for older people, based on a model project in the Vogelstang urban district of Mannheim (cf. *ibid.*). The current status of Inclusive mobility with regard to accessibility is also described as one with positive connotations (cf. *ibid.*: 18). In its forward-looking and positively worded objectives, the **Stadt Münster** (population approx. 308,300) focuses on inclusive mobility (cf. Stadt Münster 2024: 90), the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 52) and inclusive neighbourhood development to strengthen the participation of people with disabilities (cf. *ibid.*: 45), the construction of leisure facilities and playgrounds for young and older residents (cf. *ibid.*: 47 f.) and the consolidation of the Integrated Urban Development Concept (in German *Integriertes Stadtentwicklungskonzept* [ISEK]) and public participation (cf. *ibid.*: 64). The **Landeshauptstadt Kiel** (population approx. 252,700) describes the current situation regarding the rise in rents associated with the promotion of affordable housing as a negative development (cf. Landeshauptstadt Kiel 2024: 102). The **Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau** (population approx. 237,500) describes with positive connotations the current status with respect to the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2023: 85) and inclusive neighbourhood development (cf. *ibid.*: 87). The **Landkreis Fürstentum** (population approx. 218,200) focuses on the promotion of affordable housing in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (Landkreis Fürstentum 2023: 18). The current status of inclusive mobility to create accessibility and the continuation of the municipal action plan to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (cf. *ibid.*: 89 f.) are described with positive connotations. In the context of promoting affordable housing, the fact that rents rose between 2011 and 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 102) and that between 2010 and 2020 the total number of publicly subsidised housing units and the number of newly occupied or reoccupied publicly subsidised housing units declined (cf. *ibid.*: 103) were described in negative terms. The **Enzkreis** (population approx. 199,700) in Baden-Württemberg is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Enzkreis 2024: 94), inclusive mobility to create accessibility (cf. *ibid.*) and inclusive neighbourhood development with the aim of further developing public social, meeting and recreational spaces (cf. *ibid.*). The current situation with regard to the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 95) is also described in positive terms. In contrast, the increase in rents recorded in the context of the promotion of affordable housing in the period 2015–2022 was described in negative terms, even though rents did not rise as sharply as the national average in 2021 and 2022 (cf. *ibid.*: 100). The **Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken** (population approx. 183,000) describes the status of inclusive neighbourhood development to prevent social segregation in positive terms (cf. Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken 2024: 78). The **Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt** (population approx. 167,000) describes in positive terms the current state of inclusive neighbourhood development, with Darmstadt's municipal economy as a responsible employer that values diversity, a safe and discrimination-free workplace, with health promotion offers and job tickets (Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt 2021: 26) and the Local Neighbourhood App, which is designed to help city residents exchange or lend items or even set up car pools (cf. *ibid.*: 29), equality, which has resulted in an equal number of women and men working in Darmstadt's municipal economy (cf. *ibid.*: 26), and the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 29). The **Stadt Regensburg** (population approx. 151,400) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Stadt Regensburg 2024: 7). The following measures contributed to an overall positive assessment of the present situation in connection with the promotion of affordable housing: the Regensburg building land model, according to which a quota of 40% for publicly subsidised housing construction in new development areas was reported in 2019 (cf. *ibid.*: 87), the increase in the number of publicly subsidised apartments in the period 2014–2023 (cf. *ibid.*: 90) and the Regensburg Plan 2040 (cf. *ibid.*: 7), developed in cooperation with the city's citizens as part of inclusive neighbourhood development. The **Landkreis Oldenburg** (population approx. 132,000) describes the status of inclusive mobility in positive terms, citing the help of on-demand cars operated by volunteers (cf. Landkreis Oldenburg 2024: 98), the Housing Concept applied in the context of promoting affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 84) and the volunteer card introduced in connection with inclusive neighbourhood development (cf. *ibid.*: 86).

The **Stadt Cottbus/Chósebus** (population approx. 95,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on a wide range of health and culture-oriented services (cf. Stadt Cottbus/Chósebus 2024: 12) as well as inclusive public transport and a higher degree of accessibility (cf. *ibid.*: 24). The current monostructure of the local housing market (cf. *ibid.*: 17) is described as a negative situation. The **Stadt Lüdenscheid** (population approx. 71,200) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Stadt Lüdenscheid 2024: 10). The present state of affairs regarding inclusive neighbourhood development is described with positive connotations (cf. *ibid.*: 15). The **Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald** (population approx. 56,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted goal formulation on inclusive neighbourhood development to create family-friendly living environments (Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald, 2022: 44), supporting cosmopolitanism and tolerance as a city organised on the basis of solidarity, community and equality (cf. *ibid.*: 45), and inclusive mobility in the sense of accessibility (cf. *ibid.*: 44). The positive connotations regarding the current situation also include inclusive mobility with almost complete accessibility (cf. *ibid.*: 44), the participation of all citizens in the ISEK 2030 in 2017 (cf. *ibid.*: 49) and the Diversity Charter (cf. *ibid.*: 48), which has been in place since 2022 in connection with equality. The **Stadt Görlitz** (population approx. 55,200) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Stadt Görlitz 2023: 17). In assessing the present situation, the inclusive neighbourhood development is cited with positive connotations (cf. *ibid.*: 21). The **Stadt Speyer** (population approx. 49,600) describes in positive terms the status of inclusive mobility with accessible bus stops and the “Bitte klingeln” (“Please ring”) project (cf. Stadt Speyer 2023: 69 f.) as well as inclusive neighbourhood development (cf. *ibid.*: 71 f.). In the context of promoting affordable housing, the fact that rents are rising and there is a shortage of publicly subsidised housing is described as a negative aspect of the current situation (cf. *ibid.*: 85). The **Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar** (population approx. 45,700) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on inclusive public transport with accessible bus stops (cf. Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar 2023: 86) and the promotion of affordable housing with the help of publicly subsidised housing construction (cf. *ibid.*: 93). In the context of inclusive neighbourhood development, the creation of housing for refugees (cf. *ibid.*: 79), the promotion of social integration and the avoidance of neighbourhood formation (cf. *ibid.*: 75 f.) as well as publicly subsidised housing construction (cf. *ibid.*: 93) are described as a status quo with positive connotations. The **Wartburgstadt Eisenach** (population approx. 41,000) describes the range of locally available housing (cf. Wartburgstadt Eisenach 2022: 18) and inclusive neighbourhood development with social and cultural infrastructure facilities, a good range of leisure facilities and care homes for senior citizens, commitment to the integration of people with a migrant background and orientation towards the 2019 poverty prevention strategy (cf. *ibid.*: 11). In the context of inclusive mobility, the very limited accessibility (cf. *ibid.*: 17) and, in the context of promoting affordable housing, the lack of certain types of housing (large flats, fully-accessible and partially accessible flats) (cf. *ibid.*: 19) are described with negative connotations. The **Hansestadt Stendal** (population approx. 37,900) describes the current status regarding inclusive neighbourhood development in terms of social security systems with positive connotations (cf. Hansestadt Stendal 2024: 14). The **Stadt Wernigerode** (population approx. 32,200) describes equal opportunities and diversity in the city (cf. Stadt Wernigerode 2022: 7) as positive aspects of the current situation, as well as the fact that an increasing number of facilities offer accessible services in inclusive neighbourhood development (cf. *ibid.*: 14). The **Stadt Geestland** (population approx. 31,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Stadt Geestland 2019: 11) and inclusive neighbourhood development by supporting the participation of all people in the areas of education, sport, culture and leisure (cf. *ibid.*: 10), especially new immigrants and people with a migration background (cf. *ibid.*: 10 f.). Inclusive mobility in the sense of accessibility (cf. *ibid.*: 9) is described as a positively connoted feature of the present situation.

