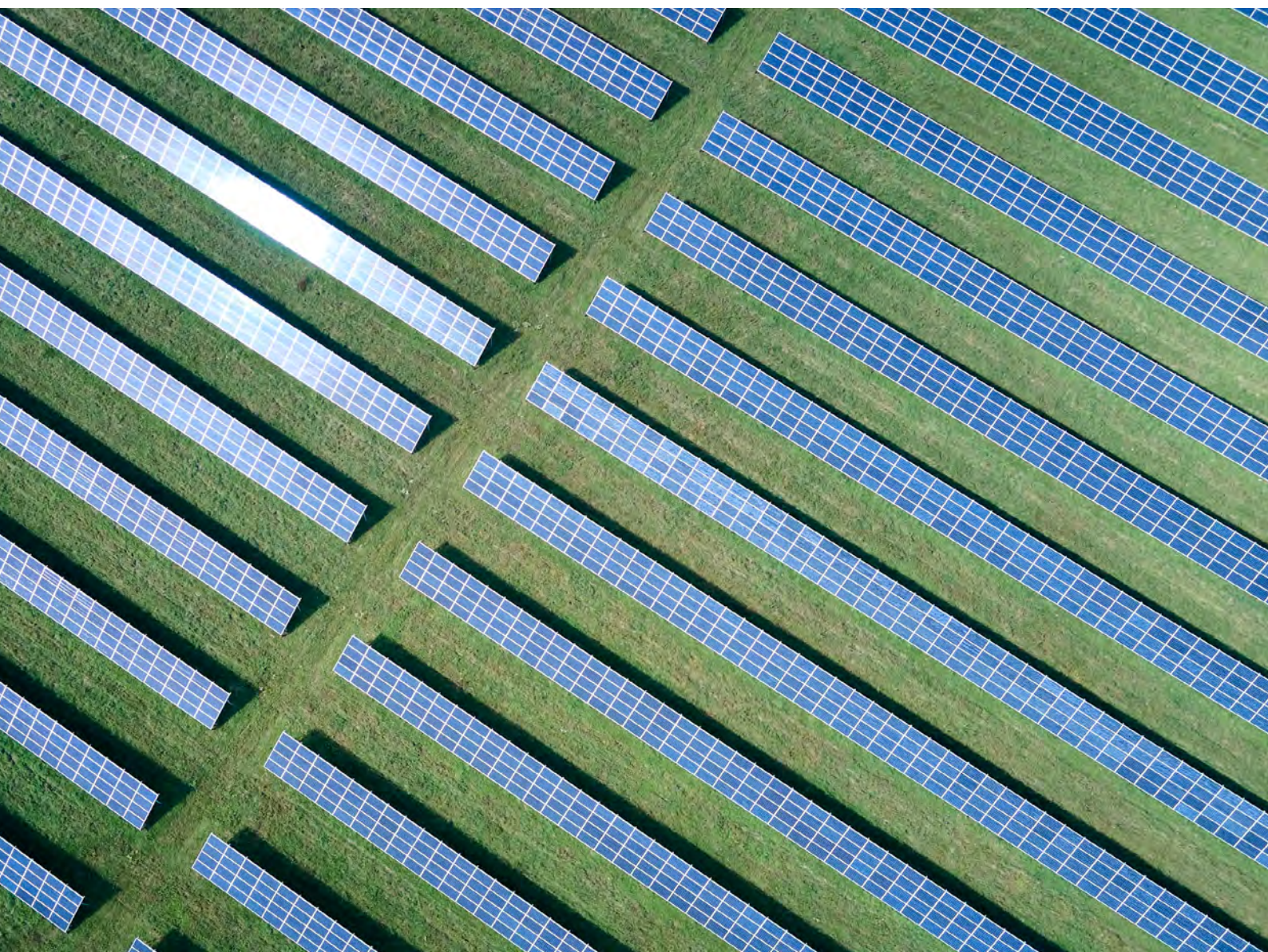




Deutsches Institut
für Urbanistik

20
22

Annual Review





Dear readers,

2022 was, in socio-political terms, a problematic year with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the sobering outcomes of the World Climate Summit and the World Conference on Nature, the recurring human rights violations in Iran and elsewhere, but also with the economic and social upheavals caused by exploding prices.

We therefore hardly dare say that 2022 was actually a good, even successful year for us at Difu. We managed to support cities by providing research and consulting in key areas of action and, despite considerable challenges, we also achieved a good economic result. Around 200 colleagues currently work at Difu – more than ever before. Despite – and to a certain extent because of – the prosperous development, we initiated a reform process at Difu last year. On the one hand, we think it is wiser to think about changes while the Institute is doing well economically. On the other hand, there are also constraints that make reforms necessary. We are having to cope with considerable increases in the so-called step fixed costs at our offices in Berlin and Cologne. This applies in particular to the exploding rental costs and expenditure for IT. A shortage of skilled workers and the intense competition for good staff, compounded by the high cost of living at our locations, are also restricting the Institute's further growth.

Our colleagues at Difu are our capital and they ensure the quality of our work. Commercial Director Luise Adrian and I are aware of this. We have therefore started to pass on any margins arising from economic improvements – as far as this is justifiable – to our staff.

Susanne Plagemann, a colleague who is highly valued by us all, retired at the end of 2022. She worked at Difu for over 30 years. No other colleague has experienced the social changes of the last decades – think digitalisation – so closely in her field of activity. For decades she led the Knowledge Management Department – covering IT, the internet, librarianship and documentation – with aplomb and considerable success. We have now restructured the department, decentralised the responsibility structures a little and transferred overall responsibility to Ulrike Wolf, who has already been responsible for further training at Difu since 2020.

Looking back, we would like to thank those outside Difu who accompany us, collaborate with us and support us. The Association for Municipal Research and thus also the Association of German Cities as our shareholders are the guarantor and basis for the excellent cooperation with German cities in our research and consulting activities. We would like to express our special thanks to Difu's more than 100 donor cities, which also support us financially, as well as to the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (Bundesministerium für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Bauwesen, BMWBS) and the Berlin Senate, which both subsidise our work. Although we generate around three quarters of our income ourselves, these funds give us freedom and independence – including to develop topics that are not (yet) put out to tender by potential clients. We would like to thank our Academic Advisory Board for the suggestions and critical reflections as well as the many cooperation partners with whom we work on projects together.

