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## Federal spatial planning



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# Federal spatial planning

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**Federal spatial planning is part of an interlinked planning system between federal states and local authorities on the one hand and the European level on the other. It serves to harmonise the spatially-relevant planning and associated measures at these levels with each other and with the guidelines, purposes and principles of spatial planning. A key focal point of federal spatial planning is to formulate guiding principles and action plans for spatial development in collaboration with the federal states.**

# 1 Task

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In regard to spatial planning, the federation is responsible for legislating and shaping the spatial planning policy at the national and the European level, together with the federal states. According to the Federal Spatial Planning Act (*Raumordnungsgesetz, ROG*) (▷ *Spatial planning law [Raumordnungsrecht]*), spatial planning in Germany serves to reconcile – through comprehensive, supra-local and cross-sectoral spatial development plans and through cooperation between the territorial authorities (▷ *Territorial authority*) – the various requirements for ▷ *Space* with each other, to balance any conflicts that may arise and to provide and allow for the various individual uses and functions of space. The guiding vision for the fulfilment of this task is sustainable ▷ *Spatial development*, which reconciles the social and economic demands made on space with its ecological functions. This serves to achieve a sustained, balanced, large-scale order and structure with equivalent living conditions (▷ *Equivalence of living conditions*) across the various regions of the country.

Federal spatial planning is part of an interlinked planning system. It is responsible both on the horizontal level, i.e. within the remit of the federation in matters of relevance for spatial planning, and in a vertical direction, i.e. vis-à-vis the European Union (EU; ▷ *European Union*) on the one hand and the federal states and local authorities on the other. By means of numerous direct and indirect measures, the federation influences spatial development, either through legislation, general fiscal conditions and sectoral planning on a federal level, or through investments in large-scale ▷ *Infrastructure* and funding programmes, as well as through decisions by federal administrations (government offices, federal property) which are relevant for spatial planning.

As the federal legislator, the federation has substantial regulatory competence for spatial development concerns across the boundaries of the federal states based on ‘the nature of the matter’ (Building law expert opinion of the *BVerfG* [Federal Constitutional Court] of 16 June 1954, case no.1 PBvV 2/52, *BVerfGE* [Federal Constitutional Court Decisions] 3, 407, 427 et seq.). In practice, however, the federation limits itself to the development and implementation (through model regulations) of general guiding principles for the federal territory and to participation in cross-border spatial planning in Europe, in each case in collaboration with the federal states. A core task of the federation is to align spatially-relevant planning and measures of the federal ministries and the European Community with each other and with the guidelines, purposes and principles of spatial planning (▷ *Objectives, principles and other requirements of spatial planning [Raumordnung]*).

In contrast to the tasks of spatial planning regulated by law, spatial planning policy or spatial development policy refers to all those activities of the state or institutions closely related to the state that focus on achieving the best possible structure and development of spaces or regions. This involves formulating concepts (▷ *Concepts of spatial planning [Raumordnung]*) and strategies for dividing up the associated tasks and responsibilities, and for the functions and use of space as well as their implementation by means of legal, fiscal, economic or organisational instruments and measures. In addition to the ministries responsible for spatial planning at the federal and state level, many other ministries and functional departments (▷ *Spatially-relevant sectoral planning*), in particular the ministries of transport, environmental and economic affairs, as well as public-law entities, such as regional associations, also shape spatial planning policy.

For some time now, the term *spatial development* has been used alongside and instead of the term *spatial planning*, for example in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), or in the ministries or institutions concerned with spatial planning (e.g. the Advisory Board for Spatial Development). This illustrates that the respective authorities and bodies consider the task of spatial planning to extend beyond individual regimes and to include spatial development strategies of an interdisciplinary nature.

## 2 Statutory basis

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Prior to the Federalism Reform in 2006, the federation had the power to issue framework legislation for spatial planning matters. This meant that in the Federal Spatial Planning Act the federation had the competence to establish a binding framework for spatial planning in the federal states, in addition to the provisions on federal spatial planning relating to the federation itself. However, the federation was rather reticent in making use of this power by leaving the federal states substantial scope for their own spatial planning legislation. The power to issue framework legislation was eliminated with the entry into force of the Federalism Reform, and the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz, GG*) now distinguishes only between exclusive and concurrent legislative powers. The latter includes legislation relating to spatial planning (Article 74(1) no. 31 of the Basic Law) (▷ *Constitutional framework of spatial planning [Raumplanung]*).

