



Partner in a World of Cities

Policy Guidelines of the German Federal Government on International Cooperation for Sustainable Urbanisation

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I. Preliminary Remarks

Worldwide urbanisation is one of the global megatrends decisively shaping the future of humanity in the 21st century. In an increasingly interconnected world the German Government sees urbanisation as an opportunity to expand existing partnerships in a world of cities and to forge new ones. As a partner in managing globalisation it is keen to play an active role in the international urbanisation process.

The intention of the Guidelines is to bring Germany's international cooperation efforts in this field together and ensure coordinated and more effective action on the part of federal ministries and subordinate authorities. They are also intended to ensure that partners in Germany outside the German Government are more involved and better informed about its international activities in the urbanisation field.

The Guidelines on International Cooperation for Sustainable Urbanisation build on the German Government's strategy paper entitled "Shaping Globalisation – Expanding Partnerships – Sharing Responsibility". They reaffirm Germany's desire to contribute actively to sustainable global development as well as the enhancement of peace and security and the realisation of human rights.

The German Government's activities in the urbanisation field are also designed to support international processes such as realisation of the United Nations (UN) post-2015 sustainable development goals in the field of urban development and urbanisation, the UN Habitat III Process and the achievement of international climate goals.

The German Government sees the aim of these activities as a dialogue between equals, which will allow the German side, too, to benefit from the experience of international partners in the sustainable management of urbanisation.

An online overview of relevant processes and the German Government's activities in the international urbanisation field will be published alongside the Guidelines.

II. Global Urbanisation as an Opportunity

This is the century of the city. More than half of humanity lives in urban regions or cities. By 2050 that figure will have risen to three quarters or around 7 billion people. Urbanisation will have very different faces. Over the coming decades today's 24 so-called megacities with a population of over 10 million will more than double in number. Urbanisation is forging ahead fastest in emerging and developing countries in cities with currently fewer than one million inhabitants.

Cities are connected not just with their surrounding regions. They are also global hubs belonging to global networks and impact contexts. Huge resources – energy, goods, capital as well as people and information – flow both between cities and between cities and their hinterlands. Cities are the main destination for migration flows. It is in urban regions that global development trends first make their appearance. The current pace of urbanisation with all its ramifications is now opening up unique opportunities for the creation of sustainable structures. The dense communication and contact that is such a feature of life in large cities encourages the emergence of innovative ideas and new approaches to solving regional and global problems.

Hence cities and urban regions are also the principal drivers of economic growth and development. Urbanisation has been the key to the impressive progress many countries have achieved and the steep fall in the proportion of the world population living in absolute poverty – today 22% compared to nearly 50% twenty years ago. With cities accounting for over 80% of world economic activity, urbanisation and economic growth clearly go hand in hand. Yet resolute action, too, is needed to tackle the host of attendant problems and make urbanisation sustainable.

III. Global Urbanisation Challenges

By 2050 cities will have absorbed all of the growth in the world population. Nearly all of this growth, however, will occur in the emerging and developing countries. The number of urban dwellers in these countries will almost double from just under 3 billion to over 5 billion by the year 2050¹.

Cities are where global change is both generated and experienced. The ensuing challenges which national and local governments face over the coming decades have international implications:

- Large and very rapidly expanding urban populations need, within a compact area, housing, food, water, energy and mobility as well as access to health care, education, culture and the media. They also need opportunities to earn a living.
- Rapidly expanding urban populations and growing social, economic and spatial disparities at close quarters may cause social dislocation and an increasingly fragmented society, leading to rising tensions, conflict and crime. The increase in the urban population is matched by a decline in the rural population and growing disparities in peripheral rural areas.
- Local governments are the level of government closest to the citizen. If local governments are weak, important management and allocation functions will not get performed. This is likely to undermine confidence in government, public administration and the law and encourage the emergence of parallel structures.
- Urbanisation increases worldwide pressure on the natural environment, with critical impacts on the ecosystem: 75% of the world's natural resources are consumed in urban areas² as well as 75% of the energy produced³. Cities are also responsible for 80% of greenhouse gas emissions.
- For urban regions the increasing risk of storms, flooding and drought due to climate change poses a particular and existential threat. In many parts of the world improving resilience and adaptation to climate change

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) (ed.), World Urbanization, The 2014 Revision.