We are celebrating an important anniversary in 2023. Difu has now been a reliable partner for municipalities for 50 years. Please continue to stay in touch with us.

Prof. Dr Carsten Kühl
Director of research, managing director



Annual Review 2022

With our research, we want to provide municipalities with impetus for solving upcoming tasks and contribute to sustainable urban development with innovative ideas.

This issue presents a selection of our projects and activities from the past year.

Christian Raffer, Henrik Scheller and Oliver Peters

Sustainability ROIs in municipal budgets

In collaboration with eight cities and the NRW.Bank, Difu has developed an instrument with which municipalities can determine the impact of investment measures on sustainability. The sustainability ROI (return on investment) tool takes into account not only economic and budgetary aspects but also ecological and societal issues.

The transformation of municipalities in line with sustainability goals is considered a key challenge for the next few years. Affecting all areas of people's lives as well as the infrastructures for providing public utilities and services, it is precisely the overarching issue of climate change as the driver of this fundamental restructuring process that confronts municipalities with new tasks: while they have adapted their traditionally sectoral-based administrative departments and clearly delineated processes rather cautiously and reactively in the past, the extraordinary challenges posed by the socio-ecological transformation today demand radical structural changes. This is because overarching issues such as climate change and digitalisation cannot be tackled in a hierarchical organisational structure as was previously the case. Instead, a new "governance for sustainable transformation" is needed. The term may sound abstract, but implies nothing other than that municipalities need to organise themselves differently than before, think in a more networked way, use new steering tools and engage the various stakeholders in the city. Whether they will succeed is not just a question of political will and corresponding majorities. The steering and management of this transformation based on sustainability goals must also be underpinned by corresponding budgets and supported by suitable budgetary instruments. That is the only way to achieve sustainable impacts in the truest sense of the word, which will determine how well Germany masters the sustainability transition and climate change.

Investments: sustainable and profitable

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals with their German indicator system comprising "SDG Indicators for Municipalities" are proving to be a driver of innovation in this regard – and not just by providing goals and indicators that serve as guidelines for all sustainability activities conducted by the municipalities in various areas of action. Rather, their possible applications are now being tested in various development strands, including and especially in the municipal finance sphere. Difu's Economy, Finance and Sustainability Indicators team has also used the "SDG Indicators for Municipalities" system as the basis for developing a new tool for calculating the so-called "sustainability ROI" (return on investment). This is aimed at enabling municipalities to determine the sustainability impacts of specific investment measures.

The model, which was developed in 2022 together with eight partner municipalities and the NRW.Bank, can be used to determine, based on scenarios, how budgetary expenditures for investments relevant for transformation contribute to the sustainability goals. The model is based on theoretically founded ROI approaches that had already been developed in various urban development contexts, but have been adapted here for the first time for the issue of sustainable urban development. In contrast to a financial ROI, a sustainability ROI is not a one-dimensional indicator, but a multidimensional quantity that encompasses the economic, ecological and societal aspects.

Social aspects are equally taken into account. For investing in individual "transformation

needs” – such as urban greening or constructing new, socially and ecologically high-quality educational facilities – the costs and benefits in terms of achieving the SDGs are assessed on the basis of an index-based evaluation. The SDGs themselves are fairly universal in nature, as they were actually developed for the global level. Nevertheless, as part of the joint project they were also downscaled and localised for individual urban investment schemes and prepared in the form of standardised goal and indicator sets for different types of investments. For this purpose, the SDGs and their sub-goals were filtered accordingly – from the global level to their application for Germany, specific German cities and individual investment schemes. This enabled an evaluation matrix of selected SDG sub-goals to be developed, which, in conjunction with a filling-in aid for municipal administrative departments, enables the scoring and indexing of various alternatives for individual investment schemes. The index calculated in this way does justice to the conventional ROI approach in that it is always considered in relation to the respective investment costs. By this means, the sustainability ROI tool not only aims to enable a sustainability-based assessment of municipal investments. Rather, it is also intended to help finance departments enter into a reasoned discourse with administrative departments in order to make forward-looking investments that go beyond the conventional economic efficiency principle in that they are also as profitable as possible throughout the life cycle in terms of sustainability.

Sustainable development must include budgetary measures

The “sustainability ROI” approach thus complements the currently frequently discussed approach known as “sustainability budgets”. These represent a form of impact-based budget and administrative management, the purpose of which is to align the distribution of municipal financial resources with sustainability goals. The approach is very similar to the traditional impact-based controlling used in double-entry bookkeeping: goals, often localised SDGs, as well as corresponding indicators are mainstreamed in the budget’s product groups or products, and regular reports are made on the achievement of the goals. This should enable the concept of sustainability to become an in-

tegral component of the budgetary cycle while enabling public funds to be channelled into sustainable projects in a more targeted way than before. The sustainable development of municipalities must include budget management. That is why increasingly more municipalities are beginning to rethink even such closely regulated processes as budgeting and finance. These approaches are still in their infancy. Cities and local authorities therefore need support in this search for practicable approaches – not only from research, but also from Germany’s federal states, the municipal supervisory authorities and the federal state and development banks. Difu sees itself as a partner of the municipalities and will continue to work on this topic in the coming years in the Sustainable Financing of Municipal Climate Investments under Consideration of EU Taxonomy (KlimKomInvest) project, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) and the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt, DLR).

➔ difu.de/16809



• Christian Raffer, M. Sc.
+49 30 39001-198
raffer@difu.de



• Dr. Henrik Scheller
+49 30 39001-295
scheller@difu.de



• Oliver Peters, M. Sc.
+49 30 39001-204
opeters@difu.de

Rethinking city centres

City centres need to be redefined. But what constitutes a city centre meeting contemporary needs? Traditional uses such as shopping and gastronomy no longer seem to suffice. A recent Difu study shows how municipalities can leverage scope for transformation. An interview with the authors Julia Diring, Ricarda Pätzold and Sandra Wagner-Endres.

There is currently considerable debate about the future of city centres. What kind of city centre does urban society need?

Ricarda Pätzold: In our view, multi-functional uses are important for ensuring the vitality of city centres, i.e. there should be a variety of different amenities in addition to retail and gastronomy, for example residential accommodation, social facilities, schools and day-care centres, but also trade-based businesses and production. But all the things that need to come together so that people perceive the city centre as their city centre varies from city to city and must be negotiated locally. Essential for lively city centres are above all the everyday functions – administration, local supplies, bicycle parking, etc. – so that people can live well there. This gives city centres an everyday significance and offers various reasons to visit them.