This means that the federation now has broader powers than before to regulate spatial planning law, including federal state and regional planning. However, the federal states have the power to diverge from this in their state legislation, particularly where provisions on spatial planning in the states, such as procedural regulations, are concerned. So far, only the Free State of Bavaria has made use of this right to diverge and has adopted comprehensive regulations for spatial planning in Bavaria (Bavarian State Spatial Planning Act [*Bayerisches Landesplanungsgesetz*] of 25 June 2012 [*BayLpG*]). Whether this will have practical ramifications for spatial planning policy in the future is not yet clear.

In the version of 22 December 2008, the Federal Spatial Planning Act contains

- guidelines and principles of spatial planning for the entire federal territory,
- provisions on spatial planning in the federal states, in particular on spatial development and regional plans, the reconciliation of spatially significant planning acts and measures, as well as spatial impact assessment procedures and
- stipulations for the tasks of the federation in regard to spatial planning.

The guidelines and principles of the Federal Spatial Planning Act are just as binding as the provisions on plans and processes for the federal states, but are formulated in a general way to offer broad latitude to the federal states in shaping their own policies, even without making use of their right to diverge. According to current law in Germany, spatial planning as a task which involves both shaping and administering plans, processes and policies is predominantly a responsibility of the federal states. The federal states are responsible for extensive and binding state spatial planning across their territory, which is binding for the subordinate territorial authorities such as local authorities. For this reason, spatial planning strategies and action areas are defined in

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practice mainly by the tasks, goals and instruments of state spatial planning (▷ *Federal state spatial planning, federal state development*).

Under federal spatial planning, the federation is not authorised to draw up a comprehensive spatial development plan for the entire federal territory. However, since its most recent amendment in the wake of the Federalism Reform, the Federal Spatial Planning Act has granted the federation the power to draw up spatial development plans for certain aspects, in a limited form and for larger connected cross-state areas as well as for coastal marine areas – the German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Pursuant to section 17(1) of the Federal Spatial Planning Act, the federal ministry responsible for spatial planning may elaborate specific principles of spatial planning for the spatial development of the federal territory in more detail in a spatial development plan, subject to the inclusion of the planning acts and measures of the EU and its Member States. Such a plan requires the consent of the federal ministries concerned and the prior participation of the federal states as part of the duty to consult and inform. Such a spatial development plan could potentially include more detailed descriptions of the prerequisites and requirements of cross-state, preventive flood protection or strategies for the space-efficient use of renewable energies. By providing greater spatial detail and other specifics of such aspects of the corresponding principles of section 2 of the Federal Spatial Planning Act, the federation should primarily provide services for federal state spatial planning (Spannowsky/Runkel/Goppel 2010: 464).

Another federal spatial development plan pursuant to section 17(2) of the Federal Spatial Planning Act should address cross-state location strategies for sea and inland ports as well as for airports. This serves to create the spatial planning foundations for transport infrastructure connections as part of ▷ *Federal transport infrastructure planning*. Such a spatial development plan would apply only to the federation itself without having a binding effect on the federal states. The basic strategy for a new Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan (FTIP), which was published in 2014, also acknowledges the objectives of spatial development policy as part of the new methodology of federal transport infrastructure planning. The FTIP is designed to contribute ‘to an improvement in accessibility and the quality of connections, while taking economic and demographic issues into account. Thus it provides a contribution to the distribution and development objectives of spatial planning’ (BMVI [Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure] 2014: 28).

The plan for the marine German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to be drawn up pursuant to section 17(3) of the Federal Spatial Planning Act contains stipulations for managing the competing uses that occur there, too, to an ever greater extent (▷ *Maritime spatial planning [Raumordnung]*). In this context, the concerns of maritime shipping and the port industry, raw materials exploitation and energy production, especially through wind power, environmental and coastal protection, the fishing industry, defence and tourism, must be taken into account. Corresponding plans for the North Sea and Baltic Sea were prepared by the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (*Bundesamt für Seeschifffahrt und Hydrographie, BSH*), agreed with the adjacent federal states and neighbouring countries and entered into effect in September 2009 in the form of an ordinance of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (*Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung, BMVBS*) (BGBl. [Federal Law Gazette] 2009 I, 3107).