² United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Cities and Green Buildings, p.1

³ Shell, New Lens Scenarios, p. 14, 2013.

has therefore become a major and increasingly important component of any sustainable urban development policy. Given the global dimension of the climate system, the impact of extreme weather events may be felt not only in the affected cities but also worldwide.

- Rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation combined with high population density and inadequate infrastructure make cities particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and may increase the risk of epidemics breaking out. The consequences are grave not just for those directly affected but also in terms of social and economic costs.
- As of now, the international system still focuses largely on the national level of government. Cities tend to be seen merely as stakeholders rather than as having a role in their own right. To an increasing extent, however, cities are now entering the international arena either alone or in alliance with others.
- The financing of urban functions, infrastructure and services is viewed all over the world as one of the key urban development challenges. Yet in developing and emerging countries especially but also in the industrialised world municipal governments often have investment backlogs due to a lack of capital, high levels of municipal debt and insufficient know-how.

IV. Goals of International Cooperation

How the international community as well as national and local governments respond to the opportunities and challenges of urbanisation has direct and indirect implications for Germany and German policy-making. These relate to a wide range of issues from the global protection of public goods to security and stability, matters for which cities, too, bear responsibility. Another concern of great importance to Germany in a rapidly urbanising world is open markets and societies.

All this means that international urbanisation and the many cross-cutting issues it involves must be seen as a holistic challenge with a foreign-policy dimension. In an increasingly interconnected world the German Government sees urbanisation as an opportunity to contribute to sustainable urban development both in Germany and the wider world. Through ongoing and new partnerships it will accordingly pursue the following goals:

- The German Government is keen to contribute to sorely needed efforts to strengthen “immunity and stability systems” for cities. The intention is not only to improve resilience to natural disasters but also to highlight how important cities are for security, stability and peace as well as for sustainable development and the realisation of human rights.
- The German Government wants to help cities and city-regions tap their potential to build prosperous economies that benefit all sections of the population and combat poverty, thereby promoting inclusive and sustainable growth also at local and regional level. To this end it intends to encourage a lively exchange and intensive economic cooperation with and between these growth regions.
- Cities and city-regions should lead the way on greater resource and energy efficiency as well as more effective climate protection as part of a global sustainable development agenda. The German Government will encourage them to bear their share of responsibility for achieving local, national and global goals and for protecting the Global Commons. Sustainable urban development along these lines must also take the viability of rural areas affected by urban sprawl into account. Such areas play an important role in supplying cities with e.g. food, water, raw materials and energy.
- The German Government will work to ensure that in the course of urbanisation people – in urban as well as adjacent rural areas – come

first. Their fundamental rights must be protected, they must have equal and non-discriminatory access to water and food as well as to basic services such as education, culture, the media, health care and security. Tackling these challenges effectively is part and parcel of good governance aimed at building a vibrant and stable society.

- The German Government is keen to support worldwide the participation of cities and their citizens in political processes. For this is not just about the quality of urban and regional development processes, it is also about laying the foundations of a democratic society.

V. Cooperation Priorities

In line with these basic goals and on the basis of relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements, the German Government collaborates through its ministries, subordinate authorities and implementing organisations with partners abroad on a range of urbanisation issues.

1. Good Governance and Administration

Development of government structures, administration and civil society participation

Political negotiation and participation mechanisms are required to identify the various concerns and conflicts of interest urban actors may have and to moderate and manage them for the common good in ways that respect human rights. A constructive exchange between governmental and non-governmental actors needs to be complemented by appropriate accountability mechanisms.