What has been neglected so far in the debate?

Julia Diring: Issues such as the mobility transition, climate change mitigation and adaptation, public welfare, the circular economy and social cohesion have so far played a subordinate role. However, these transformative building blocks – as we call them – can provide substantial impetus for strengthening city centres.

Sandra Wagner-Endres: From our point of view, city centres must also contribute to urban transformation. Although the latter is taking place across cities as a whole, city centres cannot absolve themselves of it. Basically, this is an opportunity to make changes visible in these important hubs. To take the example of climate change: It's clear that we also have to deal with it in city centres. Because if we still want to visit city centres in thirty, forty, fifty years, we need green spaces and architecture that takes climate change into account. "Overheated" city centres are not worth living in.

What distinguishes city centres from other neighbourhoods?

Julia Diring: The city centre is the place in the city frequented by different population groups. If, for example, creative approaches to climate-adapted building or car-free zones are tested here and work well for many people, this can have an impact on the rest of the city.

Ricarda Pätzold: We should utilise the centrality of city centres. Because we all go there more often and can thus come into contact with new ideas and have new experiences. It's therefore also about visibility. It's not without reason that demonstrations often take place in city centres, because the message is seen there. The city centre

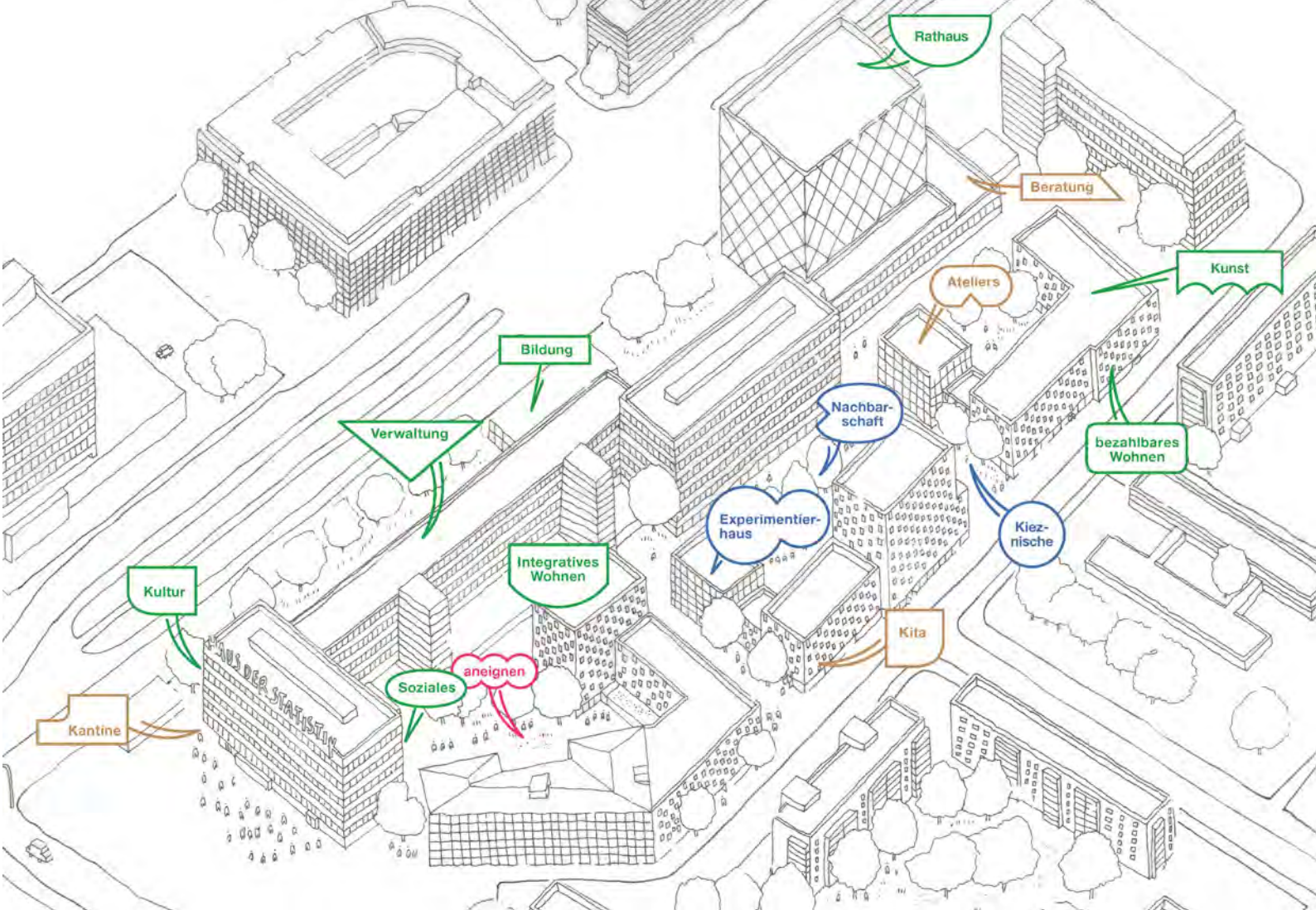
as a showcase, so to speak, for urban transformation.

Julia Diring: It's a space providing possibilities with niches for temporary use, where you can try things out. Where you can test how, for example, shops run that focus on the circular economy, or buildings that are much more mixed – with different stakeholders and a stronger focus on public welfare.

How might that look like?

Sandra Wagner-Endres: This can be seen quite well in the House of Statistics (Haus der Statistik) in Berlin. Here it's planned to combine accommodation, administration, social infrastructure and (creative) businesses in one place. The development of this large site was envisaged as a process from the very beginning. There was an overall concept – which was also developed jointly – and now pioneering uses are being tested: What works? In which direction could it go? A microcosm, if you like.

Ricarda Pätzold: This processual approach, the constant questioning – what do we want? Is this still right? – it's something you have to practise, because otherwise you're drawing on decisions that were made twenty years ago. What once seemed a good idea may no longer have any



Community-led urban development addresses a variety of uses and offerings. Usage scenario for the House of Statistics (Haus der Statistik) Berlin, as of 2019 – illustration: ZUSAMMENKUNFT Berlin eG

relevance for the society in question when it's eventually implemented.

It must be possible to take a different path. For years, many architects thought that squares set in stone were important and good. With the sponge city, that's changing today.

In what way?

