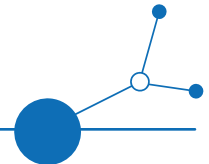


BOTTOM-UP PROCESS-ORIENTED STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT



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A. Bottom-up process-oriented stakeholder involvement

1. Initial information about the new solution

Study cluster and the members developing a new solution	Strengthening metropolitan institutionalization through developing joint opinions supporting informal and dialogical planning processes Members of the cluster: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Joint Spatial Planning Department Berlin-Brandenburg,▪ City of Warsaw,▪ City of Brno.
The pilot action tested, and the tool chosen	Pilot Action: Informal and participatory planning approach to the vision process for the Metropolitan Area Berlin-Brandenburg Tool chosen and improved: Organization of workshops (City of Warsaw)
The new solution	Bottom-up process-oriented stakeholder involvement

2. The concept of new solution

Description of new solution	<p>The new solution is suitable for metropolitan areas currently strongly characterized by formal planning. Informal participation must be integrated into planning to a greater extent than in the past. It can be used flexibly and in line with the situation by adapting it to specific spatial conditions. This takes the form of negotiation processes and cooperative collaboration. It is important to involve a large number of different stakeholders and thus change the governance structure of the region. Planning practice is therefore best achieved by combining formal and informal instruments. Sovereign planning takes a back seat in favour of cooperative network action.</p> <p>What is new in this sense is the extent to which informal participation is included, both in terms of the selection of participants and, above all, the topics: stakeholders should be put in a position to contribute their topics (identified “white spots”). This makes it possible to establish the challenges and their solutions in a spatially specific manner as topics of regional development and</p>
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	to adapt the governance structure accordingly. This also strengthens the sense of community.
Main elements	<p>The comprehensive concept of the new solution contains two key elements: “white spots” and “governance.” These are not to be considered independently of each other but are interrelated and build on each other: White spots are about “What?”, and governance about “Who?”</p> <p>The first step is to identify the appropriate point in time at which the new solution can be integrated into existing planning practice. For example, when strategically important agreements or legally binding planning documents are due to be revised. This is regularly the case everywhere. The next step in opening up this updating process is to expand the circle of stakeholders to include those who were previously not involved or not sufficiently involved. Particularly noteworthy here are non-state actors from the local level, science, civil society, or economy, such as small and medium enterprises. A targeted address and invitation can be made for this purpose. Their topics, including needs and objectives, are current “white spots” from the perspective of those legally responsible for planning. Their integration into the updating process contributes to a more comprehensive approach to regional development.</p> <p>Integration here also means identifying the appropriate spatial framework. Topics can be important for the entire metropolitan region, but sometimes only for sub-regions. Urban-rural relationships and axis concepts, i.e. areas for which specific development concepts are drawn up, should be particularly emphasized.</p> <p>This linking of specific topics, introduced in a bottom-up mode, with specific areas, defined cooperatively, enables the development of the appropriate governance structure in a further step. The main idea behind this: It is not something that exists independently of the challenges and solution approaches. This must be developed from the goal, the goal defines means and ways. Secondly, the cooperation should be spatially defined, i.e. take place in the spatial framework that is best suited to tackling the problem. Governance here is understood as flexible and temporary. At the next superior authority level (of regional planning), it is necessary for this structure to be accepted and integrated into the planning system (e.g. information loop, monitoring, continuous reporting). In the medium term, closer interdigitation of the structures can be considered. A SWOT analysis of the recent situation can contribute to this.</p>