Germany wants to engage with its partners in an intensive dialogue on effective local self-government, including opportunities and procedures for citizen participation. On the German side not only municipal governments but also political foundations and civil society groups will be involved. Germany believes the development of independent media likewise has a key role to play here.

Urban and regional planning and municipal management

Given its experience with regional restructuring and the rebuilding of Eastern Germany, Germany is well acquainted with the manifold challenges in the field of urban and regional planning. They cover a broad spectrum ranging from process management and control to sustainable transport planning (local public transport, non-motorised transport), environmental and public spaces planning and housing policy.

In Germany the National Urban Development Policy was drawn up jointly by the Federation, the federal states and local governments with the aim of implementing the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. Its main focus is the establishment of an integrated multi-level approach to urban development designed to address the economic, ecological and social

challenges facing cities and local governments. This integrated multi-level approach informs virtually all aspects of sustainable urban development: training for architects as well as town and regional planners; infrastructure planning and construction methods and procedures; transport and mobility planning; housing construction; social programmes; efforts to reduce land take. Germany therefore believes it would be useful, as part of an international exchange of experience, to discuss such multi-level approaches at national, regional and local level as well as examples of best practice.

Financing urban functions

Through its development cooperation activities Germany is already supporting investment in sustainable urban development and restructuring in developing and emerging countries. The main focus here is on financing urban infrastructure such as safe and affordable drinking water, wastewater treatment and waste disposal, recycling systems and energy as well as education and public transport.

Germany is also assisting local governments in developing and emerging countries in the field of housing construction management as well as the rehabilitation of established or the development of new neighbourhoods.

In future it will no longer be possible to finance the growing challenges urbanisation brings solely from public funds. At present, owing to legal and economic constraints, local governments often lack access to capital markets. The mobilisation of private capital to finance local infrastructure is likely to become increasingly important in future.

Germany's local financing instruments (municipal utility companies, citizen energy cooperatives, public-private and public-private-people partnerships, foundations) along with its system of fiscal decentralisation as well as its national and regional funding programmes and institutions can provide a good basis for closer international cooperation in this field.

2. Human Rights and Inclusion

Combating poverty and realising human rights

Limited access to water, food, health care and education as well as limited opportunities to participate in economic, public and political life are inimical to any sustainable and inclusive development of urban regions.

In its project-based cooperation activities as well as in international fora the German Government is working to improve this situation. It emphasises the importance of the right to adequate housing, which entitles everyone to safe and affordable housing as well as freedom of movement. That includes also the rehabilitation of informal settlement areas and slums. In its various bilateral dialogues on human rights the German Government accordingly raises issues concerning the human rights and basic needs of people affected by urbanisation.

Besides improving the precarious living conditions of residents in informal settlements and promoting inclusion for disadvantaged groups, one of the German Government's main concerns is to protect people from forced evictions that violate human rights. It is canvassing support particularly for the UN's Guiding Principles on Security of Tenure for the Urban Poor and the Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement.

Social stability, social security systems and inclusion

In the industrialised as in the developing world social and economic exclusion remains a challenge, a challenge often exacerbated by urbanisation. Social stability and individual security are important priorities if urbanisation is to be sustainable. In emerging and developing countries in particular social security systems are crucial in managing the urbanisation process successfully. For this reason Germany is keen to offer support in the form of an intensified exchange of experience. It is one of the first countries in the industrialised world to be facing a radically changed age structure, along with all that entails for its social security systems.

Migration and refugees

For all kinds of reasons – economic hardship, natural disasters, environmental degradation or violent conflict – cities are a magnet for migration and refugee flows. Both in international processes and in its bilateral cooperation activities Germany seeks to develop responses that not only address the immediate humanitarian crisis but also tackle the long-term challenges of (re)integration and building sustainable structures in urban and rural regions alike.

