



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR SAXONY-ANHALT

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Introduction

The "State Initiative Land Recycling Saxony-Anhalt" is an output of the Interreg Central Europe project GreenerSites (Environmental Rehabilitation of Brownfield Sites in Central Europe). At the same time, the initiative reflects the objectives of the government program of the state government of Saxony-Anhalt - to achieve sustainable spatial development, to spatially concentrate the settlement structure, to allocate investments on existing or designated industrial and commercial sites, to redevelop vacant lots and brownfields, and to limit land take. Land recycling is the re-use of empty buildings and vacant farms, of fallow land, and under-used development areas. Saxony-Anhalt still has a significant stock of such potential development land. Land recycling helps to protect the environment, to create jobs and to revitalise abandoned sites. Land recycling is also a key concept for shaping economic change in the central German mining region. Land recycling is a permanent task both for cities and towns in urban areas, as well as for rural municipalities.

Between October 2018 and April 2019, the draft Strategic Actions Plan was discussed and developed with stakeholders at local, regional and state level. Following the in-house coordination rounds in the Ministry of Regional Development and Transport, the 7th and 8th stakeholder tables were held with external experts and guests from other ministries. At the 7th Stakeholder Table on April 3, 2019, a total of 17 people from the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Energy, the Brownfield Authority, the Regional Planning Associations, the Saxony-Anhalt Association of Towns and Municipalities, the City of Magdeburg, the City of Halle (Saale), the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, the Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, the State Development Company (SALEG), the Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHK), the Mitteldeutsche Sanierungs- und Entsorgungsgesellschaft mbH (MDSE) and of the Institute for Structural Policy and Economic Development (ISW). At the 8th Stakeholder Table on 16 April 2019, eight people from the Ministry of Regional Development and Transport, the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Energy, the Ministry of Finance and the "Flächenpool NRW" were involved. This document contains the results of this interdepartmental and transdisciplinary cooperation process.

In the Cabinet meeting on 16. 04. 2019 the Cabinet proposal No. 743 "Preparation of a State Initiative Land Recycling" was noted by the Saxony-Anhalt state government. On the one hand, the Cabinet decided that a strategic action plan should be drawn up, which serves as the basis for the state initiative land recycling in Saxony-Anhalt, and on the other, that the affected ministries should assist the Ministry of Regional Development and Transport in drawing up the action plan. Within the next two years, suitable measures of the state to strengthen land recycling in Saxony-Anhalt will be elaborated and agreed. In order to start the inter-ministerial coordination process for drawing up the action plan, the process will be brought to the Secretary of State Conference. The action plan is to be finalised by the end of the current legislative period and, if necessary, backed by budgeting for medium-term financial planning.



Part A. Need for action in the state of Saxony-Anhalt

Many cities and towns in Saxony-Anhalt are overwhelmed with the complex requirements of brown-field revitalisation. While greenfield development has been practiced for decades, there is often a lack of experience with brownfield development projects. At the same time, however, the number of fallow land continues to rise. The old-industrial legacy, vacant commercial properties or residential buildings, as well as poor or unoccupied commercial areas in the urban areas, are accompanied by a large and rapidly increasing number of vacant buildings in rural areas. These include, for example, fallen out-of-use farms both in the inner and outer areas of rural municipalities, widespread housing vacancies in the villages, and vacant former pubs and shops.

The orientation in the area of the funding programs of the state, federal and the EU as well as the application procedures and the implementation of such projects with partly complex reporting and proof duties represent high hurdles for the local authorities. Most county, city and municipal administrations in Saxony-Anhalt suffer from low staffing levels. Municipal employees are often busy with fulfilling their mandatory tasks. Additional tasks, such as applying for funds, and the implementation of complex projects are therefore often avoided. The municipal share in co-financing funded projects also scares some municipalities.

Special problems can occur with contaminated sites. Thus, only for certain areas is a exclusively state-financed environmental remediation possible. In addition, the number of brown-field revitalization projects under the responsibility of the Brownfield Authority Saxony-Anhalt (LAF) is declining and the LAF sees its future more in the area of securing landfills. Also, there may be difficulties in lending, because banks usually do not recognize contaminated land or even only suspected contaminated sites as security. Overall, there is a high need for financial, but also personnel and professional support.

The revitalisation or renaturation of brownfields has many advantages - not only for municipalities, but also, for example, for the citizens, for landowners, for the economy and the environment as well as the state of Saxony-Anhalt as a whole. Owners benefit from the revaluation of their properties and can better place their plots in the market again. Investors can get interesting development land in central locations. Land recycling protects the resource soil, because less new areas are sealed and any existing contaminations are eliminated, and because unsealing and renaturation creates new, natural open spaces. The redevelopment of previously developed land is good for cities and towns that can use their existing infrastructures more efficiently. However, it is also citizens who no longer have to bother with vacant or neglected areas and objects that benefit from land recycling. It is also immensely important for the external perception of cities and towns to eliminate urban maladies and ruins and to ensure a friendly and secure environment. Land recycling also supports sustainable land development, as it creates spatially concentrated and economically viable settlement structures that are adapted to a declining population. This is extremely important as infrastructure costs per capita increase disproportionately due to an expansion of the settlement area and a decline in the population at the same time.