The Federal Spatial Planning Act obliges the federation and the federal states to cooperate

(section 26 of the Federal Spatial Planning Act). The competent federal ministry and the supreme spatial planning authorities of the states should consult each other on fundamental matters of spatial planning in the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (*Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung, MKRO*) (▷ *Cooperation between federal and state governments*). The parties involved are required to mutually inform each other. This cooperation focuses on the joint elaboration of guiding principles for the spatial development of the federal territory and on jointly representing German spatial planning policy in the context of EU's spatial cohesion policy (▷ *European spatial development policy*) and in cross-border cooperation (▷ *Cooperation, cross-border*).

### 3 Guiding principles and action plans in federal spatial planning

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The most important focal points of federal spatial planning include the elaboration of guiding principles and action plans for spatial development in collaboration with the federal states within the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning.

The Federal Republic of Germany adopted a Federal Spatial Planning Programme in 1975, which was intended to steer spatially-relevant planning and measures and the use of spatially-effective federal funds in line with the superordinate guidelines (*BMBau* [Federal Ministry of Spatial Order, Construction and Urban Design] 1975). The aim was to create a large-scale, balanced spatial and settlement structure (▷ *Settlement/settlement structure*) through the further expansion of development hubs and connecting axes, as well as through a spatial division of functions between densification and open areas. The expansion of the infrastructure, ▷ *Housing development*, economic and ▷ *Environmental policy* were to contribute to this strategy.

In the early 1990s, the challenges associated with the merging of the previously separated parts of Germany following Reunification and growing European integration gave rise to the elaboration of a federal spatial development strategy adapted to this process with the cooperation of the federal states within the framework of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning. The Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines of 1993 attempted to outline perspectives for a balanced and sustainable spatial development for the federal territory in five categories (settlement structure, environment and spatial use, transport, Europe, and order and development). The argumentation focuses on issues which cannot or should not be regulated by statutory provisions, but must be advanced through consensus and voluntary implementation at various action levels (*BMBau* 1993).

The Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines represented a pragmatic approach to a spatial development policy at federal level, oriented towards European integration. The federation and the federal states agreed that each would pursue their guidelines within their own remit. The Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning subsequently adopted a Framework for Action in Spatial Planning Policy, which served to elaborate in more detail the individual guidelines and proposed measures of the Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines (*BMBau* 1995). The topics include regional development strategies, city networks, European metropolitan areas (▷ *Metropolitan region*), strategies for economically underdeveloped rural areas and cross-border cooperation. Most of the focal points of the Framework for Action in Spatial Planning Policy were included in

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the ‘Model Project for Spatial Planning’ programme of the federal spatial planning authority and implemented in an exemplary manner in cooperation with the federal states, regions and local authorities.

The tasks initiated in the Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines and the Framework for Action in Spatial Planning Policy had largely been implemented by the end of the 1990s, yet the framework conditions of spatial development had significantly changed or had to be redefined. Issues such as ▷ *Globalisation*, demographic change and ▷ *Sustainability* became the focus of spatial development policy discussions. Against this backdrop, the federal spatial planning authorities initiated the elaboration of new guiding principles and action plans for spatial planning in Germany in collaboration with the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning. Unlike in the case of the Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines, which were elaborated in an internal administrative process between the federation and the federal states, the new guiding principles were developed in a public debate among those with the appropriate knowledge and expertise (Aring/Sinz 2006).

The new guiding principles were adopted by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning in June 2006 and published by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development, which was responsible for federal spatial planning at the time (*MKRO Geschäftsstelle* [Secretariat] 2006). The preliminary remarks state: ‘As a bridge between the spatially significant policy objectives, the binding determinations laid down in the spatial plans and concrete projects carried out on the ground, the three concepts

- “Growth and innovation”,
- “Ensuring services of public interest” and
- “Conservation of resources, shaping of cultural landscapes”

will be priority tasks of spatial planning in the next few years.’ (*MKRO Geschäftsstelle* 2006: 1).