3. Sustainable Economic Development

Resources and the transition to a green economy

Cities have an important role to play in developing a sustainable urban economy. Both municipal and other companies in Germany as well as micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in partner countries can contribute to establishing and refining recycling systems in these countries as well as cutting resource consumption and emissions and so fostering sustainable and inclusive growth there. German companies are very receptive to successful concepts from abroad and are currently setting up cooperative ventures in many partner countries aimed at developing sustainable transport and bioeconomy sectors, for example, as well as the construction of sustainable housing that is affordable also for poorer people.

The guiding principle of Germany's international engagement here is the "green economy", meaning a growing economy that nevertheless protects the climate, minimises resource consumption and provides jobs for all sections of the population in new and transformed industries.

Energy efficiency and renewable energies

Germany and German companies have extensive expertise in energy saving and energy efficiency, resource-efficient energy production and the use of renewable energies. Across the whole spectrum of these technologies right up to the development of smart cities, including smart grids, energy-saving buildings (e.g. KfW energy efficiency standards), the modernisation of energy systems in buildings (e.g. energy-plus house) as well as the planning and redevelopment of energy-efficient neighbourhoods and decentralised energy supply, German companies have core competences which are in demand all over the world.

The German Government is keen to share with other countries its own experience in transforming Germany's energy system and to mobilise German companies' expertise here to help achieve energy and climate goals.

Infrastructure development and mobility

Establishing and modernising public services and urban infrastructure is crucial for the development of an inclusive and sustainable urban living environment.

Given the long life-cycles of infrastructure and the built environment, making subsequent alterations, particularly when cities are growing fast, is a complex and capital-intensive process. For this reason sustainability and the use of appropriate technologies are important concerns especially in the field of infrastructure development as well as transport planning and implementation.

Promoting sustainable mobility through multimodal solutions must be part of any investment strategy for the transport sector. The aim is to maintain and further expand transport systems on the basis of multimodal transport forecasts. Through digital and other technologies the different transport systems are linked in ways that enable them to make optimal use of their specific advantages.

In these fields German companies have considerable expertise and are highly competitive, particularly as regards the integration of various aspects of infrastructure development, transport planning and the introduction of innovative and sustainable mobility and drive concepts. In many countries they are already cooperating successfully here with local partners.

Growing cities mean that increasing traffic, especially in city centres, will become a major challenge. Most journeys will begin and end in cities (first and last mile). Deliveries of goods and food will also cause an increase in commercial traffic within the city.

4. Environment, Natural Resources and Climate

Environment and natural resources, urban nature conservation

The transition to sustainability will succeed only if the multiple impacts of urbanisation can be limited so that long-term damage to the ecosystem is avoided. Growing urbanisation affects the environment and natural resources in many different ways. These include greenhouse gas emissions, land take, fresh water shortages, land degradation, loss of biological diversity as well as air, water and soil quality and noise pollution. The contamination and over-use of natural resources has both direct and indirect impacts on the quality of

urban life and generally also on the health of people living in cities and their hinterland. Germany has acquired experience and expertise in dealing with such negative impacts. Among other things, it has devised strategies and planning instruments to improve air quality and reduce noise pollution in urban regions as well as for green infrastructure, the urban natural environment and urban public spaces. Besides fulfilling important social functions, urban green spaces and public spaces in particular can have a positive effect, too, on biological diversity. Growing cities should be seen also as an important destination for primary raw materials and as a source of secondary raw materials (urban mining).

Climate protection

The increasing concentration of people and economic activity in urban regions means that also climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions are increasingly concentrated here. This presents both challenges and opportunities. Cities have huge potential for reducing emissions, improving resource efficiency and the environment and promoting green growth. How cities develop depends on a whole range of factors. While some are exogenous, others are endogenous, yet influence not only cities' immediate and more remote hinterland but sometimes even global trends. The German Government is keen to help cities make contributions of their own to climate protection and to participate, as members of like-minded networks, for example, also in the international climate debate. For whether the challenge of climate change can be tackled effectively (and the rise in global temperatures kept below 2°C over pre-industrial levels) will be decided first and foremost in the cities. Germany's own transformation of its energy system demonstrates the importance of renewable energies and energy efficiency in this context. For any effective response to climate change efforts in these areas are just as crucial as cutting emissions. At the same time action must be taken at an early stage to adapt to climate change.