	<p>In both elements, workshops are used, and the methods are based on Design Thinking, break-out sessions and plenum sessions, world café.</p> <p>The linking of these informal steps, as described here, forms the new solution. The metropolitan region presents itself as a learning region that engages in cooperative and communicative regional development. Participation is upvalued.</p>
Innovativeness and uniqueness of new solution	<p>The new solution aimed at the participation of stakeholders and their interests represents an innovative approach in the sense of being used in areas/regions where strong participation has not been part of regional development strategies yet. Innovative is the use of the new solution, inevitably unique in the way it is adopted in questions of a range of stakeholders, spatial design and topics raised and addressed. The influence on the regional government structure can also be seen as an innovation. It guarantees the long-term benefit of the new solution.</p>
Improvement of the selected tool	<p>The new solution is thoroughly based on the results of the pilot action and improves the workshop/participation tool created by the City of Warsaw in several ways. It was shown that the concept in general is important and suitable for stakeholder involvement on a deeper level. The approach also shows its strength where formal planning needs to be strengthened and improved by informal instruments and where there is no regional parliament or similar body that represents regional interests.</p> <p>Reflecting on the tool during the regional stakeholder meeting made it possible to improve and further develop the pilot action into the new solution. Feedback from regional experts and scientists led to significant improvement of the pilot action and existing tool. For example, the new solution takes white spots as identified prior to the workshop, not as a result. This allows a clear description of the problem and working on solutions. The subsequent events then serve to continue working on solutions. This improvement strengthens the perspective of the stakeholders compared to the state government because their interests are more at the centre of the tool. A second improvement of the pilot action was made by expanding the white spots to spatial aspects. This is perceived as a good linkage to the governance issue, which is the second topic of the pilot action. In summary one can say that the new solution enables better stakeholder participation by addressing their (overseen) needs within a suitable spatial framework (entire metropolitan area, axes)</p>



and then offering a governance structure where informal participation processes are fundamental.

3. Joint development and project management

The process of development of new solution	The new solution was jointly developed between the members of the cluster. JSPD served as the main creator because it was the executor of the pilot action. Therefore, it drafted the concept of new solution together with the State Chancellery of Brandenburg. The results of the regional stakeholder meeting on pilot action on 5 February 2025 were incorporated into the development of the new solution. The transnational partner meeting in Berlin, which took place on 26-28 February 2025, was crucial for the joint development of new solution: Metropolitan partners presented their proposals of new solutions and then, all of them discussed the proposals during the interactive session. Based on the outcomes of this meeting, JSPD finalised the solution in the first half of March 2025.
Methods of work	JSPD drafted the solution based on the results of the pilot action which showed that there is a need for informal instruments supporting the process of regional development. The proposal was created by JSPD together with the State Chancellery of Brandenburg. The methods of joint development included world café during a transnational partner meeting in Berlin, sharing the documents online and providing written comments and remarks on them.
The reflection of the initial work set-up and time plan	In terms of the new solution, the initial work set-up and time plan were achieved with small changes such as a month delay in the development. However, these changes did not affect the overall development of the new solution and its timely submission.
Problems and deviations	There were no problems or deviations during the development of the new solution which would cause delays in its finalisation and the whole project.

4. Strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance

Impact on metropolitan cooperation and governance	The new solution has a significant impact on metropolitan cooperation as it aims to involve several stakeholders of the metropolitan area from different sectors who have not yet been significantly involved (public authorities, scientific community,
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	<p>small and medium-sized enterprises) and establish informal participation processes in addition to formal tools.</p> <p>The given activities will have a positive impact on strengthening the development process and finally the governance structure. Furthermore, voluntary stakeholder involvement will have a positive impact on the enhancement of urban-rural cooperation, and it will also build trust in the territory and its governance - something which has to be revived constantly.</p>
Involvement of metropolitan stakeholders	<p>The key feature of the new solution is the active participation of stakeholders from the metropolitan area. It aims to involve groups that have not previously been involved in the regional development process to this extent. Their targeted invitation at the beginning opens up new subject areas through which the commitment of those involved is secured. The process of strategic regional development, which used to be dominated top-down despite participation procedures, is now more bottom-up. The new solution thus enlarges the circle of stakeholders and stabilizes their participation. Formal instruments of regional planning are more closely interlinked with informal instruments.</p>
Contribution to the Common Metropolitan Vision	<p>The new solution on bottom-up participation is in line with the Common Metropolitan Vision and contributes to its fulfilment. There can be found linkages to almost every part of the vision.</p> <p>The Vision describes metropolitan areas as “balanced, inclusive and sustainable” through active participation of citizens and stakeholders, “anchoring” and “guiding” local government “by effective cooperation and community attachment.” Furthermore, “Metropolitan Partnership and Identity” speaks about spatial collaboration in the way that the government encourages engagement and cooperation with an effect on urban and more rural parts of the metropolitan region. In general, emphasis is given to the collective work of a government engaging in cooperative efforts and citizens and businesses are participating.</p> <p>The new solution furthermore contributes to the fulfilment of the “Strengths and Commitments” chapter, where addressing potentials and opportunities is mentioned as crucial, establishing spaces for (social) innovation. The new solution is aimed to be significantly more integrative than previous processes, thereby offering improved capacity to address current challenges.</p> <p>The strongest linkages are to the third part, “Metropolitan empowerment.” As said, “Metropolitan strategies, policies and instruments play a crucial role in identifying, evaluation and</p>



