Urban-Rural Partnerships
Growth and innovation through cooperation
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Growth and innovation through cooperation

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One vital hallmark of a successful policy is that it is beneficial not only for one group of people but takes the entire population and their interests into consideration. This is also true for issues relating to urban and rural areas. Time and again there have been approaches according to which the two were to be treated separately, linked with a requirement to focus on one side or the other.

Such viewpoints not only misconstrue what life is like in our country, but also, by dividing urban from rural areas are far from being fair or future-oriented. Given the range of challenges we are facing, if we wish to achieve progress in our country we need to see the whole picture.

When urban and rural areas act in concert both will win. The spatial planning pilot project “Supra-Regional Partnerships – Innovative Projects for City-Regional Cooperation, Networking and Joint Responsibility” has illustrated how such a cooperation can promote growth and innovations and also improve the quality of life. I owe thanks to all the people in the regions involved for making this project a success by contributing their ideas, commitment and their willingness to cooperate.

Germany’s spatial planning policies at the national level and the regional levels have good reasons to pursue an approach of a “community of joint responsibility”. The central aim is to achieve good partnership relations between urban and rural areas. Such relations can improve an entire region’s competitiveness and create equivalent living conditions.

The supra-regional partnerships pilot project has shown that approaches incorporating rural areas in their development concepts can be successful even in metropolitan regions. The support of urban-rural partnerships as an important prerequisite for growth and innovations also constitutes one of the future tasks of European spatial planning policies. I am delighted to see that in this context the supra-regional partnerships pilot project has received a highly positive response from the European Commission. We need to aim to significantly improve the synergies between cohesion and rural development policies. Urban-rural partnerships do not automatically ensure success. We will drive this process by supporting specific projects and intensifying the dialogue among all the players in spatial development.

Dr Peter Ramsauer
Federal Minister of Transport, Building and Urban Development

Foreword
A pilot project for urban-rural partnerships – why and to what end?

New challenges
In recent years new challenges such as globalisation, demographic change, climate change, and scarcity of natural resources have led to adaptations in the political goals and strategies in the field of spatial development at the European level and national levels.

A new understanding of spatial planning is considered a vital precondition for a spatial development policy to succeed. In a new understanding of spatial planning, it will link different levels and include cooperation among municipalities, cities, urban-rural areas as well as peripheral areas. It will also facilitate the cooperation among the fields of politics, administration, science, the business sector and civil society.

Spatial planning visions and strategies
Germany’s visions and strategies for spatial development dating from 2006 have incorporated these goals. They are developing an innovative instrument for a spatial planning policy targeted towards development and balance by applying a strategic „community of joint responsibility“ approach for cities, metropolitan regions, and rural growth areas as well as peripheral and structurally weak regions.

In these types of regions, which vary in terms of their structures and economic situation, all sub-regions are intended to contribute as partners, particularly to enhance growth and innovations. This is in line with the desire to empower every area, whether strong or weak, to identify and pool potential, and to establish networks from which they will jointly benefit.

On the term urban-rural partnerships
While the project was running it became clear that it is better to speak of “communities of joint responsibility” than “supra-regional partnerships”. The attribute “supra-regional” triggers an unnecessary discussion about terminology. The cooperation areas do indeed exceed past (regional) types of cooperation as well as (administrative) district borders; most even go beyond state borders. These new cooperation areas, however, basically act as regions. This is why terms such as “communities of joint responsibility” or “urban-rural partnerships” are more accurate to express what this type of cooperation strives for: mobilising synergies for growth and innovation in urban and rural sub-regions by taking cooperative responsibility for their future.
Projects rather than programmes – What does MORO stand for?

With its action programme “Modellvorhaben der Raumordnung” (spatial planning pilot projects) MORO, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development is supporting hands-on testing and implementation of innovative approaches and instruments in spatial planning in cooperations between academia and applied practice, i.e., with local players in the regions. The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development at the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning supervises the action programme. It is responsible for identifying promising new approaches for practical implementation to be turned into pilot projects. It is to supervise them and to derive insights that can be adapted elsewhere, to organise transfer into practice and to provide recommendations for changes in the national regulatory framework.