Resilience to climate change impacts, natural disasters and epidemics

With their high population density, urban regions are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and the consequences of climate change. Coastal cities are one such case. Through its involvement in international processes as well as its bilateral cooperation activities Germany is supporting capacity-building designed to increase resilience to climate change and protect people in affected regions and cities.

Particular attention must also be given to developing viable health care systems that enable national and local governments to stem and combat effectively the spread of diseases and disease-carrying organisms.

5. Education, Research and Culture

Vocational training

All cities face the challenge of providing large numbers of young people with appropriate training. Besides problems with access to (vocational) training, there is often a mismatch between the training opportunities on offer and the skills companies are seeking. This is particularly the case for those working in the urban informal sector.

With its combination of theory and practice, Germany's dual system of vocational training with its orientation to the labour market, business needs and employment, and in which companies perform core training functions, is seen by many countries as a model. The German Government is assisting many countries to reform and revamp their vocational training systems, for such efforts produce not only economic benefits, they can also enhance integration and political participation. Reforms of this kind are an important tool for reducing poverty and enhancing political stability.

Science and research

German scientists have developed a wide range of concepts and competences designed to address urban challenges. The German Government is supporting basic research in this field as well as the generation of expertise directly relevant to the development of the urban living environment. It is helping to build local capacities in this field both as regards technical as well as political and societal issues. One of Germany's unique assets here is a competence network that brings together a large number of research organisations and industries concerned with urbanisation. On the basis of the German Government's National Sustainability Strategy and with the support of research programmes such as FONA⁴, its members engage in highly integrated and interdisciplinary collaboration aimed at enhancing their understanding of systems and the way these interact as well as generating practical expertise. German universities offer international programmes integrating disciplines such as urban and regional planning with architecture

⁴ FONA: Forschung für Nachhaltigkeit (Research for Sustainability)

and other relevant subjects. Social and natural scientists, economists, engineers and planners collaborate on research into the complex interrelationships in this field. To put these endeavours on a long-term footing, it is planned to expand local (research) capacities.

Media and culture

From the European perspective any dialogue on the challenges of sustainable urbanisation has to focus on cultural life and citizen participation.

Attractive and secure urban regions promote culture, identity, religious and ethnic inclusion; they strengthen social cohesion. Wherever necessary, therefore, they should be revitalised. The German Government supports international and bilateral dialogue on culture and the media in a variety of ways: its cultural relations and education activities, the work of the Goethe-Institut with its 158 branches, the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, German schools abroad, the Schools: Partners for the Future initiative and Deutsche Welle with its multi-media regional programmes. Working together with cities and federal states and in cooperation with public bodies and private partners, Germany can encourage a more intensive discussion of all these aspects.

VI. International Cooperation Instruments

1. Interministerial Steering Group on International Urbanisation

The German Government plans to continue the work of the Interministerial Steering Group on International Urbanisation. The federal ministries concerned with urbanisation issues consult regularly on their various international activities in the urbanisation field, make sure that these activities are consistent with Germany's foreign-policy goals and use ensuing synergies to good effect.

To enhance information- and experience-sharing between ministries digital technologies, too, are employed. Currently ministries' online platforms are being connected, for example, and links created also to external bodies. This will make it possible to prepare, parallel to the Guidelines, an overview of relevant processes and the German Government's activities in this field, which will be regularly updated and published online. The work of the Interministerial Steering Group is coordinated by the Federal Foreign Office.

2. Strengthening the Competence Network

A strong network extending beyond the German Government itself is required if Germany's urbanisation expertise is to be made fully available to the wider world.

