



Assessment for Germany (Northern Ruhr)

Status: Final Plan

Date of plan: 29.07.2022



Overall Plan Rating

There are also some indicators rated as not consistent with the just transition. These are marked as red on the traffic light system and should be the foremost priorities to address and improve on. The indicators are organised under their corresponding principles in the Annex to this report.

Performance of TJTP by principle



Principle 1: The TJTP should be sustainable and deliver on long-term, international and EU climate commitments such as the Paris Agreement and EU 2030 and 2050 climate objectives.



Principle 2: The TJTP should not lead to prolonged fossil fuel use or promote false solutions to the transition to climate neutrality. As a guide, coal should be phased out by 2030.



Principle 3: The TJTP should lead to sustainable economic diversification at the local, regional and national level.



Principle 4: The TJTP should address social inequalities, improve interregional solidarity, decrease inequalities and tackle injustices.



Principle 5: The TJTP should not harm EU environmental and climate objectives and values.



Principle 6: The TJTP should respect the polluter pays principle.



Principle 7: The TJTP should be supported by adequate, coordinated and long-term public and private funding sources.



Principle 8: The TJTP should be designed, monitored and evaluated through meaningful partnerships which engage all stakeholders in an open, inclusive and ongoing process, especially at local level. Social dialogue and collective bargaining should be central pillars of the transition when it comes to the labour market and enterprises.



Principle 9: The TJTP should take a place-based, local approach to strategy design and implementation.



Principle 10: The TJTP should be developed based on high quality, independent and objective analysis of the challenges and opportunities of the transition for regions.

Breakdown by indicator



Principle 1

The TJTP should be sustainable and deliver on long-term, international and EU climate commitments such as the Paris Agreement and EU 2030 and 2050 climate objectives.



Indicates a commitment to at least a 65% reduction in GHG emissions at regional or national level by 2030

Comments: This applies only at national level, "Germany has stipulated gradual greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045 and envisages a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by at least 65% by 2030."



Identifies the opportunities to increase renewable energy in the region or nationally, but no specific actions, projects or targets are proposed

Comments: Notes that the state government is pushing for the nationwide expansion of renewable energies, especially wind energy and photovoltaics, but no mention is made at regional level.

Without mentioning energy storage, it is noted that, "Power plants needed to ensure security of supply, which are to be operated with hydrogen or renewable gases in the future, are to be built at existing coal-fired power plant sites. The JTF does not promote fossil fuel power plants." It does however, indicate that interconnections with other regions and electricity grid expansion will be needed.



Identifies the opportunities to increase energy efficiency or reduce energy use in the region or nationally, but no specific actions, projects or targets are proposed

✔ Energy efficiency indicators are included as specific project/programme results indicators

Comments: Energy efficiency first is a wider operational programme project selection criteria and newtraining buildings should be efficient.



Principle 2

The TJTP should not lead to prolonged fossil fuel use or promote false solutions to the transition to climate neutrality. As a guide, coal should be phased out by 2030.



A complete phase-out of coal is planned or implied in the territory by 2030

Comments: This will depend however on federal instruments. The plan recognises the federal coalition agreements plan to accelerate coal phase out to 2030 and is in line with the regional coalition agreement (of 27th June 2022) to end coal use by 2030.

"The resources from the Just Transition Fund are therefore to be used in Bottrop, Dorsten, Gladbeck and Marl with the aim of realigning and diversifying the regional economic structure in the northern Ruhr region in order to create new jobs and thus counter the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the end of coal mining and the complete coal phase-out. The following concrete development needs arise in order to be able to achieve this goal by 2030..."



A phase out of fossil gas infrastructure phase-out is planned or implied, but the date is after 2035 or is undefined

Comments: Much attention is given to power plants on existing coal sites that will use renewable gases or hydrogen, with no mention of the future availability of this fuel, its sustainability or the potential alternatives of energy storage etc.

Further comment: caution should be given to claims that new fossil gas infrastructure can be Hydrogen-compatible.



Not enough information available or fossil fuel subsidies not discussed



Principle 3

The TJTP should lead to sustainable economic diversification at the local, regional and national level.



Promotes economic diversification, but there is no consideration of the need for new industries to be sustainable



Recognises the value of SMEs and start-ups, setting out a clear plan for their support and incentivisation e.g. through dedicated incubators

Comments: Programme specific indicators will be developed later as part of the evaluation plan to be agreed by the Monitoring Committee.