MORO’s work is financed by direct funds to the pilot regions that compensate for the additional costs of research activities. It is also indirectly funded by external project management provided by the Federal Government. The project management includes

- organising knowledge transfer in the course of workshops,
- disseminating the results in publications and at expert conferences,
- evaluating the work and the reports of the pilot projects.

A European project

In the context of MORO’s “Supra-Regional Partnerships – Innovative Projects for City-Regional Cooperation, Networking and Joint Responsibility”, the major issues in Europe – as growth, innovation, and sustainable development – were successfully driven forward at the regional level.

Europe faces many challenges. Global competition, aging societies, climate change, and the scarcity of resources have led to an adaptation of strategies at the European level in recent years. The “Europe 2020” strategy was adopted in 2010 as a follow-up to the Lisbon strategy. It aims at “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” and improved coordination between the national and European economies.

MORO’s research on supra-regional partnerships is based on these goals and attempts to fulfil them by employing innovative approaches. Metropolitan regions are the starting point. As nodes in global networks, they enable even sub-regions that are further away from them to benefit from their hub function and to contribute to development using their own potential. This is why peripheral and economically weaker areas were deliberately incorporated into supra-regional partnerships. The aim is to take them along on the journey towards more growth, innovation and sustainability.

Supra-regional partnerships attempt to establish a compromise between growth and compensation at the regional level. All regions – economically strong as well as weaker ones – are intended to contribute to growth and benefit from it.

This requires new forms of regional cooperation: between regional organisations and service providers; among networks; between academic and economic clusters. Many players in this cooperation did not know each other before, knew nothing about each other and had never met.

Supra-regional partnerships take account of the fact that a multitude of problems do not respect administrative borders and can in fact only be solved when administrative borders are crossed. Established levels of cooperation – municipalities with municipalities, cities with their surrounding areas, regional planning with regional planning – have therefore been transcended. In supra-regional partnerships the fields of politics, administration, academia, business, and civil society have worked together, and in so doing have increased their political, economic or academic clout. This was mainly due to

1. a plethora of projects ranging from regional chains of value added and regional marketing to a cooperation between economic clusters,
2. consistent project orientation (ideas for cooperations were collected at the grassroots level in the regions, and were oriented along the partners’ specific needs),
3. crossing existing regional borders, district, state and national borders,
4. flexible geographical demarcations for establishing various intra-regional project partnerships (variable geometry),
5. newly developed governance models ensuring cooperation on equal terms.
Supra-regional partnerships take account of the diversity of the cities and regions in Europe. They address goals adopted by European Regional Planning Ministers in May 2007 in their Territorial Agenda and further developed in the light of the “Europe 2020” strategy: to integrate the places where people live, to better use the regions’ local resources and in this way to contribute to cultural, social, ecological, and economic sustainability.

MORO pilot projects have made invisible relations visible. They have worked out new fields of cooperation by themselves. They have shown that areas that did not know much about each other at the outset can develop an understanding for mutual problems and for their solutions. As intended by the Territorial Agenda of the European Union, they have succeeded in enhancing economic and social cohesion. Supra-regional partnerships have helped to reduce territorial inequalities, to promote fair opportunities, and in the long term to translate diversity into prosperity, the aim of the European policy of cohesion.

**“It fits into the debate at the European level”**

MORO’s supra-regional partnerships research project illustrates the importance of cooperating across regional and political borders. The EU will react to it in its funding policy, says Dr Dirk Ahner, head of the European Commission’s DG Regional Policy, in an interview he gave in the summer of 2011.

**Does the research project have an influence on the discussion within the EU?**

Yes, it does, because it fits into the debate at the European level. People had assumed that a partnership between urban and rural areas would be a win-win situation for both. But before MORO, however, it was not sufficiently clear how they would specifically benefit from it. The research project has indeed made a difference in that respect.

**How does the European Commission see the role of urban-rural partnerships?**

From our point of view the whole idea has a strong link to our new aim of territorial cohesion. In the context of the research project, cooperation was established beyond traditional and political administrative borders, and in some cases, e.g., MORO Nord, even across national borders. For the EU’s cohesion policy to develop, it is very important to think in terms of larger functional regions.

**Can supra-regional partnerships contribute to implementing “Europe 2020”?**

Absolutely. One of the philosophies behind “Europe 2020” says that growth needs to happen in every territory within a framework of joint priorities. But all of this needs to be implemented locally. MORO has shown how important cooperation within a country is among regions and municipalities. We understand we need to provide stronger incentives for enabling cooperations among Member States across regional borders.