In the interest of an ongoing exchange and good collaboration, the German Government is eager to encourage German actors outside its own ambit to become more involved in international cooperation in this field and to offer them a joint platform to this end.

- The German Government explicitly welcomes the international activities of German cities, city associations and the federal states in the urbanisation field.
- It would be impossible to conceive of any German contribution to international urbanisation processes without the involvement of private-sector actors such as companies, engineering and architecture firms, business associations, chambers of commerce abroad or ongoing and new sectoral initiatives.

- The German Government emphasises the importance of the work done by scientific and cultural institutions, research bodies as well as foundations and non-governmental organisations to intensify dialogue and cooperation in the urbanisation field.

Accordingly, the Interministerial Steering Group intends to invite also German actors from outside the Government to discuss cooperation with partners abroad. In their respective spheres and without reference to the Interministerial Steering Group, the federal ministries will continue to cultivate their technical and political contacts and will designate contact points for relevant German and international actors.

3. Supporting International Processes and Organisations

Within the United Nations urbanisation is a prime topic in the negotiations on the post-2015 sustainable development goals. The German Government supports these international activities and processes and is in favour of a specific goal for cities.

Increasingly cities and city alliances are themselves actors in the international arena. The German Government is keen for the importance of cities to be recognised and for their concerns to be heeded in international fora. It supports intensified cooperation with cities in such fora, but it also believes that cities for their part should pursue their agendas more independently and in a sustainable manner.

The German Government likewise sees its cooperation with and support for international fora and organisations such as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) or the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Human Rights Council and the World Bank not only as a significant contribution to achieving global sustainability goals but also as a way to assist individual cities and urban regions to effectively tackle the challenges they face. The German Government therefore plans to energetically pursue its long-standing international endeavours in this field.

In 2016 the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) will be held. The aim of the conference, which takes place every twenty years, is to adopt a universally applicable New Urban Agenda. As the first conference to be held following the adoption of the

post-2015 agenda, Habitat III will have a trailblazing role pointing the world towards a future based on a sustainable development. For this reason Germany is playing an active part in the conceptual preparations for the conference and the drafting of the New Urban Agenda.

The European Commission is currently working on a new EU Urban Agenda. The Agenda will serve to improve the coordination of all activities relevant to cities at European level (having regard to the subsidiarity principle), tap the economic and technological potential of sustainable urban development and ensure greater policy consistency in this field.

4. Promoting Economic Cooperation

As exporters and buyers, as advisers, contractors or investors, German companies offer solutions to the complex challenges of the urban living environment. They are active in transferring technology and shaping Germany's image as a centre of sustainable economic activity.

The German Government promotes international economic relations with a whole range of instruments: market information provided by Germany Trade & Invest, advisory services offered by German chambers of commerce abroad, the German Trade Fair Programme, trips to tap new markets and initiate business contacts, chamber of commerce as well as industry association partnerships, the DeveloPPP programme (development partnerships with the private sector) as well as the Federation's export credit and investment guarantees. Sectoral export initiatives (in areas such as energy efficiency, renewable energies, health care and civil security technologies) can make further major contributions to meeting key urbanisation challenges. The German Government is also consistently pushing here for implementation of the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Many cities are engaged in major urban development projects and in this connection large and complex international tendering processes are under way. Since the bulk of German businesses are medium-sized enterprises, German companies win fewer contracts as project planners and consortium leaders than might be expected considering their expertise.

It is in this context that the German Government is promoting thematic alliances bringing together a variety of actors. Examples are the German Water Partnership, the German Partnership for Sustainable Mobility, the

German Healthcare Partnership and the German Recycling Technologies and Waste Management Partnership.

As far as the law on competition and regulatory parameters allow, the German Government supports bids to join or lead consortia. Within the EU and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) it is lobbying for the further opening up of public procurement.