- Indicates a link to and a need for consistency with the NECP, but does not clearly link investments for sustainable economic diversification and decent job creation to it

● Principle 4

The TJTP should address social inequalities, improve interregional solidarity, decrease inequalities and tackle injustices.

- Justifies why certain regions should receive support with reference to the underlying economic and employment impacts of the transition, and justifies the choice objective criteria or comparative data
- Prioritises employment support and job search assistance for workers directly losing their jobs as a result of the transition AND other worker groups, including those who may be indirectly affected
- Identifies the existing and future skills, training and education gaps for all workers and sectors, including future generations, at regional level on the basis of objective and quality skills forecasts or clearly sets out a process to identify them
- Foresees targeted investments sufficient to remedy these gaps and create decent, sustainable and resilient jobs for all current (and future) workers in the region
 - ✓ Includes programme specific indicators (section 2.5) to measure the uptake of skills courses or training
- Comments: The wider operational programme indicators include indicators to measure the uptake of skills courses or training, but these could be elaborated further in the specific programme indicators to be developed.
- Does not consider the quality of new jobs or include measures to address the issue
 - Comments: A recommendation might be to include indicators on the quality of new jobs created in the eventual specific programme indicators.
- Does not consider social protection and inclusion measures, even if inequalities are recognised
- Identifies the potential changes to quality of life arising from the transition and includes some targeted measures to address residual negative factors, such as air and water quality issues
 - Comments: This can be considered, in particular, if the wider operational programme of which the JTF is a part is taken into account and if the land redevelopment plans are considered in this respect.
- makes reference to the importance of supporting gender equality but does not propose any dedicated activities or priorities to achieve this
 - Comments: Gender equality, inclusion and no-discrimination are defined as part of the selection criteria in the wider operational programme [for all projects and beneficiaries] and there are budget lines for activities.

● Principle 5

The TJTP should not harm EU environmental and climate objectives and values.

- Does not include activities which would negatively impact environmental and biodiversity indicators relating to:
 - Biodiversity
 - Air pollution
 - Accessible greenspace (land take)
 - Water quality
- AND neither does it include significantly harmful activities as defined by the EU Taxonomy or which would lead to unsustainable use of natural resources or which would lead to ecosystem harm
- Foresees no investments in infrastructure which could directly or indirectly lead to greater greenhouse gas emissions
- Identifies actions or possible activities to improve some biodiversity and environmental indicators. These activities and actions cover at least one of the following categories:
 - Biodiversity
 - Air pollution
 - Accessible greenspace (land take)
 - Water quality

- Foresees no new investment in waste incineration or landfill capacity
However, neither does it include or prioritise measures for increasing economy circularity or to reduce waste

Comments: Under the wider ERDF/JTF Operational programme, the Ressource.NRW call will be continued from the 2014-2020 period. It is not clear, however, whether specific support for activities will be provided for the Northern Ruhr region.

Further detail could be provided on how the potential from the circular economy and circular value creation (identified as a development need), "for which there are promising starting points for diversifying the economic structure and creating new jobs in the northern Ruhr region, for example through the universities and research institutions," will be promoted e.g. how vocational training courses will ensure circular economy and resource efficiency are featured.

● Principle 6

The TJTP should respect the polluter pays principle.

- The TJTP identifies - or commits to identify - the entities responsible for existing environmental damage, and sets out clearly how the Polluter Pays Principle will be respected when making investment decisions

Comments: It is not clear, however, whether the legal requirements on coal companies to, in their final operating plan, 'set out and apply all measures to ensure the protection of third parties from hazards to life and health caused by the former operation [translated]' is sufficient. For example, the Plan foresees support to address land restoration issues, like soil subsidence, in addition to land development. It does include intervention areas such as, "water management and protection of water resources (including watershed management, climate change adaptation measures, reuse and leakage reduction)."

● Principle 7

The TJTP should be supported by adequate, coordinated and long-term public and private funding sources.

- Relies on EU funds only to deliver the just transition (although not limited to the Just Transition Fund and the Pillar III of the Just Transition Mechanism)
AND/OR there is no clear targeting of funds for the most appropriate activities or to address funding gaps

Comments: In addition to national cofinancing, the following areas of activity could be financed by Pillars II and III and the JTM. However, there is no further detail to ensure that these potential resources are leveraged:

- Renewable energies and environmentally friendly and sustainable mobility, including the promotion of green hydrogen and efficient district heating networks,
- Digitisation,
- Environmental infrastructure for smart waste and water management,
- sustainable energy, energy efficiency and integration measures, including the renovation and conversion of buildings,
- Urban renewal and regeneration,
- the transition to a circular economy,
- Restoration of soils and ecosystems and decontamination, taking into account the polluter-pays principle,
- biodiversity,
- Upskilling and retraining, education and social infrastructure, including care facilities and social housing.