These guiding principles are intended to provide an impulse for the modernisation of spatial planning in Germany. Their thematic priorities are not defined from the ‘internal’ perspective of spatial planning, but as a response to developments in the current social environment, such as increased economic competitiveness between regions, the consequences of population decline and the increasing scarcity of natural resources. At the same time, the guiding principles are to some extent shifting away from the traditional but no longer appropriate primary orientation of spatial development policy towards rural areas and attaching equal significance to the development perspectives of urban regions. The buzzword *metropolitan regions*, which made its appearance in the Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines but went largely unnoticed in the absence of any public discussion, triggered a debate about a presumed or actual paradigm shift towards urban areas (Sinz 2011: 286).

The guiding principles also serve as a German contribution to the discussion about a common European spatial development policy. The resolution adopting the guiding principle of 30 June 2006 reads: ‘It [the Conference of Ministers] considers that it is of key importance that the economic and social elements of the European cohesion policy be supplemented by a territorial dimension by way of linking these three priority issues with each other in a well-balanced manner. The Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning expect these concepts and strategies to provide an impetus which will

- enable all areas to reinforce their strengths, to concentrate and network resources and potential, and to further develop the joint responsibility of the regions;
- strengthen the key role of the European metropolitan regions in Germany as well as support the transformation of forms of cooperation into large-scale communities of responsibility;
- support the adjustment of the strategies, standards and instruments of spatial planning with a view to continuing to ensure a convergence of living standards in all regions of Germany, particularly in terms of the provision and accessibility of services and infrastructure; and
- enhance a stronger coordination of sectoral policies with a spatial impact with the requirements of spatial planning.’ (*MKRO Geschäftsstelle* 2006: 1).

The spatial planning report of 2005 issued by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (*Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung, BBR*) was elaborated with a certain head start, but largely parallel to the process of elaborating the guiding principles (*BBR* 2005). It refers to the core themes of the guiding principles and documents them with analytical findings, e.g. on the criteria for metropolitan functions or the foreseeable spatial impacts of demographic change. The Federal Office supports the entire process of elaborating the guiding principles through expert scientific opinions, and in particular through the development of spatial concept maps, for which a new characteristic style between thematic abstraction and spatial specificity was developed. Illustrations of the spatial concept maps can be found in the ▷ *Guiding principles for spatial development* in this Handbook of Urban and Spatial Development. These spatial concept maps – and specifically those for the metropolitan regions – were the starting point for sectoral and political discussions during and after the process of elaborating the guiding principles.

In the wake of these discussions, the 2009 Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning decided to update the guiding principles. In so doing, they should be supplemented by topics that are not sufficiently treated in the existing document. These include the spatial consequences of climate change (▷ *Climate, climate change*), energy supply as well as ▷ *Mobility* and transport. This update process is accompanied by a consultation process by the authorities and institutions concerned with spatial development in Germany and the neighbouring countries and through an online dialogue with the interested professional public (*MKRO* 2013).

## 4 Organisation and instruments

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### 4.1 Ministry

In the past, the competence for federal spatial planning rested with various federal ministries (including the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Urban Design, Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development). Within these ministries, the responsibility for spatial planning was allocated and staffed differently. A clear decline in capacities and resources has been apparent since the mid-1990s. At the time of the editorial deadline for this handbook, the responsibility for federal spatial planning was assigned to the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (*BMVI*) and consisted of only two units with a total of 12 employees.

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Spatial planning, as an interdisciplinary field, falls within the competency of various ministries at the federal level. These include, in particular, ▷ *Transport policy*, regional economic policy, environmental policy, financial and budget policy as well as agricultural policy, housing and urban design policy, research and higher education policy, ▷ *Energy policy*, and telecommunications and digital infrastructure. According to the Basic Law, it falls to each federal minister to conduct the affairs of their department independently and on their own authority (Article 65 of the Basic Law). The Federal Cabinet shall resolve differences of opinion between federal ministers.