5. Making Use of German Organisations Abroad

Germany's embassies and consulates-general abroad are hubs of cooperation activity. Its around 230 missions abroad operate in most of the urban regions likely to be the focus of national and international action plans over the decades ahead. Other German organisations abroad include the local offices of Germany's development cooperation implementing agencies, Goethe-Institut branches, chambers of commerce abroad etc.

Germany's missions abroad ensure they have the necessary capacities to observe the urbanisation process in their host country and brief the ministries concerned on relevant developments.

Intensified reporting by missions on urban developments is intended to enable ministries to coordinate their activities in the light of current urbanisation trends and adapt them to changing needs.

It will also help them identify ways in which existing cooperative ventures could become involved in urbanisation processes as well as opportunities for new ventures in this field.

In agreement with the relevant ministries Germany's missions abroad are intensifying their contacts with host-country decision-makers and actors. For whether urbanisation is managed sustainably and with due regard for human rights depends to a very large extent on reform-minded governmental and non-governmental actors. In agreement with the relevant ministries and in consultation with the Interministerial Steering Group missions regularly invite relevant German actors in their host country to discussions on urbanisation issues. Some may represent quangos and implementing agencies or German companies, NGOs and political foundations, others may be academics or people active in the cultural sector.

Information must also flow in the other direction, however. The Interministerial Steering Group on International Urbanisation ensures that missions can also recognise how themes in their host countries interconnect and liaise with each other accordingly. This is intended to generate synergies and contribute to a better understanding of urbanisation processes on the ground.

6. Establishing and Implementing Partnerships

With international partners keen to intensify their cooperation with Germany the German Government is willing, following joint evaluation by the Interministerial Steering Group on International Urbanisation and with the approval of the relevant ministry, to conclude urbanisation partnerships that give its ongoing cooperation activities a new dimension.

Before this can happen, the prospective partner and the German Government need to agree on thematic priorities tailored to the needs of both sides and building, where possible, on work already in progress. These urbanisation partnerships will be geared to achieving the goals set out in the Guidelines. What ministry will be responsible on the German side will depend on what priorities are agreed. The Interministerial Steering Group will be regularly updated on how the partnership evolves.

The German Government is interested not only in concluding urbanisation partnerships at national level but also with cities, regions and urban regions in different countries. Regional initiatives will receive special consideration. Depending on what projects and activities are planned, partnerships may be of limited duration; progress will be reviewed at the regular intergovernmental consultations.

The European Union is likewise currently establishing urbanisation partnerships with countries and cities. Through close liaison with the European Commission and the European External Action Service, the German Government is working for a thematically consistent approach here and discusses relevant issues in the Interministerial Steering Group. Such partnerships could serve to promote initiatives by the EU and EU Delegations abroad designed in particular to disseminate EU Smart Cities standards as well as develop cooperation with international partners in this connection. International urbanisation partnerships under EU auspices could also help European companies form consortia to bid for contracts in connection with major urbanisation projects abroad.

7. Promoting Cooperation with and between Cities

International city partnerships and cooperation programmes involving German cities and metropolitan regions serve not only to complement inter-governmental cooperation, they also give bilateral and multilateral relations vitality and substance, creating a wide range of opportunities for direct exchanges between people and local decision-makers.

The German Government supports the international cooperation activities of German cities. A two-way flow of knowledge enables German cities, too, to benefit from the experience partner countries or cities have gained with new technologies and management tools. The German Government supports municipal cooperation with emerging and developing countries through, for example, ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL's Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) and expert exchanges via the platform Connective Cities – Community of Practice for Sustainable Urban Development.

In an increasingly urbanised world where cities are fast becoming metropolitan regions, the German Government sees targeted cooperation with such regions as a new field of action. Global networks (as well as regional city initiatives and south-south city cooperation) make a significant contribution to achieving development goals and realising human rights. The German Government is already supporting a number of these networks and alliances (ICLEI, Cities Alliance, UCLG, Metropolis and C40).