**What could these incentives be?**

Cooperation often fail to be established because the authorities in charge do not wish money from their programmes to flow into other regions. We as the Commission intend to push harder for this reluctance to be overcome, because any time a cooperation did come about we have seen very good win-win results.

**Can the supra-regional cooperation model also work for other regions such as Eastern and Northern Europe?**

Cooperation is important not only for metropolitan regions and their surroundings, for urban networks and economic projects; there are many examples from daily life illustrating how essential cooperation is for citizens. Two cities are located across from each other at the Finnish-Swedish border: Haparanda in Sweden and Tornio in Finland. Letters from Haparanda to Tornio were first sent to Stockholm and then on to Helsinki before arriving in Tornio. The two mayors got together and developed a ‘postal service’ themselves so that letters going from Haparanda to Tornio and vice versa do not need to take a long detour.

**Will the lessons learnt from the research project be taken into consideration for future EU plans?**

In the programme’s next generation we wish to focus on cooperation across regional borders – within a Member State and across national borders. We would like to create more awareness for the types of cooperation that already exist in Germany, and to give scope to the Member States and regions to receive EU funds for financing these types of cooperation. We are even thinking of setting up special incentives. At the moment we are working on funding partnerships like these through our existing instruments such as the Fund for Rural Development as well as Regional and Social Funds.
Lessons learnt from the pilot projects

The power of cooperating

If cities and their surrounding areas, major cities and rural areas work together, both sides win. The “Supra-regional partnerships – Innovative Projects for City-Regional Cooperation, Networking and Joint Responsibility” pilot project has shown in an impressive way that growth and innovation can be promoted by urban-rural cooperation. Even the supposedly weaker partner may have strengths that everyone can benefit from.

The image of economically stronger cities on the one side and an economically weak rural area on the other, offering, however, good housing and leisure quality, has become obsolete. These days it is all about mutual benefits. “The division of labour: you keep the natural environment clean so that we can come to you and relax at the weekends while work life happens in the city no longer corresponds to reality”, says Nuremberg’s Lord Mayor Ulrich Maly in an interview.

The Lord Mayor of Nuremberg is describing one of the major findings of the “Supra-Regional Partnerships – Innovative Projects for City-Regional Cooperation, Networking and Joint Responsibility” pilot project. The aim is to establish win-win situations for everyone.

The pilot project was part of the MORO action programme and was supported by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development from 2008 to 2010.

Seven regions in different parts of Germany worked out blueprints for a spatial policy aiming to help cities, metropolitan regions and rural growth regions as well as peripheral and structurally weak regions to develop and complement each other. The pilot project thereby made a valuable contribution towards the goal of spatial policy in general, i.e., promoting growth and innovation.

No one knows what they are capable of until they try

People were, of course, sceptical as to whether cooperations in such a large framework would work at all and whether manageable structures would be found for them. Weak regions were concerned that metropolitan regions would dominate; strong regions were afraid they would have to give to weaker ones, thus losing their own momentum. Universities in northern Germany, for instance, feared that cooperation would erode their independence. It was naturally easier to develop and implement ideas where cooperation already had some tradition than in partnerships getting together for the first time.

MORO’s results have convincingly refuted sceptics and doubters. The idea of creating win-win situations for everyone caught on: identifying strengths and using them to mutual benefit – supra-regional partnerships have shown in myriad ways how forward-looking such an approach is. Despite all their differences in terms of structure and economic strength, the regions have illustrated how by cooperating as partners all sub-regions can contribute, especially to growth and innovation. Economically strong regions but also weaker ones were successfully empowered to identify and pool their own potential, and to establish a network. ‘Stronger’ sub-regions can thus even better fulfil their role as mentors.

At the same time they are developing a feeling of co-responsibility for the entire region.

Supra-regional partnerships did not take long to develop a new understanding of urban-rural partnerships. They quickly developed a culture of cooperation between major cities and rural sub-regions and generated benefits for all partners. The cooperations neither aggravated existing competition in the region nor established new competition. Through their wide-area approach they were able to contribute to solutions not only appropriate as far as their contents were concerned, but also apt to the level in question. They also increased the players’ scope for action and influence.