The **Stadt Eltville am Rhein** (population approx. 17,000) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on inclusive neighbourhood development and the associated financial support for families, older people and people on low incomes (cf. Stadt Eltville am Rhein 2022: 45), multiculturalism (cf. *ibid.* 2022: 41) and participation of the population, sustainable urban planning and development, and gender and generational justice (cf. *ibid.*: 42). In the context of promoting affordable housing, the current situation is described with negative connotations due to the rising rents and the predominance of large and high-priced flats in the local housing market (cf. *ibid.*: 44).

The **Stadt Niebüll** (population approx. 10,200) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on inclusive mobility (cf. Stadt Niebüll 2025: 21) and the promotion of affordable housing (cf. *ibid.*: 21).

The **Stadt Baruth/Mark** (population approx. 4,170) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Bad Köstritz** (population approx. 3,650) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on the promotion of affordable housing (cf. Stadt Bad Köstritz 2023: 69) and inclusive neighbourhood development through the creation of accessible paths and access to public buildings (cf. *ibid.*: 69). The **Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist** (population approx. 1,140) describes the app developed in connection with inclusive mobility for car-pooling and information about accessible routes as positive aspects of the current situation (cf. Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist 2021: 93). Also in the context of inclusive mobility, but with negative connotations, is the fact that discounts on the rental of electric cars, electric scooters and electric bikes, as well as ferry trips, only apply to island residents and not to visitors (cf. *ibid.*: 92)..

Guiding principle of safety

Berlin, Land und Bundeshauptstadt of the Federal Republic of Germany (population approx. 3,685,300), does not explicitly describe this term in its report. The **Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion** (population approx. 2,419,800) also does not explicitly describe this term in its report. The **Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg** (population approx. 1,862,600) describes the slight decline in the number of road traffic accidents as a positive development in the context of improving road safety (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2023: 173). The **Landeshauptstadt München** (population approx. 1,505,000) focuses on improving road safety in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Landeshauptstadt München 2022: 112). In connection with the status of improving road safety, the fact that the number of children involved in road accidents has remained at almost the same level for several years and is not declining is described in negative terms (cf. *ibid.*: 111). The **Stadt Köln** (population approx. 1,024,600) is focusing its forward-looking and positive formulation of objectives on improving road safety, with the aim of organising stationary traffic in a way that is compatible with the city living, reducing it over the long term (cf. Stadt Köln 2023: 133) and maintaining a safe cycle path network (cf. *ibid.*: 135). With regard to the current status of improving road safety, traffic calming measures (cf. *ibid.*: 140) are described as a positive development, given the fact that the number of people injured or killed in road traffic accidents per 1,000 inhabitants fell between 2010 and 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 150). The **Stadt Frankfurt am Main** (population approx. 756,000) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation on improving road safety in order to create safer cycle paths, improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists at intersections, and reduce the number of lanes for motorised individual transport (cf. Stadt Frankfurt am Main 2020: 109). The **Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf** (population approx. 618,700) does not describe this term in its report. The **Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart** (population approx. 612,700) describes the present 30 km/h zones established in connection with improving road safety and traffic calming as a positive feature of the current status of road safety (cf. State Capital Stuttgart 2025: 197). The **Stadt Dortmund** (population approx. 603,500) does not describe this term in its report. The **Freie und Hansestadt Bremen** (population approx. 586,300) in describing the current status of efforts to improve road safety, the increase in the number of people injured or killed in road traffic accidents per 100,000 inhabitants was assessed negatively (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Bremen 2023: 83). The **Landeshauptstadt Hannover** (population approx. 522,100) describes the current status regarding the promotion of cycling in connection with improving road safety with positive connotations (cf.