	addressing key challenges.” This is exactly what the new solution is putting into practice, emphasizing the relationship between agendas and institutional frameworks and the importance of active involvement of citizens and businesses in the design and implementation of shared goals. The strategic shift to soft(er) forms of governance is carried out by the new solution.
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5. Replicability to other metropolitan areas

Replicability to metropolitan territories	<p>The concept of stakeholder involvement is replicable to other metropolitan areas or territories by adopting the general concept and fitting it to specific contexts in terms of regional governance. It is particularly suitable where a top-down strategy has been pursued in the past and more bottom-up work is now required for the development of a regional development strategy. The size of the region is less important.</p> <p>Values and topic - The White spots topic marks a sensitive point that brings together the interests of stakeholders and the initiator/regional government. The solution is based on the insight that the knowledge is available and must be activated for sustainable, inclusive regional development. Therefore, the topics are specific to each territory.</p> <p>Financial and organisational aspects - No extensive financial or organisational resources are needed to implement the new solution. In the further course, the implementation will depend on the intensity and extent of the use of the new solution, and how much money is needed. However, the associated costs should remain within a manageable range.</p> <p>Management structure and staff - There is no need for a special management structure or a big staff. The initiators must organize the first workshops and ensure that the results are taken up.</p> <p>Involvement of stakeholders - The success of the new solution depends on how well it succeeds in involving new stakeholders. The importance of their participation and the seriousness of the search for white spots must be communicated to them. It must be clear to the stakeholders that their participation is part of a larger process of strategic regional development.</p> <p>Legislative framework - As part of informal planning processes, the new solution should be highly transferable to other metropolitan areas. It is designed to support formal processes, it can be</p>
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	implemented wherever it is needed. No special legislative framework is needed, the solution fits into the existing legal framework.
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6. Uptake of new solution

Uptake of new solution	<p>JSPD and the State Chancellery of Brandenburg as executors of pilot action created a concept for the new solution of integrating stakeholders and their topics in the process of refacing the overall strategic framework. However, the perspective went beyond that right from the start: The aim is to have a lasting participation of all relevant stakeholders and with that a better understanding of the needs and goals of future regional development processes.</p> <p>The new solution is highly flexible. This means it can not only be used in questions of the entire metropolitan area but also for subareas like smaller regions or development axes. The latter in particular can be the ideal area of application because they need the bottom-up engagement to brought to life. This means that both the topics and the form of cooperation must be defined; Top-down only support can be given. What is described here also applies to border regions/cross-border cooperation or regions that lie at the interface with neighbouring metropolitan regions. These will become increasingly important in the coming years. A flexible concept of participation that takes the interests and needs of all stakeholders seriously is very useful in any aspect.</p>
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7. Summary of new solution

Summary	<p>The comprehensive concept of the new solution “Bottom-up process-oriented stakeholder involvement” includes two key elements: “white spots” and “governance.” These are part of a cooperative development and participation process in which new groups of stakeholders with their specific issues and challenges are integrated into the general regional planning process. The consequence of this is that the governance structure must be adapted so that it can meet the new objectives.</p> <p>The more intensive participation process therefore initially leads to more topics being considered and integrated into regional planning than before. It gives it a broad basis among stakeholders and in civil society, which increases acceptance of regional planning and</p>
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strategic development goals. The sense of community and regional responsibility and, ultimately, trust in democratic processes and institutions are strengthened.

The new solution is highly transferable. It can only be applied on a region-specific basis. It helps to integrate overlooked topics and stakeholders into the planning process.

In the federal state of Brandenburg, regional development is currently being reorganized after the state elections. In this process, JSPD is an anchor of stability with its legally binding instruments that ensures the connection to Berlin. The new solution is ready for use as soon as the political framework conditions are in place. The joint cabinet meeting of Brandenburg and Berlin in May 2025 will deal with the future handling of the overall strategic framework.