Sandra Wagner-Endres: The sponge city is a good example. Copenhagen comes immediately to mind. There, many squares were created in the city centre – thus sealing its surfaces. And they're now changing course. There are now plans for greening, all around on all floors. Transformation requires positive images of the future.

How do local authorities develop a vision that is coherent for them?

Sandra Wagner-Endres: The central starting point is the definition of a target vision. All stakeholders in the city centre – be they residents or local trade – should be involved.

Julia Diringer: Developing a vision together with this inner-city network, which is more diverse than in other neighbourhoods, is a very complex process. It therefore needs someone to take over the steering. From our point of view, this is ideally the local authority, although it's not the central owner. Many private stakeholders with different interests exert influence in the city centres.

Which instruments can local authorities use for developing city centres?

Sandra Wagner-Endres: If they don't own any land themselves – which is often the case – they can try to buy land that becomes available. Or they can give themselves statutory pre-emption rights. And they can implement investment measures in the public realm. They can create places where people like to spend time, with greenery, benches, playgrounds.

Ricarda Pätzold: Of course, there's the question of what happens to vacant, large-scale properties? Who do you leave it to? Is something happening there that is helpful to the team or

only benefits individual interests? And to what extent does the public sector need to get more involved through urban development contracts or ownership? Lübeck, for example, has now converted a former department store into a school. With such changes in use, city centres are also changing. It's important that added value is created throughout the cities. It cannot be about taking functions away from other parts of the city, for example in the cultural sector. It's about strengthening the network of public functions throughout city centres as central hubs.

What do you recommend to cities that want to tackle this process?

Ricarda Pätzold: In a project on inner-city development currently underway at Difu, we want to open up new perspectives on the topic together with five partner cities – using the foresight method. In essence, it's about thinking in a radically different way for once, instead of perhaps continuing what generations have done before. City centres as social settings, for example, often get far too little attention. In this respect, this function should urgently be strengthened and it certainly makes sense to look at this urban space with other methods.

Interview: Dr. Sinje Hörlin

➔ difu.de/17532



• Julia Diringer
+49 30 39001-283
diringer@difu.de



© Annette Koroll

• Dipl.-Ing. Ricarda Pätzold
+49 30 39001-190
paetzold@difu.de



• Dipl.-Ing. Sandra Wagner-Endres
+49 30 39001-295
wagner-endres@difu.de

You can find more information online:

➔ difu.de/publikationen

➔ difu.de/projekte

➔ difu.de/veranstaltungen





Maic Verbücheln and Thomas Preuß

Municipalities are important players in the circular economy

Municipalities have interfaces to the circular economy in many areas of action. However, they are often not perceived as key players in this regenerative economic model. Areas of potential on route to circular cities.

The principle of the circular economy is based on transforming the current economic system: away from a linear model based on extracting raw materials for generating and then disposing of products, towards a circular economy in which the individual processes – extracting raw materials, designing, producing or refurbishing used goods as well as their distribution, consumption, use, repurposing, repair, collection and recycling – are considered as a whole. Sustainability principles such as efficiency, consistency and sufficiency provide guiding strategies for this type of economy.

Municipalities have direct or indirect possibilities for influencing processes that are important for the circular economy, for example when it comes to procurement they can influence the design or production of goods. They influence consumer behaviour by providing advice on reducing waste. Municipal waste management companies control the collection of waste and thus play a significant role in decisions about reusing and recycling materials. City councils sometimes have control over the type and amount of building materials used. This enables cities to also exert influence on markets for building materials, recyclables and waste for disposal.

Pathways to resource-efficient municipalities

Despite these multiple interfaces, local authorities are hardly perceived as significant actors in the circular economy. Difu therefore wants to clarify the possibilities for municipal action on route to the circular economy. For example, in the current “Environment in the Neighbourhood” project, the Institute is developing content-led building blocks for strategy of the

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz, BMUV) on municipal sustainability for the German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA). Under the focal point “The circular city – ways to resource-efficient municipalities” (Die Kreislaufstadt – Wege zur ressourcenleichten Kommune), challenges at the local level are being identified and recommendations for integrated climate and resource policies are being developed. The close link between sustainable, resource-conserving and resilient urban development at the city-wide level down to the neighbourhoods becomes evident here. At the same time, it becomes apparent how technical, economic and social aspects of urban living environments are interconnected in the circular city. Policy-makers, city administration, economic development, municipal enterprises and civil society are thus identified as key actors of the circular city.

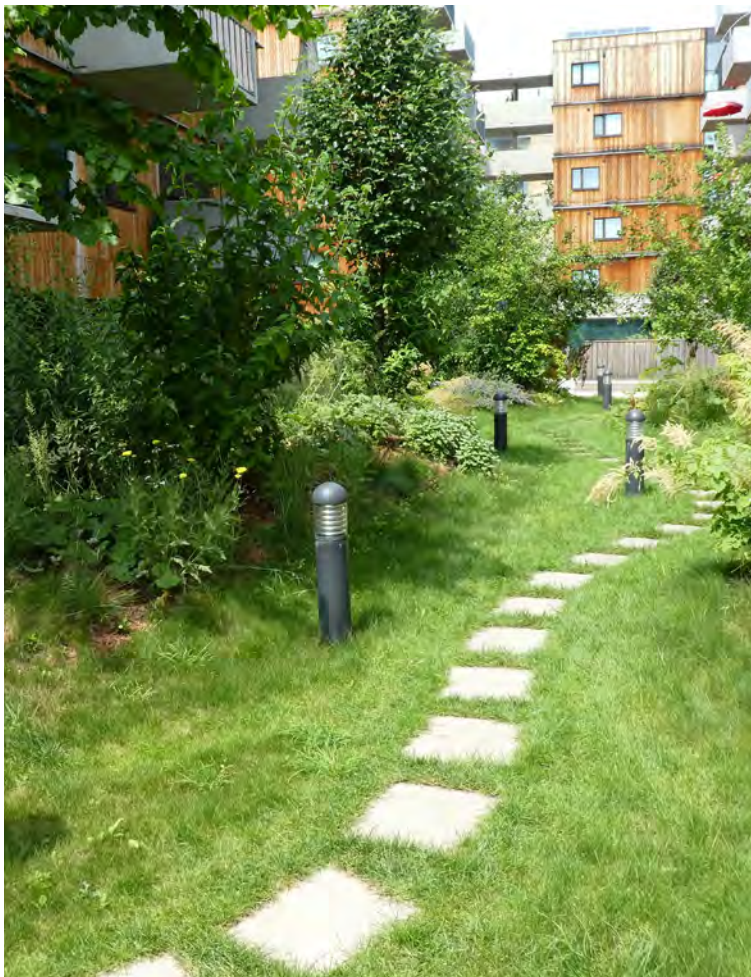
Timber as a recyclable building material