Landeshauptstadt Hannover 2020: 38). The **Bundesstadt Bonn** (population approx. 323,300) cites the National City Initiative Tempo 30 (cf. Bundesstadt Bonn 2022:53) and the decline in road traffic accidents (cf. *ibid.*: 58) as a positive aspect of the current status of improving road safety. Conversely the fact that the number of traffic accidents involving children has risen is cited as a negative aspect of the current situation (cf. *ibid.*: 58). The **Stadt Mannheim** (population approx. 318,000) describes the construction of cycle lanes as a positive development in relation to improving road safety (cf. Stadt Mannheim 2023: 113). The **Stadt Münster** (population approx. 308,300) focuses on improving road safety and the associated Mobility Master Plan 2035+ in its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation (cf. Stadt Münster 2024: 90). The **Landeshauptstadt Kiel** (population approx. 252,700) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation on improving road safety and the associated continuation of the 2035 cycle route network plan (cf. Landeshauptstadt Kiel 2024: 51). In the context of improving road safety, the fact that the number of road accident victims has not increased is described as a positive indicator (cf. *ibid.*: 102). The **Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau** (population approx. 237,500) in describing the current situation in relation to improving road safety, the fact that the number of people injured or killed in road accidents per 1,000 inhabitants is above the national average was cited as a negative factor (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2023: 99). The **Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck** (population approx. 218,200) focuses its sustainable and positively connoted target formulation on improving road safety in the sense of creating complete accessibility (cf. Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck 2023: 92). The **Enzkreis** (population approx. 199,700) in Baden-Württemberg describes in positive terms the current situation regarding the traffic monitoring system installed as part of the road safety improvements, which is contributing to road safety through preventive measures (cf. Enzkreis 2024: 99). The **Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken** (population approx. 183,000), in its sustainable and positively connoted formulation of objectives, focuses on improving road safety with the help of the Tempo 30 (20 mph speed limit) pilot project on main roads (cf. Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken 2024: 56 f.). The **Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt** (population approx. 167,000) in describing the current situation, cites with positive connotations the fact that in 2020 and 2021, the number of work-related injuries in Darmstadt's urban economy fell slightly and that no fatalities had been recorded to date (cf. Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt 2021: 26). The **Stadt Regensburg** (population approx. 151,400) cites as a positive sign the conversion of traffic lights to improve road safety and equipped with priority switching (cf. Stadt Regensburg 2024: 88) and the fact that the number of road traffic accidents has fallen since 2015, although – and this would turn the positive sign into a negative one – there has been a slight annual increase again since 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 91). The **Landkreis Oldenburg** (population approx. 132,000) does not describe this term in its report.

The **Stadt Cottbus/Chóseebuz** (population approx. 95,100) focuses on improving road safety and the associated low-conflict routing for cyclists and pedestrians in its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation (cf. Stadt Cottbus/Chóseebuz 2024:24). The **Stadt Lüdenscheid** (population approx. 71,200) describes the current status of improving road safety negatively, due to the narrow streets of the city (cf. Stadt Lüdenscheid 2024:16), the number of road traffic accidents (cf. *ibid.*: 19) and the high settlement load of 40.7% with flood areas compared to the state average in North Rhine-Westphalia (6.2%) (cf. *ibid.*: 24). The **Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald** (population approx. 56,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on improving road safety and the associated development of traffic-calmed and car-free urban districts (cf. Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald 2022: 44). The designation of 30 km/h zones (cf. *ibid.*: 69) is described as a positive indicator in the context of improving road safety. The **Stadt Görlitz** (population approx. 55,200) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Speyer** (population approx. 49,600) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar** (population approx. 45,700) describes in positive terms the pedestrian traffic concept (cf. Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar 2023:85) and the fact that the number of road traffic accidents has at least not worsened (cf. *ibid.*: 96). The **Wartburgstadt Eisenach** (population approx. 41,000) does not describe this term in its report. The **Hansestadt Stendal** (population approx. 37,900) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Wernigerode** (population approx. 32,200) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Geestland** (population approx. 31,100) does not describe this term in its report.

The **Stadt Eltville am Rhein** (population approx. 17,000) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on improving road safety with the aim of reducing motorised individual transport (cf. Stadt Eltville am Rhein 2022:41).

The **Stadt Niebüll** (population approx. 10,200) focuses on improving road safety in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Stadt Niebüll 2025:21).

The **Stadt Baruth/Mark** (population approx. 4,170) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Bad Köstritz** (population approx. 3,650) does not describe this term in its report. The **Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist** (population approx. 1,140) does not describe this term in its report.

Guiding principle of resilience

Berlin, Land und Bundeshauptstadt of the Federal Republic of Germany (population approx. 3,685,300), does not explicitly describe this term in its report. The **Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion** (population approx. 2,419,800) describes the flood protection measures implemented in the region as part of climate adaptation and disaster management as a positive aspect of the current situation (cf. Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion 2024: 51). The **Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg** (population approx. 1,862,600) focuses on urban wastewater management and urban waste management in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives in connection with climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2023: 154). The **Landeshauptstadt München** (population approx. 1,505,000) is focusing on greening municipal buildings in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives in connection with well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development (cf. Landeshauptstadt München 2022:30) and, in the context of climate adaptation and disaster control, on protective measures against extreme weather events (cf. *ibid.*: 31). The **Stadt Köln** (population approx. 1,024,600) mentions the Heat Action Plan for Older People in the City of Cologne (2019–2022) (cf. Stadt Köln 2023:168) and the implementation of the sponge city concept (cf. *ibid.*: 169) as positive aspects of the present situation. The **Stadt Frankfurt am Main** (population approx. 756,000) does not describe this term in its report. The **Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf** (population approx. 618,700) cites green roofs and heavy rain prevention as a positive achievement in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2022:45 f.). The **Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart** (population approx. 612,700) cites climate adaptation and disaster management as positive aspects of the current situation (cf. Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart 2025:227). The **Stadt Dortmund** (population approx. 603,500) cites flood protection in the city and green roofs for municipal buildings as positive aspects of the current situation with regard to climate adaptation and disaster control (cf. Stadt Dortmund 2022:48). The **Freie und Hansestadt Bremen** (population approx. 586,300) cites flood protection in the city (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Bremen 2023: 68) and information events on crisis prevention (cf. *ibid.*: 71) as positive aspects in the context of climate adaptation and disaster control. The **Landeshauptstadt Hannover** (population approx. 522,100) cites flood protection in the city and rainwater management as a positive aspect in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Landeshauptstadt Hannover 2020:33). The **Bundestadt Bonn** (population approx. 323,300) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Mannheim** (population approx. 318,000) cites its heat action plan as a positive measure in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (Stadt Mannheim 2023: 47). The **Stadt Münster** (population approx. 308,300) describes as positive features of the present situation information provided to citizens on the unsealing of surfaces and options for rainwater retention and rainwater infiltration (cf. Stadt Münster 2024: 80), the heavy rain hazard map (cf. *ibid.*: 85) and tree planting for cooling in summer and rainwater storage (cf. *ibid.*: 71). The **Landeshauptstadt Kiel** (population approx. 252,700) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau** (population approx. 237,500) describes as positive features of the present situation the city's flood protection measures and the implementation of the sponge city concept (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2023: 44) and the 2019 climate adaptation concept (cf. *ibid.*: 84). The **Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck** (population approx. 218,200) describes as a positive feature of the present situation the administrative district's climate protection management in the