A vision becomes reality

For nearly three years seven pilot regions tested concepts and projects of joint responsibility. They developed an understanding of each other’s needs and problems. They overcame barriers in their minds, revised biased opinion, and enhanced how they worked together. At the end of the project, all the regions participating in MORO declared their supra-regional cooperation a success and expressed interest in continuing the work they started.

This was also due to the fact that specific projects were already implemented during MORO’s relatively short lifetime. Be it a better marketing for local produce, linking businesses and up-and-coming skilled manpower, or expanding day care facilities – while the project was still running, all pilot regions carried out projects contributing to growth and innovation which would hardly have been possible otherwise. The opposition between city and countryside, between rural and metropolitan regions was convincingly overcome. The European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart, for example, developed a concept for transport connections not only to the region immediately around it, but also towards centres further away. The cooperation’s success was primarily due to all sub-regions being able to incorporate their interests transparently and on an equal footing.

One particular attribute of supra-regional partnerships is the cooperation among players not only from the field of politics, but also from civil society. In the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region, for example, 400 representatives from politics, businesses, culture, tourism, academia, and marketing worked together in its administrative bodies. People who had known nothing about each other created stable and resilient networks. Where there had been only fragments of random knowledge about existing competences, MORO brought all of it together in a systematic approach.

The business sector enthusiastically cooperated in all pilot regions and a range of projects. In some projects, they were even the driving force, for example in the “Brückenschlag” (building bridges) project. This project is intended to help the metropolitan region of Hamburg grow closer together with the Oresund region including Copenhagen in Denmark, and Malmö and Lund in Sweden. Such a joint development of regional economic and innovation potential as in this case is at the core of the cooperation. MORO has promoted a new partnership in the regional development policy.

 Preconditions for success

Supra-regional partnerships are long-term ‘strategic networks’ of urban (metropolitan) and rural areas. Depending on the cooperation model selected and existing structures, the
networks’ organisation enables its members greater or lesser leeway. At the same time, the cooperation partners commit to shared strategic goals. For these cooperations to succeed the following basic preconditions must be taken into consideration:

**Establishing a management system:**
Overcoming the urban-rural divide. In addition partnerships are intended to cooperatively develop an identity and be perceived. These partnerships are now gaining additional significance in view of the necessity to work together across national borders. For certain specific topics they need to be capable to cooperate with partners from outside their cooperation scope as well.

**Emphasising the benefit:**
Supra-regional partnerships are intended to cooperatively overcome the urban-rural divide. In addition partnerships are intended to cooperatively overcome the urban-rural divide. In addition to ‘responsibility’ for the entire region and its neighbours, benefits to be expected for one’s own sub-region are the main issue. These benefits can consist of additional development momentum or avoiding the disadvantage of being located in an isolated spot between strong cooperating regions.

**Being specific:**
The ambition to focus the cooperation on specific projects right from the outset is crucial for its success. This helps to

1. push overly long discussions about the background,
2. open cooperation opportunities for all partners, and above all
3. to have tangible proof of specific benefits of the cooperation at an early stage.

**Establishing a management system:**
Supra-regional partnerships require highly capable network management and resilient geographical demarcations so that they can develop an identity and be perceived.

**Allowing flexibility:**
Every pilot region has significantly expanded the scope of its previous regional cooperations and integrated different existing ‘regions’. These partnerships are now gaining additional significance in view of the necessity to work together across national borders. For certain specific topics they need

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**Important lessons learnt in an overview:**

- In view of the intense efforts required especially at the beginning, it is indispensable that the cooperation have the full support of the political leadership in the regions.
- The guiding principle of the MORO research programme, i.e., to equip the regional players with a great deal of freedom, has proved valuable. This was true when setting up the framework, for developing the organisational structure and defining major fields of action.
- Without the impetus given by federal level of spatial planning, without start-up funding, and without an organised exchange of know-how, a comparable innovation effort would hardly have been possible.
- The project’s very short duration was a problem. A stabilisation would make it possible to state reliably whether the concept is viable in the long term, but would require more time.
- The approach is perfectly suited to prepare the regions for much closer European cooperation.