Difu developed a call for ideas for the timber construction offensive initiated by the Ministry for Nutrition, Rural Areas and Consumer Protection (Ministerium für Ernährung, Ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz, MLR) in Baden-Württemberg. In the form of timber construction, municipalities are promoting both the bio-economy, i.e. an economy based on biological resources and processes, and the circular economy. As a building material, timber can be disassembled and reused in appropriate structures – and is thus recyclable. By developing their own properties, urban planning (e.g. as part of “concept tendering”), providing advice



Apartment building made of timber

© Maic Verbücheln



Use of greenery in a densely built urban district

© Maic Verbücheln

and information, or in their function as owners of forests, municipalities can promote timber construction and, at the same time, act as role models.

Sustainably recycling plastics

The circular economy is also the focus of the “reGLOcycle – sustainably recycling plastics” project (“re-GLOcycle – nachhaltige Kreislaufwirtschaft von Kunststoffen”) funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF), in which Difu is involved as part of a project consortium. Taking the Augsburg region as an example, reGLOcycle is developing and testing solutions for avoiding and substituting plastics while attaining a sustainable circular economy. With the “Augsburger Becher”, a deposit-based cold drinks returnable system emerged from the project which is to be extended by the participating inner-city companies to the Augsburg region and, at the same time, used at large events. A raw materials database was also created for the region in order to identify the bioeconomic potential that exists there. The database forms the basis for evaluating possible biological alternatives in urban and rural contexts. Based on this, the consortium developed implementation concepts for developing cycle-led value chains for bioplastics on the one hand and renewable raw materials on the other.

Roadmap for reduced land consumption

In addition to material- and product-related aspects, circular flow land use management also plays a key role in the circular economy – whereby “land scarcity” is the operative term here! Municipalities have already been addressing land policy goals for the last twenty years, especially with regard to urban settlements and transport. In this context, Difu is involved in a number of projects from the Federal Environment Agency. For instance, the Institute has been organising events for the federal/state dialogue on land saving since 2020, and manages the federal government’s “aktion-flaeche.de” information platform. In preparation for an inter-departmental approach at the federal level, Difu has also drafted recommendations for instruments and approaches in the relevant areas of action as well as for a coordinated framework for action by state and other stakeholders. In a par-

allel project, possibilities for land recycling and potential (urban development) impacts caused by the shortage of building land are being investigated and possibilities are being explored for giving the Building Code (Baugesetzbuch) a greater focus on inner development. The “Implementation of Land Saving Targets in the Context of Spatial Planning” (Umsetzung von Flächensparzielen im Rahmen der Raumordnung) project is focusing on implementation and legal options, scope for action, as well as on operational and institutional considerations in conjunction with a possible quota system for land use. A shared aspect of all the projects is that they define individual building blocks or a roadmap for effectively reducing land use in line with land policy objectives, thus helping to shape frameworks for municipal action. The activities presented here provide an insight into the diverse potential and challenges that the circular economy brings to municipalities. In order to seize the opportunity to transform them into circular cities, there needs to be a greater focus on the contact points between municipal action and the circular economy at all policy levels: in programmes, strategies (e.g. the national circular economy strategy), research and sectoral policies.

➔ difu.de/17033

➔ difu.de/15842

➔ difu.de/13327

➔ difu.de/12993



• Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Maic Verbücheln
+49 30 39001-263
verbuecheln@difu.de



• Dipl.-Ing. agr. Thomas Preuß
+49 30 39001-265
preuss@difu.de



Martina Hertel and Anne Klein-Hitpaß

Electric scooters: How cities can manage them

The approval and introduction of electric scooters raised hopes that the new scooter-sharing services would advance the transport transition. However, three years after the Personal Light Electric Vehicle Ordinance (Elektrokleinstfahrzeuge-Verordnung, eKfV) was enacted, municipalities are still faced with the question of how to regulate this means of transport and integrate it into the urban environment.

A dangerous nuisance to some, an expression of modern mobility for others, electric scooters – or e-scooters for short – have been licensed as “Personal Light Electric Vehicles” (PLEVs) in Germany since June 2019. Initially, the scooter-sharing services mainly rolled out their fleets of e-scooters in the inner city areas of major conurbations and cities. In the meantime, smaller towns and cities are also increasingly being discovered as business areas by the providers. E-scooters are mostly used for covering short distances and the so-called “last or first mile”, e.g. as a shuttle to public transport stops. They can be used as a component in the multimodal transport services provided by cities and complement the ecomobility network.

This potential is countered by people frequently parking the personal light electric vehicles in an incorrect manner. Carelessly parked or left overturned on the pavement, e-scooters have proved to be a problem in the use of scarce public space. People with limited mobility in particular, but also pedestrians in general, feel impeded or even endangered by them.

Providers are demanding more designated parking spaces, while residents even want the vehicles banned. For municipalities, the challenge is to find an urban-friendly way of dealing with e-scooters, to manage the range of scooter-sharing services sensibly and to integrate them into the urban transport system.

As part of a project funded by the Federal Ministry for Digital and

Transport (Bundesministerium für Digitales und Verkehr, BMDV), Difu and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) have investigated both the use of e-scooters and the conflicts that arise between pedestrian and bicycle traffic and e-scooters. For this purpose, the research team interviewed experts from cities including Berlin, Cologne, Stuttgart, Basel, Paris and Warsaw, interviewed scooter users and non-users as well as blind and visually impaired people, analysed accident and usage data, and recorded and evaluated videos in street spaces. Based on the analysed conflict situations and given the still existing legal ambiguities, recommendations for municipalities were developed on how to manage the scooter-sharing services in a city-friendly way and which scope for action should be utilised.

E-scooters need to be integrated into transport policy strategies as a component of multimodal transport offerings. This includes integrating scooter-sharing services in the ecomobility network, especially with regard to booking and ticketing: additional infrastructure needs to be created, for example through designated collective parking spaces and the systematic expansion of cycle paths.