context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck 2023:59). The **Enzkreis** (population approx. 199,700) in Baden-Württemberg cites the implementation of the sponge city concept as a positive feature of the present situation in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Enzkreis 2024: 95). The **Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken** (population approx. 183,000) describes as positive features of the present situation biodiversity, green roofs and water retention measures, as well as the avoidance of sealed surfaces, in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken 2024: 50). The **Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt** (population approx. 167,000) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Regensburg** (population approx. 151,400) describes as positive features of the present situation the city's flood protection concept and heavy rain and heat management in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Stadt Regensburg 2024: 102). The **Landkreis Oldenburg** (population approx. 132,000) describes climate adaptation and disaster management with positive connotations (cf. Landkreis Oldenburg 2024: 95).

The **Stadt Cottbus/Chóšebuz** (population approx. 95,100) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Lüdenscheld** (population approx. 71,200) describes information events on heat and flooding as a positive contribution to environmental and climate protection (cf. Stadt Lüdenscheld 2024:24). In the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, the topography and the associated high degree of sealing, the urban heat island effect and reduced rainwater infiltration are described with negative connotations (cf. *ibid.*:21 f.). The **Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald** (population approx. 56,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation on the creation of shade and quiet zones in the city as a contribution to climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald 2022: 44). Flood protection is cited as a positively connoted aspect in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. *ibid.*: 62). The **Stadt Görlitz** (population approx. 55,200) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Speyer** (population approx. 49,600) describes the city's heavy rain hazard map as a positive feature in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Stadt Speyer 2023: 44). The **Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar** (population approx. 45,700) focuses on flood protection and the siren warning system as contributions to climate adaptation and disaster management in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar 2023: 88, 95). Flood protection and the siren warning system are also described as features of the present situation with positive connotations (cf. *ibid.*). The **Wartburgstadt Eisenach** (population approx. 41,000) describes the high flood risk potential in parts of the city as a negative status quo in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Wartburgstadt Eisenach 2022: 18). The **Hansestadt Stendal** (population approx. 37,900) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Wernigerode** (population approx. 32,200) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Geestland** (population approx. 31,100) does not describe this term in its report.

The **Stadt Eltville am Rhein** (population approx. 17,000) describes the city's flood protection as a positive status quo in connection with climate adaptation and disaster management (cf. Stadt Eltville am Rhein 2022: 57). The high building density and extensive soil sealing, as well as the fact that there are hardly any air-cooling and air-purifying green spaces, are cited as negative features of the present situation (cf. *ibid.*: 58).

The **Stadt Niebüll** (population approx. 10,200) focuses on climate adaptation and disaster management in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Stadt Niebüll 2025: 21).

The **Stadt Baruth/Mark** (population approx. 4,170) does not describe this term in its report. The **Stadt Bad Köstritz** (population approx. 3,650) describes measures to reduce local warming (cf. Stadt Bad Köstritz 2023: 70) and flood protection (cf. *ibid.*: 71) as a positively aspect of the present situation in the context of climate adaptation and disaster management. The **Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist** (population approx. 1,140) does not describe this term in its report.

Guiding principle of sustainability

Berlin, Land und Bundeshauptstadt of the Federal Republic of Germany (population approx. 3,685,300), focuses in particular on strengthening eco-friendly transport in its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives (cf. Land und Bundeshauptstadt Berlin 2021: 66 f.). The **Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion** (population approx. 2,419,800) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development (cf. Rhein-Neckar Metropolregion 2024: 12), the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 12 ff.), a contribution to environmental and climate protection with urban development concepts (in German *Stadtentwicklungskonzepte* [STEKs]) 2035 (cf. *ibid.*: 21), the regional energy transition (cf. *ibid.*: 12 ff.) and the promotion of renewable energies (cf. *ibid.*: 34), as well as regional innovation promotion (cf. *ibid.*: 12). The development of non-environmentally friendly mobility, i.e. the increase in the number of cars per inhabitant (cf. *ibid.*: 41), as well as environmental pollution and air quality due to increased commuter traffic (cf. *ibid.*: 37) are described as negative aspects of the present situation. The **Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg** (population approx. 1,862,600) is focusing its forward-looking and positive target formulation on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by 2030, i.e. the integration of on-demand transport into local public transport (in German *Öffentlicher Personennahverkehr* [ÖPNV]) and higher frequency (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2023: 165) as well as a contribution to environmental and climate protection, i.e. achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 (cf. *ibid.*: 11). The positively cited aspects of the present situation with regard to the well-balanced development of human settlements and open spaces are: the use of conversion areas (cf. *ibid.*: 156), the slight decrease in land use intensity (cf. *ibid.*: 168), the increase in local recreation areas per inhabitant in m² (cf. *ibid.*: 169), the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 164), the decline in motorised individual transport (cf. *ibid.*: 166), the increase in electric cars (cf. *ibid.*: 172), the expansion of the cycle route network (cf. *ibid.*: 173) and the contribution to environmental and climate protection through the increase in residential buildings with renewable heating energy generation (cf. *ibid.*: 169). In the area of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the slight increase in privately registered cars between 2017 and 2021 is cited as a negative aspect of the present situation (cf. *ibid.*: 172). The **Landeshauptstadt München** (population approx. 1,505,000) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development based on organic farming (cf. Landeshauptstadt München 2022: 25), a contribution to environmental and climate protection as a climate-neutral city by 2035 (cf. *ibid.*: 27), the renewable energy expansion offensive and the Integrated Climate Protection Action Programme in München (cf. *ibid.*: 29). The current situation is seen as positive, with well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development in view of the increase in sustainably managed areas (cf. *ibid.*: 25), the reduction in the overall degree of soil sealing (cf. *ibid.*: 100), the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility with the help of the largest municipal electric mobility support programme in Germany (cf. *ibid.*: 28), the increase in journeys made by cycle or public transport (cf. *ibid.*: 107), the contribution to environmental and climate protection (cf. *ibid.*: 29) and the diverse economic structure (cf. *ibid.*: 92). The increase in motorised individual transport is cited as a negative feature of the present situation in the area of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 108). The **Stadt Köln** (population approx. 1,024,600) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development with the help of optimised land use within the framework of its Perspectives 2030+ (cf. Stadt Köln 2023: 133), the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility with more space for cycling and walking (cf. *ibid.*: 134) and hub connections at multimodal transfer points (cf. *ibid.*: 135), as well as a contribution to environmental and climate protection with the achievement of climate neutrality by 2035 (cf. *ibid.*: 166). As positive aspects of the current situation, the city points to the well-balanced development of human settlements and open spaces in the sense of “careful” land use (cf. *ibid.*: 131). This includes the following developments: a slight decrease in the proportion of settlement and road traffic spatial footprint in the total area between 2010 and 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 145) and a decrease in new land use between 2010 and 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 149); the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility based on the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) and the local transport plan and cycle path concept (cf. *ibid.*: 141); the decline in car use and the increase in public transport, cycle use and pedestrian traffic in the modal split from 1982 to 2017 (cf. *ibid.*: 147).