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**What does ‘variable geometry’ mean?**

Undoubtedly, supra-regional partnerships cannot cover every subject in the entire region to the same extent. The large area covered by the partnerships and the great number of existing socio-economic networks provides many points of contact for cooperating with a variety of partners. The principle of a ‘variable geometry’ has proven helpful in the context of the pilot project for making use of these connecting factors as needed. There are two different goals to be differentiated in this context:

1. Supra-regional partnerships are an excellent platform (for initiating, organising, providing services) for partnerships defined either by their subject or region they cover within the entire region = intra-regional variable geometry.
2. Supra-regional partnerships are ideally suited for practising specific cooperations with other partners beyond their defined cooperation areas, e.g., with an international/global dimension = supra-regional variable geometry.

According to this definition, the principle of variable geometry is of particular significance for specific project-related cooperations within supra-regional partnerships. However, a clear spatial demarcation of the cooperation area or ‘strategic area’ remains an indispensable element for the partnership’s identity.
Lessons learnt from the pilot projects

Figure 2: Organisational structure of urban-rural partnerships in a variable geometry (own data)

Urban-rural partnerships as an umbrella organisation for various project partnerships on the basis of a variable geometry

Urban-rural partnership << self-governed region >>

- several sub-regions different in structure and organisation
- project partnerships with partners within and beyond the self-governed organisation
- project partnerships with selected sub-regions and partners
- project partnerships with selected sub-regions and partners
- supra-regional variable geometry
- intra-regional variable geometry

initiator, coordinator, moderator, consultant, conveyor of know-how, marketing

Globalised cities need to be rooted in their regions more than ever before, says Ulrich Maly, Nuremberg’s Lord Mayor, about the driving forces behind the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region and working together as equals.

The conurbations are considered to be the central drivers for economic and social development. Has this focus changed at all due to supra-regional partnerships?

If you reduce this question to their importance in solely economic terms, the answer is no. Where large manufacturers and service-providers are located certainly creates higher added value. Having said that, the GNP cannot be the only indicator with which to measure prosperity. If we include the standard of living and cultural identification as factors influencing the attractiveness of a place, then the focus has indeed shifted.

The Nuremberg Metropolitan Region established its principles for cooperation in the Bad Windsheim Declaration. What do you find to be the key sentence of the Declaration?

It is the sentence: “Equal living conditions as the goal and standard for our action are at the centre of our activities”. For me this equality is the standard for all action, although we often hear from politicians that it is a romantic relic from the post-war era. It is true that Nuremberg’s central railway station is not comparable to a station in the Bavarian Forest. But if equality is the standard, then the Federal Government and Deutsche Bahn AG need to provide the funds for developing the area.

The Declaration says that describing urban and rural areas as opposing is wrong. Why was this sentence included?

This opposition does not correspond to historical, economic, sociological or cultural realities. People are part of a region that influences their identities. We leave the city during our leisure time; we live in the countryside and work in the city. A globalised city needs to be rooted in the region for its cultural identity.

How do you deal with the different weight of the sub-regions in your partnership?

It is about creating a win-win situation, about mutual benefits, not about compensation. Were we to talk about compensation, we would be thinking in the obsolete terms of a division of labour between the two areas: keep the natural environment clean so that we can come to you at the weekends to relax while work life happens in the city. We have long moved beyond this image, which dated from the 1970s.
How important is it to include the business sector in supra-regional partnerships?
The business sector is very important for our “Original regional” (originally regional) project and in the field of energy, because nothing works without having the producers on board. As far as nature parks are concerned, it would not be that important because they are run by the public sector. Generally speaking, the rural-urban divide is easier for the business sector to deal with, because there are as many world market leaders located outside city borders as within them.

Who are the key players in supra-regional partnerships: business or politics?
There is no either/or. If one side feels they are being asked politely to take the same path, it is done smoothly. The beauty of it is that we have several locomotives ultimately pulling all the small trains in the same direction.

How do you make sure there is a balance between economic and political interests?
We try to establish institutions where we can meet as equal partners. There is the steering group for the entire metropolitan region in which representatives from the business sector, academia and politics jointly discuss the basic principles of our work on an equal footing. The same is true for sub-projects.

Cooperation is often seen as a panacea. Realistically, what can you do to avoid disappointment?
It can never be prevented, but you need to learn how to deal with it. It is always bad to assume that a network is a model of harmony. Confronting and resolving conflicts reasonably is crucial.