Increasingly more cities are regulating e-scooter rental systems through special permits. For effective and city-friendly management, special permits should ideally be linked to the following procedural steps:

- Developing an e-scooter concept (e.g. defining supply zones, number

and locations of parking spaces, fleet limits).

- Formulating a special use statute and subsequent council decision
- Preparing a selection procedure (drawing up criteria such as street-legal ecological standards, duration of approval, number of providers)
- Organising the selection process

If cities take the management of e-scooters seriously and create infrastructural conditions, personal light electric vehicles could potentially provide a small component in the multimodal transport system. The detailed results can be read in the practical guide entitled “E-Tretroller in Städten – Nutzung, Konflikte und kommunale Handlungsmöglichkeiten” (E-scooters in cities – use, conflicts and municipal options for action).

➔ difu.de/17613



• Dipl.-Geogr. Martina Hertel
+49 30 39001-105
hertel@difu.de



• Dipl.-Geogr. Anne Klein-Hitpaß
+49 30 39001-260
klein-hitpass@difu.de

Christa Böhme and Thomas Franke

Creating greater environmental justice

Environmental health burdens such as noise, air pollutants and heat islands are concentrated in many socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. At the same time, these areas often lack green spaces. How can municipalities therefore ensure more environmental justice?

Various studies verify the spatial correlation between low social status and higher environmental impacts such as noise, particulate matter pollution or overheating. Entire neighbourhoods are often affected. At the same time, studies show that people with low incomes and social status are, in terms of their health, much more vulnerable to adverse environmental influences than better-off groups of people. In view of this, it is necessary to focus more strongly than before on the interfaces between urban development, social, environmental and health policies. Environmental justice is about such an integrated approach.

It aims to prevent environmental health burdens from concentrating in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Likewise, residents should have access to environmental resources that promote health, such as green spaces and areas of water. As a holistic approach, environmental justice links many issues and policy fields – ranging from environmental protection and nature conservation to climate change adaptation and health promotion, from developing urban and open spaces to transport planning and community work. The social dimension is particularly important.

Difu supports municipalities on route to more environmental justice

The issue of environmental justice, which has its origins in the 1980s environmental justice movement in the USA, is still comparatively new in Germany. Since then, however, increasing more municipalities in this country are embarking on the path to more environmental justice. Difu supports them with application-oriented research. For example, in the 2010s, with funding from the Federal Environment Agency and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, the Institute developed underlying principles and recommendations for translating the issue into municipal

action and, together with the three pilot municipalities of Kassel, Marburg and Munich, tested how the approach can be implemented in municipal practice. The insights and experiences garnered from this have been incorporated into the online toolbox on environmental justice designed and implemented by Difu (publicly available at www.toolbox-umweltgerechtigkeit.de).

Recommendations for action at the federal and state level

Possible courses of action for increased mainstreaming of the environmental justice approach at the federal and state government levels setting policy frameworks were the focus of the departmental research project entitled “Environmental Justice – Further Development and Implementation of the Recommendations for Action at the Federal Level” (Umweltgerechtigkeit – Weiterentwicklung und Umsetzung der Handlungsempfehlungen auf Bundesebene), which was also commissioned by the Federal Ministry for the Environment and the Federal Environment Agency and concluded in 2022. The recommendations developed by Difu within this framework include agenda setting and changing programmatic and statutory frameworks, organisational and cooperative aspects, support for the municipal level as well as further developing knowledge and methods relating to environmental justice.

Examples of good municipal practice

In addition, the project identified good examples of municipal practice and showed how local authorities and policy-makers work together with local stakeholders and citizens to achieve more environmental justice – for instance by identifying smaller scale urban areas with multiple environmental burdens, upgrading open spaces, increasing the proportion of green spaces in neighbourhoods with multiple burdens, or by



establishing an integrated planning and strategic approach across agencies.

The results have been published in the brochure “Mehr Umweltgerechtigkeit: gute Praxis auf kommunaler Ebene” (More Environmental Justice: Good Practice at the Municipal Level) and can serve as a model for other cities and municipalities in establishing healthy environmental and living conditions for all population groups locally.

The “Social Cohesion” urban development programme

The “Environmental Justice in the ‘Social Cohesion’ Urban Development Programme” project, which was launched at the end of 2022 on behalf of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung, BBSR), is now focusing on how the relevant assisted areas can make use of this new approach. With the programme, the federal and state governments are supporting municipalities with the challenge of stabilising disadvantaged urban and local districts and improving living conditions in these areas. One area of action for which funding can be used is concerned with improving environmental justice in the neighbourhoods. Based on the project results, Difu will develop recommendations for action and measures aimed specifically at municipal officials and make them available in the form of video tutorials.

Environmental justice – a community task

At the interface between the environmental, health and social contexts, environmental justice can make a valuable contribution to transforming the social and ecological landscape. In view of the urgent challenges currently facing us – expanding cities and the accompanying densification, worsening social inequality as well as spatial displacement and, above all, climate change – the approach needs to be mainstreamed even more firmly in policy terms. Municipalities have a key role to play in this regard. However, it will only be possible to mainstream environmental justice permanently and create healthy neighbourhoods and living conditions for all in our cities through policy-makers and administrators collaborating at the federal, state and municipal levels, and through science and civil society.

- ➔ difu.de/9705
- ➔ difu.de/12522
- ➔ difu.de/17346
- ➔ difu.de/17452
- ➔ difu.de/17621



• Dipl.-Ing. Christa Böhme
+49 30 39001-291
boehme@difu.de



• Dr. Thomas Franke
+49 30 39001-107
franke@difu.de

Climate-friendly mobility – impetus from European cities

The transport sector plays a key role in climate change mitigation. But CO₂ emissions have remained high for decades. How do municipalities in other countries deal with the challenge? In a study, Difu compared the strategies of different European cities. A conversation with Martina Hertel and Björn Weber about promising approaches and the limits to which they can be translated.

What are the challenges facing German municipalities?

Björn Weber: Climate change mitigation is an overarching issue that affects not just the transport sector, but many areas of action. The national legislation on mitigating climate change stipulates that Germany must be greenhouse gas-neutral by 2045, so the goals need to be downscaled and localised to the municipal level. Many municipalities have set themselves much more ambitious targets – 2030, 2035 or 2040, which in some cases are very short timeframes, not least in view of the long planning periods. The municipalities have to deal with several construction sites at the same time, and given the low staffing levels and a task that involves several departments, this basically means that the culture of how we work together also needs to change.