and the contribution to environmental and climate protection with the help of the support programme for building renovation and renewable energies (cf. *ibid.*: 138). The increase in overall car density between 2010 and 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 146) and the rise in rents between 2020 and 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 148) are cited as negative aspects of the present situation in the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility. The **Stadt Frankfurt am Main** (population approx. 756,000) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development by securing green and open spaces (cf. *Stadt Frankfurt am Main* 2020:108 ff.), promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility through the massive expansion of cycle traffic promotion (cf. *ibid.*: 108), the reduction of cars (cf. *ibid.*: 132) and the expansion of the charging infrastructure to promote electromobility (cf. *ibid.*: 134). Sustainability events (cf. *ibid.*: 110) and the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility through the creation of cycle parking spaces (cf. *ibid.*: 109) are described as a positive feature of the present situation. The **Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf** (population approx. 618,700) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation on the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility on the basis of the mobility plan (cf. *Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf* 2022: 57). The promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility with a view to modal split and shared mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 57 ff.) as well as the contribution to environmental and climate protection through an increase in the supply of residential buildings with electricity from renewable energy sources (cf. *ibid.*: 40) are described as positive aspects of the current situation. Aspects of the present situation reported with negative connotations include the very high proportion of settlement and road traffic spatial footprint (61.2% of the total area), which is above the average of 14.4% in Germany (cf. *ibid.*: 50), in the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, and the increase in car density (cf. *ibid.*: 60). The **Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart** (population approx. 612,700) describes in positive terms the situation regarding the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility through the increase in electric vehicles (cf. *Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart* 2025:195) and the decrease in car ownership (cf. *ibid.*: 194) as well as a contribution to environmental and climate protection through the construction of buildings with renewable energy sources (cf. *ibid.*: 202). The **Stadt Dortmund** (population approx. 603,500) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility and contributing to environmental and climate protection with the help of the Emission-Free City Centre project (cf. *Stadt Dortmund* 2022:57). In the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, the very high proportion of settlement and road traffic spatial footprint (59.9%) of the total area, which is above the average for Germany (14.4%), is seen as a negative feature of the present situation (cf. *ibid.*: 50) and is the increase in car density (cf. *ibid.*: 58) recorded in the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility. The **Freie und Hansestadt Bremen** (population approx. 586,300) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation on contributing to environmental and climate protection by achieving climate neutrality and safeguarding biodiversity (cf. *Freie und Hansestadt Bremen* 2023: 15) and reducing resource consumption in the administration and in its own and affiliated companies (cf. *ibid.*: 64). Positively cited aspects of the present situation include: the slightly increased land use intensity in connection with well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development (cf. *ibid.*: 74), the mobility concept for promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 15), the 2025 Transport Development Plan with a city-wide link between transport systems and services (cf. *ibid.*: 77), the promotion of cargo bikes (cf. *ibid.*: 79) and the Mobility Construction Location Act (cf. *ibid.*: 78) as well as the Combined Clean Air and Action Plan (cf. *ibid.*: 66) and the Bremen State Car Sharing Act of 2019 to reduce the climate and environmental impact of motorised individual transport (cf. *ibid.*: 78) as a contribution to environmental and climate protection. The minimal increase in new land use in the period 2019–2021 (cf. *ibid.*: 73) is cited as a negative aspect in the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development. The **Landeshauptstadt Hannover** (population approx. 522,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted target formulation on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by reducing motorised individual transport (cf. *Landeshauptstadt Hannover* 2020: 18), contributing to environmental and climate protection by promoting biodiversity and significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions (cf. *ibid.*), and strengthening the city as a business and employment location (cf. *ibid.*). Positive aspects of the present situation cited by the city include: the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility with the help of cycling concepts and the support of electromobility (cf. *ibid.*: 35);