This 'departmental principle' inevitably leads to tensions in relation to the task of reconciling sectoral policies with the guiding visions, principles and objectives of spatial planning. More than almost any other policy field, spatial planning is characterised by an interdisciplinary, integrative approach, combined with the demands of resolving conflicts about the use of space and coordinating spatially-relevant sectoral policies, or at least influencing them in the sense of the goals of spatial planning policy. As a rather marginally institutionalised, interdisciplinary policy without major public support, they are faced with sectoral policies that are organised in a strictly hierarchical manner and have influential lobbies in the economy and society at their disposal. In general, the responsibility of spatial planning for the tasks of integration, the weighing of interests and coordination enjoys a measure of support among policymakers and society, as it is deemed a matter of common sense to keep track of the numerous, mutually interacting influences and dependencies of case-by-case decisions and to strive for a holistic design of living space that is free of conflict as far as possible. Yet the political reality is that attempts at integration and coordination through spatial planning quickly reach their limits. The inner logic of transport policy, environmental policy, economic development policy or ▷ *Agricultural policy* means these areas generally have greater political support and more assertiveness than spatial planning, because they represent the various interests of a pluralistic society. While people want a balanced coordination of the various concerns as provided for in the Federal Spatial Planning Act, they are only rarely willing to accept an outcome of this weighing process that contradicts their own respective positions in the political power structure (Sinz 2011: 471). This inner conflict also exists at the level of the federal ministries as their structure and their understanding of their role are oriented towards the various interests in society and the economy.

The federal minister responsible for spatial planning shall work towards the realisation of the guidelines and principles of spatial planning. At the level of the German Federal Government, this is done through the mandatory consultation between the ministries about draft bills and important projects. The main opportunities to influence them lie in the efforts made by the ministries concerned to coordinate cabinet bills. This applies, for example, to the statements of the German Federal Government on the spatial planning reports, which must as a rule include all federal ministries. However, there are also instances where the federal ministry responsible for spatial planning must be involved in coordinating cabinet bills submitted by other ministries, e.g. bills or reports on environmental or energy policy. Many sectoral planning laws also contain spatial planning clauses that require the objectives and measures of spatial planning to be observed in the corresponding planning acts.

The spatial development plans of the federal states and regions must be consistent with the guidelines and principles of the Federal Spatial Planning Act. Notwithstanding the above, the federation provides comments on the spatial development plans that primarily serve to ensure that these plans do not contain any stipulations that contradict the intended sectoral planning

measures of the federation or other important federal interests (section 5 of the Federal Spatial Planning Act). The federation may also use that opportunity to point out general consultation and coordination requirements.

Coordination regarding spatially-relevant planning and measures of the European Community in relation to the guidelines and principles of spatial planning takes place only informally, as the EU does not have any competence to draw up its own spatial planning objectives. However, the federal minister responsible for spatial planning takes part in the coordination with the federal states to elaborate spatial development strategies at the European level, e.g. in the case of ESDP, which was established through a collaboration of the EU Member States, or the Territorial Agenda of the EU (▷ *European spatial development policy*).

## 4.2 Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning

The vertical coordination of spatial planning matters between the federation and the federal states is mainly done at the level of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning. It is composed of the ministers and senators responsible for federal state spatial planning from all federal states and from the federation. The Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning convenes once a year as a rule. Its sessions are prepared by the Central Committee, which in turn has established sectoral committees to prepare its work. The Conference of Ministers is chaired alternately by the federation or a federal state. This is an essential difference compared to other ministerial conferences, where the federation only participates as a guest. The federation also manages the secretariat of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning.

Pursuant to section 26 of the Federal Spatial Planning Act, the Conference of Ministers advises on fundamental issues of spatial planning. This includes the development of guiding principles for the spatial development of the federal territory, the clarification of questions and issues during the coordination of spatially-relevant measures as well as cross-border cooperation and contribution to a European spatial development policy. Currently, the focus is on topics relating to climate protection, the energy transition and demographic change. The Conference of Ministers regularly adopts recommendations or resolutions on spatial planning policy (*MKRO Geschäftsstelle* 2013). It also formulates policy positions on basic issues of spatial planning, such as reducing land take. To this extent, it influences other sectoral ministerial conferences of the federal states, but also federal spatial planning. In view of the proscription of overlapping administrative responsibilities under the Basic Law, the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning cannot issue any binding stipulations for the federation and the federal states. Hence, the significance of its resolutions lies primarily in the responsible ministries in the federation and federal states arriving at a consistent position, which may result in a self commitment by the participants to respect the resolution.