Part B. Actions for strengthening land recycling

The state of Saxony-Anhalt does not currently have a central information offer on the subject of land saving and land recycling. Saxony-Anhalt also has a large number of authorities and subsidiaries that deal with topics such as remediation, brownfield development, location marketing, urban redevelopment, compensation and replacement measures, land management and state-owned properties. There is no central contact for the advice and support of land recycling projects. Municipalities, investors and landowners have to navigate a heterogeneous system of responsibilities. Non-uniformity also prevails at the municipal as well as at the state level with regard to the detection of brownfields and the identification of internal development potentials.

The process of drawing up an action plan begins with the identification of the departments involved and the clarification of the internal responsibilities within the ministries. Within the next two years, appropriate state measures to strengthen land recycling in Saxony-Anhalt will be developed and coordinated. The action plan is to be finalised by the end of the current legislative period and, if necessary, framed by budgeting for medium-term financial planning. The Ministry of Regional Development and Transport (Unit 44) will form a land recycling task force involving the designated representatives of the ministries, as well as other experts and stakeholders, such as the municipal umbrella organisations. The task force will develop proposals for actions and will, in due course, open discussion in existing inter-ministerial bodies. The coordinated action plan will then be returned to the cabinet. Possible actions include:

- Establishment of a central information hub on the internet,
- Establishment of a transdisciplinary competence network for land recycling with the participation of politics, administration, science, universities, industry, engineering offices, environmental associations
- Use of state guarantees to secure investment loans,
- Creation of a central service point for the advice of municipalities in land recycling
- Introduction of quantified guidelines for the reduction of land use as an objective of spatial planning in the future state development plan,
- Regional land management as a task of the regional planning associations
- State-wide uniform coverage of municipal internal development potentials,
- Coupling of the award of funds to the management of a uniform potential development area cadastre
- Merging of state institutions, or parts of state institutions, to a central land management authority
- Evaluation of existing funding guidelines,
- Creation of a special municipal support programme for land recycling.



A funding guideline for land recycling may cover the following items:

- Creation of concepts, investigations, feasibility studies
- Conducting architectural competitions
- Land purchase by municipalities
- Demolition of buildings
- Dismantling of above-ground and underground construction and infrastructure remains
- Environmental remediation
- Development measures
- Renaturation and investment in green infrastructure
- Installation of a potential development area cadastre
- Marketing measures
- Measures of inter-municipal / regional land management

As an immediate measure, an image campaign for the "State Initiative Land Recycling" will be developed from the budget of the GreenerSites project. The implementation of the image campaign as well as all other possible measures of the state of Saxony-Anhalt must then be financed by other means. However, there are also activities, such as the establishment of a competence network, which can be implemented without an own budget. The land recycling task force can already be considered as the core group of the network. The signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding "Declaration on further cooperation in the area of brownfield revitalisation and land recycling in Saxony-Anhalt" form part of the wider network for land recycling.



Exemplary measures from other German states

Approaches from other German states show what measures a regional government authority can take to promote land recycling for the benefit of the general public and to assist municipalities in the implementation of brownfield development projects. However, it must remain open whether these measures can be transferred one-to-one or in parts to Saxony-Anhalt.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, municipalities are specifically advised and supported in the preparation and implementation of brownfield development measures as part of the state initiative "Flächenpool NRW". The state bears most of the associated staff costs (around 80%), while municipalities and landowners only have to contribute a small amount of their own. With an annual budget of just EUR 1.4 million, since 2014 the state of NRW has supported 60 municipalities with 222 locations (1,130 ha) and 1,290 site owners.

In the Free State of Saxony the Central Land Management Saxony (ZFM) was established 2017 as a state-owned enterprise. The tasks of ZFM Sachsen include the purchase of real estate and the sale of the expendable state property, the leasing of land owned by the Land, as well as the provision of compensation areas and ecological measures. The ZFM is the central point of contact for fiscal inheritances and acquisition rights and, in addition, for municipalities, investors and project development bodies. Municipalities are supported in areas such as brownfield sites, abandoned land and the marketing of municipal real estate.

In Thuringia, the (rural) municipalities have been provided with a land management software (FLOO-TH) free of charge since 2018 by the Free State. The online platform FLOO-TH should help to identify land potentials for internal development and thus to counteract vacancy. For municipalities that prepare a local development concept in the context of village renewal as well as to apply for funding in the Thuringian village redevelopment program or for the purchase, demolition and unsealing of vacant lots and buildings, the use is obligatory. FLOO-TH provides a detailed overview on vacant lots, fallow land, vacant buildings or slightly used areas and should facilitate the activation of these existing land potentials.

For more information on the above-mentioned measures and beyond visit the following web sites:

- <http://nrw-flaechenpool.de/> - homepage of the North Rhine-Westphalian state initiative "Flächenpool NRW".
- <https://www.zfm.sachsen.de/> - homepage of the Central Land Management Saxony (ZFM)
- <https://www.floo-thuringen.de/> - homepage of the Thuringian land management software (FLOO-TH)
- <https://aktion-flaeche.de/> - web portal for municipal land saving activities in Germany