the contribution to environmental and climate protection as one of the 50 greenest cities in Germany and the title of “German Capital of Biodiversity” awarded in 2011 (ibid.: 23); climate adaptation measures (cf. ibid.: 29) and in recent years, the significant reduction in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions (Landeshauptstadt Hannover [cf. ibid.:30 f.]). In the context of contributing to environmental and climate protection, the fact that the current CO₂ balance does not indicate that the targets set in 2008 will be achieved is cited as a negative aspect of the present situation (cf. ibid.: 29). The **Bundesstadt Bonn** (population approx. 323,300) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility with the help of modal split and the reduction of motorised individual transport (cf. Bundesstadt Bonn 2022: 53) and contributing to environmental and climate protection with the goal of climate neutrality by 2035 (cf. ibid.: 33). As positive aspects of the present situation, the city mentions: the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility based on the Mobility Programme (cf. ibid.: 53) and modal split (cf. ibid.: 56) and the contribution to environmental and climate protection through the installation of photovoltaic systems in municipal buildings and compliance with energy efficiency standards in the municipal building stock (cf. ibid.: 33), the increase in residential buildings with renewable energy sources, despite being below the average for the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (cf. ibid.: 37), and emission-free mobility in urban areas (cf. ibid.: 53). Negatively described aspects of the present situation regarding well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development are the barely changed proportion of settlement and total area of 50.85% of the total area (cf. ibid.: 48) and, in the area of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the slight increase in car density in the period 2011–2018 (cf. ibid.: 56). The **Stadt Mannheim** (population approx. 318,000) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives for promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility through integrated mobility services with the aid of digital technologies (cf. Stadt Mannheim 2023: 11) and contributing to environmental and climate protection in the areas of inner-city green spaces, climate-damaging and environmentally harmful emissions, and a reduction in municipal waste (cf. ibid.). Positively cited aspects of the present situation are the contribution to environmental and climate protection within the framework of the 2030 Climate Action Plan, the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2030 (cf. ibid.: 18) and the reduction in nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter pollution between 2012 and 2023, which is now below the limit values (cf. ibid.: 106). The increase in car density in the period 2016–2023 (cf. ibid.: 102) and the virtually unchanged car usage in the period 2018–2023 (cf. ibid.: 105) in connection with the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility are negatively described aspects of the current situation. The **Stadt Münster** (population approx. 308,300) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by supporting electric mobility (cf. Stadt Münster 2024: 97). In the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility for the period 1990–2022, the reduction in car use with a slight decline in pedestrian traffic and an increase in cycle use and public transport use (cf. ibid.: 9), cycle concepts (cf. ibid.: 94) and electric buses (cf. ibid.: 96) as well as the contribution to environmental and climate protection through a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions per inhabitant (cf. ibid.: 9) and the tree register maintained by the city administration (cf. ibid.: 72) are cited as positive connotations of the current situation. The **Landeshauptstadt Kiel** (population approx. 252,700) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by relieving the city's roads with the help of the appropriately high-frequency Kiel light rail system and the continuation of the 2035 cycle route network plan (cf. Landeshauptstadt Kiel 2024: 51). The positively cited features of the present situation include the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility based on the 2022 electric mobility strategy (cf. ibid.: 52) and through electric cars (cf. ibid.: 102), the contribution to environmental and climate protection through the number of completed residential buildings with heating energy from renewable energy sources (cf. ibid.: 103) and well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development through the living space per inhabitant, which remains unchanged from previous years (cf. ibid.: 102). The increase in car density and land use (cf. ibid.: 102) is cited as a negative aspect of the present situation in connection with well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development. The **Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau** (population approx. 237,500) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development based on the 2040 land use plan (cf. Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau 2023: 82) and a contribution to environmental and climate

protection by reducing CO₂ emissions by 60% by 2030, saving energy and using renewable energies (cf. *ibid.*: 26). Positively cited measures include: the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility through an appropriate modal split; the city's good global reputation in the field of environmentally friendly transport planning and the pilot project Climate Mobility Plan (cf. *ibid.*: 89 f.); sustainability management with the help of a sustainability council that has been in office since 2006 (cf. *ibid.*: 16); ongoing monitoring, corresponding sustainability reporting (cf. *ibid.*: 29) and corresponding interdepartmental communication and co-operation (cf. *ibid.*: 31). In the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, the high proportion of settlement and road traffic spatial footprint in the total area (cf. *ibid.*: 92) and the increase in car density (cf. *ibid.*: 99) are cited as negative aspects of the current situation, as is the fact that traffic-related CO₂ emissions are not falling (cf. *ibid.*: 89). The **Landkreis Fürstenfeldbruck** (population approx. 218,200) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development based on appropriately oriented land use (cf. Landkreis Fürstenfeldbruck 2023: 19), the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 91) and a contribution to environmental and climate protection by preventing land sealing (cf. *ibid.*: 20). In the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, the features of the present situation with positive connotations include: the land use intensity remaining unchanged in the period 2010–2020 and the slight decrease in the proportion of settlement and road traffic spatial footprint in the total area in the period 2018–2019 compared to the previous year (cf. *ibid.*: 100); the regional bus network, which has been greatly expanded as part of the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 18); the support of cycling and walking (cf. *ibid.*: 92); the networking of all forms of mobility as a sharing system (cf. *ibid.*: 92) and, in terms of the contribution to environmental and climate protection, the increased number of residential buildings completed with renewable heating energy (cf. *ibid.*: 67) and the decline in air pollution in the period 2012–2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 108). The increased density of passenger cars (cf. *ibid.*: 106) is cited as a negative feature of the present situation with regard to the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility. The **Enzkreis** (population approx. 199,700) focuses its forward-looking and positively formulated objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by improving the infrastructure for cycling and walking (Enzkreis 2024: 94) and contributing to environmental and climate protection on the basis of a carbon-neutral, climate-adapted and energy-efficient county (cf. Enzkreis 2024: 94). In the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the following are considered to be positive developments: support for on-demand transport since 2023 (cf. *ibid.*: 96), the planned new light rail line and the cycling concept (cf. *ibid.*: 97), in the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, and as a contribution to environmental and climate protection, the increase in the number of residential buildings completed with electricity from renewable energy sources in the period 2016–2022 (cf. *ibid.*: 100). The **Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken** (population approx. 183,000) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility on the basis of the Transport Development Plan / Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan 2030 (cf. Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken 2024: 56) and with the help of public transport hubs and mobility stations (cf. *ibid.*: 57), as well as contributing to environmental and climate protection through municipal heat planning (cf. *ibid.*: 36). In the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the following were cited as positive contributions: the e-mobility concept (cf. *ibid.*: 57), the expansion of park-and-ride facilities (cf. *ibid.*), subsidies for the Germany-wide rail ticket (cf. *ibid.*: 58) and company cycle leasing (cf. *ibid.*), as well as the promotion of renewable energies (cf. *ibid.*: 35), reducing energy consumption and increasing energy efficiency (cf. *ibid.*: 36). The **Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt** (population approx. 167,000) cites the following positively described measures: the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility and the associated support for electric mobility (cf. Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt 2021: 14) as well as the Climate Protection Plan 2035 (cf. *ibid.*: 8); the Street Lighting Concept 2020 and the associated increase in energy efficiency (cf. *ibid.*: 18 ff.) and the corresponding partial use of the municipal administrative district heating network (cf. *ibid.*: 22); the reduction of water consumption by 9.9% compared to 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 23) and the promotion of biodiversity (cf. *ibid.*: 32 f.). The contribution to environmental and climate protection is described with negative connotations due to the fact that CO₂ emissions from Darmstadt's municipal economy have risen by 41% compared to 2020 as a result of network losses (cf. *ibid.*: 24). The **Stadt Regensburg** (population approx. 151,400) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of

objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by reducing motorised individual transport, a corresponding modal split (cf. Stadt Regensburg 2024: 86) and supporting electric mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 89), as well as contributing to environmental and climate protection in the area of green spaces (cf. *ibid.*: 7) and creating climate-neutral public utilities by 2035 (cf. *ibid.*: 89). In the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the following are considered positive aspects of the current situation: the designation as a cycle-friendly municipality in Bavaria (cf. *ibid.*: 88), the support of electric mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 89), the modal split and the reduction in the share of motorised individual transport from 51% to 37% in the period 1999–2024 (cf. *ibid.*: 91), as well as the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 41% compared to 1990 (cf. *ibid.*: 23) as a contribution to environmental and climate protection, the promotion of energy-efficient building renovation by owners (cf. *ibid.*: 103) and the creation of sustainability awareness with the help of the Regensburg Future Barometer (cf. *ibid.*: 15). The increase in car density in the period 2015–2023 (cf. *ibid.*: 91) is cited as a negative aspect in connection with the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility. The **Landkreis Oldenburg** (population approx. 132,000) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on contributing to environmental and climate protection with the aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 (cf. Landkreis Oldenburg 2024: 94). The project to equip all roof surfaces of the community centre and all buildings owned by the administrative district with photovoltaic systems is cited as a positive contribution to environmental and climate protection (cf. *ibid.*: 94).

The **Stadt Cottbus/Chóšebuz** (population approx. 95,100) is focusing its forward-looking and positive target formulation on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development with the aim of reducing land consumption (cf. Stadt Cottbus/Chóšebuz 2024: 12) in line with the strategy of internal rather than external development (cf. *ibid.*: 27); the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility based on the Old Town Mobility Concept (cf. *ibid.*: 13) and a cycle parking facility (cf. *ibid.*: 24); a contribution to environmental and climate protection through the further development and strengthening of existing natural areas and green spaces; the energy-efficient renovation of existing buildings and environmentally friendly construction (cf. *ibid.*: 12); promoting biodiversity; expanding renewable energies and aiming for climate neutrality by 2045 (cf. *ibid.*: 13); as well as investing in technology, education and infrastructure projects (cf. *ibid.*: 13). The **Stadt Lüdenschaid** (population approx. 71,200) cites the following developments as examples in positive terms: a well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development with regard to new land use (cf. Stadt Lüdenschaid 2024:20); the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility with regard to the modal split and the reduction of motorised individual transport (cf. *ibid.*: 7); the increase in electric cars in the period 2020–2023 – albeit at a low level (cf. *ibid.*: 18); contributing to environmental and climate protection through CO₂ savings (cf. *ibid.*: 7) and supplying homes from renewable energy sources (cf. *ibid.*: 31). In the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the following developments were described in negative terms: the increase in car density in the period 2010–2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 17), the promotion of affordable housing, the increase in rents, which is significantly below the average for North Rhine-Westphalia (cf. *ibid.*: 11), and well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, the local recreation area, which is significantly below the state average of 48.5 m² per inhabitant, but has been increasing in size since 2016 (cf. *ibid.*: 29). The **Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald** (population approx. 56,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by supporting intermodal and environmentally friendly mobility concepts (cf. Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald 2022:44); the reduction of motorised individual transport (cf. *ibid.*: 65); the support of alternative drive systems (cf. *ibid.*: 66) and a common fare system or a strong regional transport association (cf. *ibid.*: 67); contributing to environmental and climate protection by reducing CO₂ emissions and dependence on fossil fuels (cf. *ibid.*: 44); and the sustainable design of heat supply (cf. *ibid.*: 61). The well-balanced development of residential areas and open spaces, the halting of land sealing and the unsealing of land (cf. *ibid.*: 62) and the reduction of car parking spaces (cf. *ibid.*: 66) are seen as positive aspects of the present situation, as is the fact that Greifswald is the cycle capital of Germany (cf. *ibid.*: 65). In terms of contributing to environmental and climate protection, the following measures were cited in positive terms: the climate protection concept (cf. *ibid.*: 59), the plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 95% by 2050 compared to 1990 and to halve energy consumption (cf. *ibid.*: 61), building sustainably (cf. *ibid.*: 62), saving energy in schools and daycare