What measures are other European cities taking in regards to the transport transition?

Björn Weber: There are different approaches. A couple of examples: The city of Helsinki has legally obliged public and private mobility providers to publish their data interfaces, thus enabling a liberalisation of the ticketing market. The canton of Basel-City has introduced a commuter fund. With profits from area-wide parking management, the canton finances climate-friendly mobility – even in the canton's surrounding areas! These are innovative approaches that we don't have in Germany.

Can such approaches be transferred to Germany?

Martina Hertel: Some German cities would like to manage parking spaces across the entire city,

but this is not possible in Germany due to the current legal situation. To do so, municipalities must first prove that there is considerable pressure on parking spaces throughout the city. To implement the “Mobility as a Service” as in Helsinki would require a change in the regulations on data flow and data integration.

What is decisive from your point of view?

Martina Hertel: Preventing traffic is a very important issue. This can also be seen in the case studies. These cities are strategically focusing on changing the modal split, i.e. on changing the choice of transport. Merely transitioning from internal combustion engines to electric powertrains won't get us anywhere.

The Spanish city of Vitoria-Gasteiz has succeeded in reclaiming parts of the public realm with a series of measures.

Martina Hertel: Among other things, the introduction of superblocks – i.e. area-wide traffic calming – was started in 2012. The share of motorised individual traffic has since then dropped to 25 per cent. Of the 72 planned superblocks, 63 have been implemented so far.

Civil society is also calling for such “Kiezblocks” to improve the quality of life in residential neighbourhoods.

Björn Weber: Participation played an important role in the majority of the case studies examined.

The measures were implemented in close collaboration with civil society. This was not only the task of policy-makers and administrators,

Canton of Basel-City: Cross-border financing with the commuter fund

- Commuter fund finances measures within and outside the canton
- Revenues through area-wide parking space management
- Goal: less vehicular traffic and fewer parking pressures in public spaces

Vitoria-Gasteiz: Reclaiming public space for people

- Parking management
- Introducing a modern, low-floor tram
- Implementing a walking and cycling strategy
- Introducing superblocks

Helsinki: Mobility as a Service

- Provider is the Finnish company “MaaS Global”
- Services delivered by public and private transport providers via a single portal
- Services: public transport, bike and car sharing, taxis, car rentals
- Access and ticket purchases via the “Whim” smartphone application

Approaches taken in European cities (selection)

but was distributed across a broad range of shoulders. For example, civil society coordinators were specifically chosen for implementing mobility strategies.

How important is it to adapt to climate change?

Björn Weber: In terms of policy and legislation, climate change mitigation is, of course, mainstreamed differently at the European level – think of the European Green Deal. Specific goals were agreed in the Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is not the case when it comes to adapting to climate change, i.e. we don't have any parameters, e.g. for number of green spaces, limiting heating in cities, etc. Nevertheless, cities such as Leuven in Belgium have recognised the need for this and have started to unseal areas and re-designate and green car parks.

Martina Hertel: Issues such as greening and shading have only gained momentum in recent years. In Vitoria-Gasteiz, pedestrian traffic had a 50 per cent share, but only one third of the space was available for it. This imbalance had to be redressed. Be-

cause people only like to walk where there are attractive footpaths.

What conclusions can you draw from this?

Björn Weber: A promising approach would be to implement restrictive (push) measures in combination with environmentally friendly (pull) policies. In this country, “pull” measures tend to be prioritised. It should be said, however, that we really need to have the courage to initiate and implement “push” measures as well. In other words, to take measures aimed at systematically calming traffic. This requires a cultural change, but if the municipalities want to achieve their self-imposed goals, there's no getting around it.

Martina Hertel: It's also about fairness in using space, in other words about how to divide up public road space. From a transport planning point of view, we need to look at eco-mobility (Walking, cycling and public transport), but even that doesn't go anywhere far enough: we also have to think about green and blue infrastructures, i.e. about areas of water and urban greenery. The competition for

space will increase, that's something we need to realise.

Björn Weber and Martina Hertel were interviewed by Dr Sinje Hörlin.

➔ difu.de/17531



• Dipl.-Geogr. Martina Hertel
+49 30 39001-105
hertel@difu.de



• Dipl.-Geogr. Björn Weber
+49 221 340308-10
bweber@difu.de

Urban research: current and close to practice

The German Institute of Urban Affairs is the largest urban research institute in the German-speaking region. We advise municipalities on all tasks that they face now and in the future. Independent, objective and well-founded.

We have been a reliable partner for the municipalities for 50 years.

Difu was founded in 1973 on the initiative of the member towns and cities of the Association of German Cities (Deutscher Städtetag, DST). Difu is a non-profit limited company under German law and has offices in Berlin and Cologne. Alongside the German Federal Government and the state of Berlin, more than 100 municipalities are its donors. Its sole shareholder is the Verein für Kommunalwissenschaften (VfK - Association for Municipal Research).

We address the complete spectrum of municipal topics.

From new forms of mobility and housing to municipal climate change mitigation and environmental protection and from policies for the development of building land to smart cities. We target our research towards the needs of the towns and cities: We implement planning games and law impact assessments, undertake application research, evaluate programmes and develop qualified training opportunities and work tools for municipal practice.

We tackle the municipalities' future topics at an early stage.

It is our aim to give the towns and cities new impulses to solve upcoming challenges and to contribute to sustainable urban development with innovative ideas – through research, training and exchange of experiences.

We bring different perspectives together.

Complex societal problems can only be solved if we work together. Therefore, we work closely with our partners from worlds of politics, civil society and the economy, and integrate their expertise in the research process. Together we discover sustainable solutions suitable for practice.

We research in an interdisciplinary manner and benefit from a broad network.

Researchers from different subjects work together at Difu on current municipal matters. Be it urban and regional planning, law, geography, social sciences, economy or environmental sciences – we look at the municipalities' topics from different points of views. And we benefit from an excellent network of cities and municipalities, with the research community and with our partner institutes in Germany and abroad.