Do cooperations need special official regulations by spatial planning authorities?
Yes, they do. I am in favour of structured planning. In this case the Federal State – Bavaria to be more precise – is called for rather than the Federal Government. If you allow everyone to do as they please without any regulations, you will not serve the public good. Leaving development in the hands of private interests would not give us the Germany we desire. We need regulations for questions such as whether a thousand square metre shopping centre can be built in the countryside if that space is available and the mayor wishes to sell the real estate.

What role do regional cooperations play for the regions’ position within the Federal State, within Germany, and not least the EU?
It is the same as with every product. You can sell it well if you have the right quality. If we want to position ourselves as one region to the outside world, we need more than a jointly signed paper. If we can provide regional work environments which credibly prove our intention, our voice will be heard much more readily.

What is the most important result for the region?
Our cooperation has been elevated to an overall higher quality for the future. With respect to the things we set out to do, we have made significant headway in going into common fields of interest.

What will the next step be?
The cooperation centre “Partnerschaft Ländlicher Raum – Verdichtungsraum in der Metropolregion Nürnberg” for the cooperation between the rural area and the conurbation of the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region will continue the partnership between 2010 and 2013 with a different financial sponsor. New fields of action will be added to the MORO ones. Demographic change is a prime focus for us at the moment as it is a major challenge. Additionally, we will systematically integrate competences and requirements of rural areas into regional clusters, specifically the “Medical Valley” top cluster this year. We are working on a concept for the “Via Carolina” as a trans-boundary development axis between Nuremberg and Prague in order to reveal its economic, tourist, and cultural potential.

Specific, binding, and on equal terms
Supra-regional partnerships have a very short history. They are role models for a new type of cooperation. This pilot project has resulted in many lessons to be learnt that are of fundamental importance for such cooperation.

What is special about supra-regional partnerships?
Supra-regional partnerships have deliberately extended cooperation to include rural areas that are further away from major cities. This makes them different from traditional metropolitan regions. The players themselves have defined the geographical demarcations for cooperation. Supra-regional partnerships have gone beyond administrative and regional borders, and in many cases even state borders. The aim is not only to focus on relations that already exist, but rather to develop new links. The regions in Germany already have the advantage of a tradition of cooperation in some cases, so that there is some experience which makes new cooperations easier. Not every region participating in the pilot project, however, had this background. And we had many different players involved in the process, not all of them were experienced in cooperation. This has made the project a true novelty in regional cooperation.

What are the benefits of cooperating?
Supra-regional partnerships enhance the entire region and its sub-regions. They improve the scopes of action and influence for participating sub-regions and their players. New opportunities arise for improving efficiency and performance, for economies of scale and synergies. There are more possibilities for the sub-regions to specialise in and additional potential deriving from “learning from each other”, from dialogue and knowledge transfer. All the pilot regions have explicitly confirmed these effects in their final reports and in the speeches by their political leadership during
MORO’s concluding session. Particular benefits for national and international competition arise from ‘an increase of political weight’. There are more possibilities to have a say in political decision-making processes by participating in this partnership. Weaker sub-regions benefit most from this aspect. An indirect/direct benefit can be seen in the possibilities of exchange ideas and experience, most particularly when working together in the administrative bodies of supra-regional partnerships.

What is at the core of these cooperations?

Economic and knowledge-based linkages are the focus. ‘Soft’ factors, however, are also important, such as family-friendly policies, image and political weight; these are increasing in global competition. The linkages can look very different from one region to another and cover different subjects. Different areas work together within supra-regional partnerships depending on the subject matter of their cooperation.

What are the objectives?

The objectives are

• to be more competitive in global and regional competition as a good location,
• to use, strengthen, and expand local resources to achieve the above,
• to offer these resources actively for regional use,
• to strengthen one’s position in the competition for attracting businesses,
• to improve living conditions as a soft location factor.

This is an ambitious approach, because it depends on the commitment of regional players who know ‘their (sub)region’ best.

What is necessary for a successful start?