centres, and securing and upgrading the city's green belt (cf. *ibid.*: 63), as well as implementing the ISEK 2030 (cf. *ibid.*: 65) to create a city of short distances. The **Stadt Görlitz** (population approx. 55,200) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development by creating attractive location conditions for companies with the help of modern infrastructure (cf. *Stadt Görlitz* 2023: 21). In the context of contributing to environmental and climate protection, greening the city is described as a positively connoted aspect of the present situation (cf. *ibid.*: 19). The **Stadt Speyer** (population approx. 49,600) cites the following features of the present situation in positive terms: a well-balanced development of residential areas and open spaces with regard to car density (cf. *Stadt Speyer* 2023: 57), the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility through a range of shared taxis and the possibility of cycle rental beyond the city limits (cf. *ibid.*: 54), the dominance of pedestrian and cycle traffic over other modes of transport (cf. *ibid.*: 58), the good accessibility of public transport stops (cf. *ibid.*: 86), and the annual waste disposal campaigns as a contribution to environmental and climate protection (cf. *ibid.*: 45). On the other hand, the high land consumption (cf. *ibid.*: 46) is stated as a negative feature of the present situation. In connection with well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development. The **Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar** (population approx. 45,700) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility with the help of the regional light rail concept (cf. *Stadt Rottenburg am Neckar* 2023: 86). Positively cited aspects of the current situation include: the cycling and pedestrian traffic concepts and the support of electromobility (cf. *ibid.*: 85 f.), the provision of green spaces as a contribution to environmental and climate protection (cf. *ibid.*: 78) and measures to reduce settlement waste (cf. *ibid.*: 81), as well as the mixed use of land in urban development in general (cf. *ibid.*: 75). The **Wartburgstadt Eisenach** (population approx. 41,000) cites in positive terms the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *Wartburgstadt Eisenach* 2022: 16) as well as the green space concept (cf. *ibid.*: 18) as a contribution to environmental and climate protection. In the area of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the high level of motorisation and the high density of cars (cf. *ibid.*: 16) and the inadequate cycling and pedestrian infrastructure (cf. *ibid.*: 17) are cited as negative aspects of the present situation, as is the monostructure in the labour market dependent on the automotive industry (cf. *ibid.*: 14). The **Hansestadt Stendal** (population approx. 37,900) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on contributing to environmental and climate protection with the help of decarbonisation and on the basis of a climate risk analysis (cf. *Hansestadt Stendal* 2024: 16). A well-balanced development of human settlements and open spaces (cf. *ibid.*: 11) and the sustainable use of resources, especially in construction and infrastructure measures (cf. *ibid.*: 10 f.), are cited as positive features of the present state of the city. A potentially negative aspect in terms of the contribution to environmental and climate protection is the fact that the transport and distribution of gas generates revenues of €11.95 million for the Stendal public utility company (cf. *ibid.*: 10 f.). The **Stadt Wernigerode** (population approx. 32,200) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on contributing to environmental and climate protection and sustainable tourism (cf. *Stadt Wernigerode* 2022: 7). In the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the following are considered positive measures: the provision of basic information; the introduction in 2010 and gradual expansion of the Harz holiday ticket for free use of buses and trams in the Harz county during a holiday stay; buses and trams as a climate-friendly alternative (cf. *ibid.*: 12), CO₂ savings of up to 90% in the area of mobility through the use of biogas (cf. *ibid.*: 15); the expansion of electromobility through support programmes and a one-off subsidy of € 200 per household for the purchase of an e-bike from a local dealer (cf. *ibid.*: 16). Also assessed as positive contributions to environmental and climate protection are the establishment of uniform quality and environmental standards, for example, for the certification of currently seven accommodation providers in Wernigerode and Schierke as national park-friendly accommodations, the protection of forests through tree planting and awareness-raising measures aimed at visitors with regard to paper consumption and waste avoidance (cf. *ibid.*: 13), and the designation as a Fairtrade Town 2017 (cf. *ibid.*: 11). The **Stadt Geestland** (population approx. 31,100) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted formulation of objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 9) and contributing to environmental and climate protection (cf. *ibid.*: 11).

The **Stadt Eltville am Rhein** (population approx. 17,000) focuses its future-oriented and positively connoted objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by expanding the network of footpaths and paved walkways (cf. Stadt Eltville am Rhein 2022: 41), reducing motorised individual transport and promoting local mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 50), as well as contributing to environmental and climate protection through energy conservation and the generation of renewable energy, reducing emissions from transport and industry, and preserving and developing open spaces and green structures (cf. *ibid.*: 41 ff.). Negatively cited aspects of the present situation included: in the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, the high land consumption for motorised individual transport and the land consumption caused by stationary traffic, the inadequate road and parking infrastructure and the high volume of traffic during rush hours (cf. *ibid.*: 48) as well as, in the area of public transport services, low frequency, inadequate connections and an unfavourable fare structure (cf. *ibid.*: 46) and the low importance of cycling (cf. *ibid.*: 47).

The **Stadt Niebüll** (population approx. 10,200) focuses its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. Stadt Niebüll 2025: 21) and, as a contribution to environmental and climate protection, on improving air quality and municipal waste management (cf. *ibid.*). The promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility (cf. *ibid.*: 24) is described as a positive feature of the current situation, as is participation in the City Cycling competition since 2014 (cf. *ibid.*: 25) as a contribution to environmental and climate protection. Cited as negative features of the present situation were: the increase in land consumption (cf. *ibid.*: 26) and, in terms of the contribution to environmental and climate protection, the decline in newly constructed residential buildings powered by renewable energy sources, whose share is nevertheless 28% above the average for the state of Schleswig-Holstein (cf. *ibid.*: 30).

The **Stadt Baruth/Mark** (population approx. 4,170) cites the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility based on the Mobility Concept 2030, the associated increased implementation of cycle path infrastructure requirements and the Mobility Today–Tomorrow–2050 strategy as positive aspects of the present situation (cf. Stadt Baruth/Mark 2021: 83). As a positive contribution to environmental and climate protection, the town cites the award as a 100% renewable energy region, membership in the Climate Alliance e.V., participation in the German Federal Government's Climate Action Alliance 2020, integration into international networks, the energy and climate protection programme and the annual reduction of CO₂ emissions by more than 350 tonnes (cf. *ibid.*: 83), as well as digitalisation measures (cf. *ibid.*: 83). The **Stadt Bad Köstritz** (population approx. 3,650) is focusing its forward-looking and positively connoted objectives on well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development by reducing land consumption and sealing and infill development (cf. Stadt Bad Köstritz 2023: 67) and the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility through the expansion of the cycle and hiking trail network (cf. *ibid.*: 73 ff.). In the context of well-balanced built and non-built-up environment development, the town mentions with positive connotations the insignificant change in land use in the period 2019–2021 (cf. *ibid.*: 74). Positively cited in connection with the promotion of low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, are the action plan for electric mobility 2020 (cf. *ibid.*: 73) and the insignificant change in car density in the period 2018–2022 (cf. *ibid.*: 77). The **Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist** (population approx. 1,140) focuses its positively worded formulation of objectives on promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility by: implementing the principle of a car-free island, the Integrated Energy and Climate Protection Concept and the gradual introduction of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in shipping (cf. Einheits- und Inselgemeinde Juist 2021: 92), contributing to environmental and climate protection with the help of the strategy that the North Sea island should be climate-neutral by 2030, thereby reducing CO₂ emissions to zero (cf. *ibid.*: 92), and improving the quality of life in the island's harbour (cf. *ibid.*: 92). In the context of promoting low-emission and environmentally friendly mobility, the community positively cites the hire of electric cars, e-scooters and e-bikes for citizens and tourists (cf. *ibid.*: 92), the sustainable purchasing policy (cf. *ibid.*: 91). As a contribution to environmental and climate protection, they positively cite the award as one of Germany's most sustainable small towns and municipalities in 2015 and 2015 and as a Fairtrade Town (cf. *ibid.*: 91).