- Private funding sources are identified alongside public funding sources, with an indication of how private funds may be leveraged, mainly or exclusively relying on Pillar II of the Just Transition Mechanism

Comments: There is no detail on mechanism, but the wider operational programme outcome indicators for JTF suggests around 200 million euros is expected to be leveraged.

● Principle 8

The TJTP should be designed, monitored and evaluated through meaningful partnerships which engage all stakeholders in an open, inclusive and ongoing process, especially at local level. Social dialogue and collective bargaining should be central pillars of the transition when it comes to the labour market and enterprises.

- A coordination body is established. Requirements for membership of the coordination body and composition of the membership body are clearly presented. Detailed information on meeting timing and regularity is provided, as well as detailed information on how, when and where relevant documents and information on process will be published in an accessible place, ideally including online tools.

Comments: Further detail would be helpful on where future documents about the Monitoring Committee operations and schedule of meetings should be made available to score full marks here.

- Clearly and comprehensively identifies stakeholders to be involved in the process, consistent with the groups identified in Article 3 of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership and a clear and justified description of their roles and status in the process

Comments: Clear tasks are provided, as well as detail on voting and advisory members.

- Concrete detail on stakeholder engagement plans (e.g. meeting and consultation schedules and arrangements), as well as provisions to address stakeholder capacity-building needs

AND the TJTP includes sufficient details on how stakeholders have or will be involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the TJTP and how their views and inputs were integrated into the final plan

- Public consultation and engagement of all stakeholders while all options are open is provided for, but the period of consultation and engagement is launched with less than 4 weeks prior notice

AND/OR

The period for consultation and engagement lasts for less than 12 weeks

AND/OR

There is less than 4 weeks to comment on the final draft

AND/OR

Not all relevant stakeholders have been given the opportunity to participate in a public consultation.

Comments: "On the basis of the key points for ERDF.NRW, an online consultation was carried out from 07.07.20 to 28.08.20, enabling the general public to comment on key statements of ERDF.NRW 2021-2027.

Attention was drawn to the online consultation procedure via various channels in order to reach as many interested parties as possible. The event-related ERDF newsletter was sent to around 1,600 people. In addition, there were more than 1,800 hits on the ERDF.NRW social media. Together with the press release published by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the information campaign resulted in the questionnaire consulted being accessed almost 2,100 times. 440 complete responses were sent to the managing authority. " For the TJTP, joint video conferences with the Rhensiches Revier region were held and participants could send in proposed measures, but it is not clear a specific consultation on the TJTP was made, or that a consultation on the final draft lasted more than 4 weeks.

- Social dialogue is not a part of the planning process, or is mentioned only passively. Labour unions and social partners have not been engaged in social dialogue during the development of the TJTP.

Comments: Detail is lacking on how this will be ensured, particularly for skills plans, going forward. There is no recognition of the importance of decent work, including the importance of collective bargaining, as well as rights and protections at work, for new and emerging jobs/sectors.

● Principle 9

The TJTP should take a place-based, local approach to strategy design and implementation.

- Identifies NUTS 3 regions which will require targeted action and prioritises measures for the specific NUTS 3 regions concerned

- Notes the need for community engagement and acknowledges existing or planned community initiatives, but does not indicate how these will be integrated into the TJTP or how the community will be engaged and informed

Comments: For the wider operational programme, budget is set aside for communication and visibility about the programme, both in the form of digital and analogue events and channels (section 7). The target groups include 'the general public', but it is not clear that communication will be organised at the NUTS 3 specific level on the implementation of the TJTP.



Principle 10

The TJTP should be developed based on high quality, independent and objective analysis of the challenges and opportunities of the transition for regions.



The indicators and/or data included in the TJTP are high quality, focused at the regional level and are appropriate to the goals of the fund to address the socioeconomic challenges arising from the transition to climate neutrality, but do not cover all aspects of the just transition, focusing for example on the energy transition only

Comments: The programme-specific indicators are yet to be developed.



The TJTP does not foresee a revision process even to remedy poor performances or ensure consistency with a revised NECP

Comments: An evaluation plan shall be submitted no later than one year after approval of the NRW ERDF/JTF or ESF Plus/JTF programme.

For further information on the TJTP assessment tool

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