## 4.3 Advisory Board for Spatial Development

Section 24 of the Federal Spatial Planning Act requires the establishment of an Advisory Board for Spatial Development at the federal minister responsible for spatial planning. The Advisory Board is tasked with advising the federal minister on fundamental issues of spatial planning. Members of the Advisory Board include representatives of the associations of local authorities, experts from all areas of science, of federal state and regional planning services, of urban design, of industry, of ▷ *Agriculture*, ▷ *Forestry*, nature conservation and landscape conservation, and representatives

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of employers, employees and sports. As reflected in the composition of the Advisory Board, its purpose is to provide advice to the responsible federal minister at the pre-parliamentary stage. In practice, the Advisory Board issues opinions on current fundamental political issues and elaborates expert opinions in this regard. The Advisory Board also fulfils its advisory task in direct dialogue with the political leadership of the responsible federal ministry. Some examples of its most recent recommendations are:

- *Region 2020: Zur Zukunft peripherer, strukturschwacher, ländlicher Regionen – Denkanstöße zur gleichwertigen Entwicklung und Handlungsansätze zur Daseinsvorsorge* (On the future of peripheral, structurally weak, rural regions – Ideas for the equivalent development and initiatives for the provision of public services)
- *Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung bei Planungs- und Zulassungsverfahren großer Infrastrukturvorhaben* (Public participation in planning and approval processes for large infrastructure projects)
- *Großräumige Partnerschaften: Chancen für Innovation und Kohäsion auf neuer Maßstabsebene* (Large-scale partnerships: Opportunities for innovation and cohesion at new benchmark levels)

### 4.4 Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development

An essential element of the federal spatial planning authority and its main staffing resource is the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) at the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR). The Federal Institute evolved from the previous Federal Research Institute for Country and Environmental Studies (*Bundesforschungsanstalt für Landeskunde und Raumordnung, BfLR*) and is an independent, scientific unit within the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning. Since 2013, the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, as a ministerial research institution, has fallen within the remit of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Construction and Nuclear Safety (*Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit, BMUB*). It advises this ministry and other federal ministries in policy areas such as ▷ *Urban development*, ▷ *Spatial development*, ▷ *Urban design*, ▷ *Housing development* and the real estate market, as well as ▷ *High-quality building planning, design and construction at the national and European level*.

The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development forms part of the space-related information infrastructure of the federation, which also includes the space-related research facilities of the Leibniz Association and the Central Institute for Spatial Planning at the University of Münster. The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development is a practice-oriented, interdisciplinary research institute. It provides information, research results and analyses, expert opinions, and reports for policymakers and the public and manages relevant ministry research programmes. According to section 25 of the Federal Spatial Planning Act, the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning shall manage an information system on spatial development in the federal territory and in the adjacent areas, the ongoing ▷ *Spatial observation*. The results of this information system are also made available to the federal states and are an essential foundation for the spatial planning reports (▷ *Reports on urban and spatial development*).

The spatial planning reports must be provided by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning at regular intervals to the responsible federal ministry for submission to the German Federal Parliament. In addition to a survey and ▷ *Forecasting* of the spatial development, which also comprises the associated planning and measures, these reports also provide information about the impact of European integration. The reports are forwarded to the Federal Parliament accompanied by a statement from the German Federal Government. This process represents an innovation compared to the agreed governmental reports required pursuant to the Federal Spatial Planning Act of 1965. The advantage of this is that the reports are not provided by the government itself, but by a scientifically independent, yet subordinate authority. Any coordination at the government level concerns only the statement of opinion on the report, which is submitted by the government to the Federal Parliament with the report. This means, however, that the ministries concerned with spatially-relevant policy identify with the actual content of the reports to a lesser extent.

## 4.5 Model Project for Spatial Planning

Model projects are an essential instrument in federal spatial planning for implementing its guidelines and strategies as part of a more process-oriented, action-based and project-focused understanding of planning and policy. With the ‘Model Project for Spatial Planning’ (MORO) action programme, the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure responsible for spatial planning supports the practical testing and implementation of spatial planning approaches to action and instruments in a dialogue between theory and practice, i.e. with the local stakeholders and in the regions. To this end, it funds and supports research fields, studies, initiatives and individual, specific model projects. The range of issues covered by the model projects include the ▷ *Provision of public services* and central-place theories (▷ *Central place*), spatial development strategies on climate change, supra-regional partnerships and communities of responsibility or river landscape design.

The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development manages the action programme. It is responsible for selecting promising new approaches to action for practical implementation as model projects, for supporting these projects and drawing transferable insights from them. It also organises the transfer of these insights into practical use and makes recommendations for the change of statutory or financial framework conditions.

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