During the initial phase it is beneficial to have a local project management in place. Ideally, existing organisational units and structures would be used. This can be an external office, a university, or an employee of a regional organisation. Spatial/regional planning is the central player as it is not committed to a single subject but promotes development by using various instruments. It is essential that the partners have a written document right from the outset testifying to their will to cooperate and agree on objectives, structure, responsibilities and decision-making methods, rights and obligations, and the financial resources for the partnership. The document can initially be an ‘informal cooperation agreement’, but it makes more sense to have a ‘framework agreement’ addressing the various issues and dealing with the question how the partners can meet as equals. It would be a clear and transparent agreement among partners.

Which organisational structure has proved to be best?

The organisational structures used in the partnerships project in northern Germany and the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region have proved best practice. The structure consists of a steering committee or a council/steering group at the strategic level, and fora or projects at operational level. The different levels are linked to one another by spokespersons or sponsors. They are integrated into decision-making processes by the council or steering committee. Secretariats are in charge of coordinating the entire process. If the organisation is restricted to the operational level, major problems ensue even in the starting phase in view of the complex ambitions and objectives of supra-regional partnerships.

Do supra-regional partnerships need permanent structures?

Every region is striving for a stabilisation of the communities of joint responsibility. Some institutionalisation of the cooperations is therefore indispensable. ‘Self-organisation’ in particular cannot do without structures, bearing in mind that many diverse players need to be organised across large areas. In an independent project, the pilot project “Großräumige Verantwortungsgemeinschaft Norddeutschland” (northern German community of joint responsibility) has developed suitable structures for future cooperations.

How important is a flexible organisation?

Supra-regional partnerships can be expanded when required, but there is a clear geographically defined ‘core area’. This is why restrictions are imposed in flexibility in the institutional structure. This is primarily true at the levels of taking or adopting decisions for the partnerships to be able to act and work. The work level, on the other hand, can be designed as required and flexibly.

What are the principles of cooperating?

Every pilot region was faced with the challenge of integrating different sub-regions and
existing cooperations and involving the business sector. The following principles were helpful:
- voluntary commitment to cooperate on the part of the partners
- equality and consensus as principles
- participatory financial contributions
- clear project orientation.

What is the role of project work?
Working together on projects, wording objectives jointly, and reaping the successes motivates players, making the benefits of cooperating tangible for them. In all pilot regions specific project work was of particular importance. It is at least as important for integrating the sub-regions and players from the business sector as for participating in the higher-level organisational structure, which often sees itself as providing a platform, giving impetus, and providing services for the project partnerships.

How are the subjects of the cooperation developed?
The regions have to independently prepare their subjects in a bottom-up approach in dialogue with the players in the sub-regions. The top-down part is to analyse the sub-regions, their capabilities and deficits so that there is evidence for why the subjects are useful. This is the basis for subsequent steps of bundling the potential. This can only work if there is awareness of what the shared problems and potentials are. Almost every pilot region placed emphasis on analysing the potential in the different fields of action.

How can additional benefit be generated for the stakeholders?
The evaluations of the pilot projects have shown how much transparency is valued. The stakeholders need to know what potential and unique selling points the sub-regions have, how intensively these have already been integrated in existing linkages, e.g., between companies, and how they can be enhanced for mutual benefit. The players/sub-regions need to
- systematically analyse the potential, requirements and type and structure of existing functional linkages,
- facilitate joint learning processes and create an atmosphere of trust favourable for joint and coordinated action,
- develop cooperation strategies and linkages at the different levels of action that are based on coordinating functional linkages and player-controlled networks.

Which locally generated potential of sub-regions can be tapped better or exclusively through supra-regional cooperation?
The locally generated regional potential reflects the region’s capability. This includes its population, landscape and nature, tourism, settlement and building culture, business, economic tradition and identity as starting points, for example for marketing regional products. The endogenous potential is the ‘dowry’ of community action with other sub-regions and enables much scope for regional creativity. It is necessary to promote endogenous potential in view of synergies that could be created with other sub-regions. The sky is the limit for creativity.

This potential is
- not restricted to a very narrow and specific use by the sub-region, e.g., a limited amounts of biomass for their own energy production or crafts for local needs without supplier qualities
- promising to enhance the regional added value together with other potential.