Organisation

Institute Management

Prof. Dr. Carsten Kühl
Director of Research and Managing
Director

Dipl.-Geogr. Luise Adrian
Commercial Director

Prof. Dr. Arno Bunzel
Deputy Director of Research and authorised
Representative, Head of the Urban Development,
Law and Social Affairs Department

Research, knowledge transfer and administration

Department Urban Development, Law and
Social Affairs
Head: Prof. Dr. Arno Bunzel

Department Infrastructure, Economy and
Finance
Head: Dr. Jens Libbe

Department Mobility
Head: Anne Klein-Hitpaß

Department Environment
Head: Cornelia Rösler

Further Training
Head: Ulrike Wolf

Knowledge Management
Head: Susanne Plagemann

General Administration
Commercial Director: Luise Adrian

You can find an overview of all our employees
online:

difu.de/institut/menschen-am-difu

Difu 2022 in figures



2 offices: Berlin and Cologne



194 employees, including
31 students



100 ongoing research projects, of
which 28 have been newly started



We research, educate and network:
almost 2.070 participants at our Difu
seminars and Difu dialogues



Innovative urban research for more
than 110 donors with a population of
approx. 25 million people



Over 24.400 downloads of Difu
publications



Around 7.350 subscribers to the Difu
magazine "Berichte"



Over 554.000 visits to difu.de and
291.000 page impressions on repos-
itory.difu.de



More than 8.400 subscribers
to the Difu newsletter



More than 9.400 followers on Facebook,
Twitter, Youtube and LinkedIn

Academic advisory board

The academic advisory board advises the management and the shareholders' meetings on specialist and strategical matters. It includes representatives from academia, practice, various German ministries and the State of Berlin.

Chairperson

Professor em. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ulrich Battis
Emeritus from the Faculty of Law at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Practice

Prof. Dr. Martin Haag
Councillor for Construction, City of Freiburg im Breisgau, Department of Urban Development and Construction, Civil Engineering with Traffic Planning, Green Urban Areas and Buildings Management

Thomas Kufen
Lord Mayor of the City of Essen

Hilmar von Lojewski
Deputy at the Association of German Cities, Head of the Department of Urban Development, Construction, Housing and Traffic

Mike Schubert
Lord Mayor of the State Capital of Potsdam

Christian Specht
First Mayor of the City of Mannheim, Department 1

Research

Prof. em. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ulrich Battis
Emeritus from the Faculty of Law at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Prof. Dr. Regine Gerike
TU Dresden, Institute of Transport Planning and Road Traffic

Prof. Dr. Sabine Kuhlmann
University of Potsdam, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Political Science, Public Administration and Organisation

Prof. Dr. Thomas Lenk
Leipzig University, Institute of Public Finance and Public Management, Chair for Finance

Prof. Dr. Angela Million
Technische Universität Berlin, Faculty VI Planning, Building, Environment

Prof. Dr. Guido Spars
University of Wuppertal, Chair for Economy of Planning Construction, Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design

Federal Government and the State of Berlin

Ministry Head Dietmar Horn
Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building, Director-General S - Urban and Spatial Development

Ministry Head Dr. Susanne Lottermoser
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection

Ministry Head Dr. Christian Diehr
Federal Ministry of Finance, Financial Relations with the Länder and Municipalities; Public and Constitutional Law

Harald Fuchs
State Administration for Finances, Berlin, Department I - Assets and Shares I D

Thorsten Tonndorf
State Administration for Urban Development and Housing, Berlin, Head of the Department for Urban Development Planning

Research Associates at Difu

Jan Abt
Department Infrastructure, Economy and Finance

Dr. Elke Bojarra-Becker
Department Environment

Ricarda Pätzold
Department Urban Development, Law and Social Affairs

Permanent representation

Helmut Dedy
Managing Director of the Association of German Cities

Verena Göppert
Permanent Deputy of the Managing Director and Deputy, Association of German Cities, Head of the Department of Finance

Members of the steering group of Difu

Difu-Donors 2022

Aachen	Hennigsdorf	Saarbrücken
Amberg	Herne	Schwanewede
Aschaffenburg	Hildesheim	Schweinfurt
Augsburg		Spelle
	Iserlohn	Stadtroda
Bad Homburg	Jena	Stendal
Bargteheide		Stuttgart
Bautzen	Karlsruhe	Sulzbach-Rosenberg
Berlin	Kassel	
Bielefeld	Kiel	Trier
Bocholt	Koblenz	Tübingen
Bochum	Konstanz	
Bonn	Krefeld	Ulm
Braunschweig		Unna
Bremen	Lahr	
	Lampertheim	Weimar
Celle	Landau	Wiesbaden
Cologne	Landshut	Wismar
Cottbus	Langenhagen	Wittenberg
Cuxhaven	Leipzig	Wolfsburg
	Lingen	Wuppertal
Darmstadt	Ludwigsburg	
Dortmund	Ludwigshafen am Rhein	
Dresden	Lünen	Entwicklungsagentur Rheinland-Pfalz e.V.
Düsseldorf		
	Magdeburg	
Eisenach	Mainz	Hannover Region
Emmendingen	Mannheim	
Erfurt	Marburg	FrankfurtRhineMain Regional Asso- ciation
Erlangen	Minden	(Regionalverband FrankfurtRhein- Main)
Essen	München	
Esslingen	Münster	
Falkensee	Neuss	Regional Association for Greater Braunschweig
Flensburg	Norderstedt	(Regionalverband Großraum Braunschweig)
Forchheim	Nürnberg	
Frankfurt am Main		
Freiburg	Oberhausen	
Friedrichshafen	Offenbach am Main	Ruhr Regional Association (Regionalverband Ruhr)
	Offenburg	
	Oldenburg	
Gelsenkirchen		
Gießen	Passau	Regional Association Saarbrücken (Regionalverband Saarbrücken)
Gotha	Plauen	
Göttingen	Potsdam	Regional Association Stuttgart (Verband Region Stuttgart)
Hamburg	Regensburg	
Hamm	Reutlingen	
Hanau	Rheine	The Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (Österreichischer Städtebund)
Hannover	Rüsselsheim	
Heidelberg		

Editor

Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik
(German Institute of Urban Affairs)
Zimmerstraße 13–15
10969 Berlin

Telephone: +49 30 39001-0

Fax: +49 30 39001-100

Internet: www.difu.de

Editorial department

Dr. Sinje Hörlin

Layout

Christina Bloedorn

Design

anschlaege.de

Photo credits

Cover: pshyk, stock.adobe.com

S. 3/4, 11, 16: qimby.net

S. 12: Jarama, stock.adobe.com

Printing

oeding print GmbH, Braunschweig

Berlin, Februar 2023

Difu on social media

www.facebook.com/difu.de

www.twitter.com/difu_d





Deutsches Institut
für Urbanistik