Which fields of action are most suited to maximise growth and innovation effects in different sub-regions?
Generally speaking, these are all the fields of action in which complementary interests can be generated. This makes supra-regional partnerships different from other types of regional and intra-municipal cooperation. However, a precondition for evaluating the situation is the agreement that fields of action and projects often only cover (different) sub-regions of a partnership, as defined in the variable geometry. Bearing in mind the two guiding principles of MORO – “Growth and Innovation” as well as “Cooperation between metropolitan and rural areas” – the following fields of action play an important role:
- regional chains of value added,
- developing cluster initiatives in different sectors,
- creating networks and clusters in order to create more efficient units and synergies,
- cooperation between the business sector and academia (technology transfer),
- cooperative training arrangements, with the additional aim of securing the potential pool of skilled workers,
- instruments for balancing interests,
- transport as basic infrastructure,
- regional planning (joint regional plans such as in Stuttgart),
- marketing within and beyond the region, in order to gain attention from politicians at the Federal State level and to enhance acceptance for cooperating within the region.

Figure 4: Typical fields of action in urban-rural partnerships (own data)
Objectives

The Metropolitan Region and its partners have vast competences in business and academia. They are not, however, organised in a supra-regional way or described on a joint platform. This means that competences and synergies are going to waste. At the same time, potential investors and skilled workers from outside the Metropolitan Region underestimate its potential. Information systems that exist in the sub-regions vary greatly in terms of contents they cover and the technology they use. The MORO project aims to:

- collect information about economic and scientific competences and to communicate them within the region as well as beyond, and to create a more effective network,
- discuss and develop technical solutions for collecting, filtering, pooling and updating existing data,
- identify regional core competences that are competitive at the international level to create a critical mass and a network,
- develop an overall concept for a web-based description of competences in companies, universities, research institutes and the like, including solutions for the technology to be used.

Results

In the course of the sub-working group’s work on business and academia, the most viable areas of competence were identified for the Metropolitan Region. They include vital technologies for the future but also a number of economic development cores in the Metropolitan Region:

1. Energy-related and environmental technologies,
2. Mechanical and plant engineering,
3. Automotive industry,
4. Micro-electronics/IT.

A web page was established for presenting these fields of competence online. You can find it at www.region-mitteldeutschland.com. Its target groups are interested citizens, but also experts, companies and skilled workers.

Project example

Interlinking business and academia in the Central German Metropolitan Region

Objectives

The strengths of the rural areas in the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region lie in the automotive industry, the energy sector and new materials. Competences in energy-related and environmental issues are especially strong in the immediate surroundings of the city. Some rural districts, too, hold competences that may be of interest to other parts of the project region, but are as yet unknown. The aims of the MORO project were the following:

- to establish a closer-knit network which makes use of specialisations, supports exemplary action, and secures efficiency benefits through cooperation,
- to further develop the energy and automotive clusters,
- to support the exchange of experiences and strengthen networking for best practice solutions in energy technology to become more widely used,
- to improve linkages between institutions with similar functions, e.g., energy agencies, energy consultants, or contact centres for private households. This reduces red tape and the costs for public relations work, increases work efficiency, and creates more public attention.

Results

The “Energie und Umwelt” (energy and the environment) project took initial steps towards setting up a network of energy technology centres. The renewable energies network Western Central Franconia, for example, was integrated into the network as was the ATZ development centre Sulzbach-Rosenberg and its knowledge. Energy agencies work together in the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region, in fields such as providing information to citizens, and municipal energy management, i.e., sustainably managing the municipality’s property. The two large independent agencies in the region, providing advice on energy efficiency, ENERGIEregion Nürnberg and Energieagentur Oberfranken, are now working together closely.
How can spatial planning policies support supra-regional partnerships?

Supra-regional partnerships should be taken into consideration at the stage of drafting a regional development and regional planning policy. This would ensure that the higher-level plans support cooperations as much as possible. Coordination is an important aspect so that official provisions do not confront partnerships across regional or national borders with conflicting objectives.

Which players need to be on board?

Supra-regional partnerships aim to generate growth and innovation through specific projects. For each project private sector players, such as representatives of companies or the tourism industry, need to be included in the partnerships as well as involving representatives from the public administration offices. A strong commitment by the business sector is vital for the cooperation’s success. This will not take away the public sector’s undisputed role in steering the process. The fact that there is usually no institutionalised political framework for such partnerships lends weight to having the (political) administrative leaders of the sub-regions on board. The projects’ results and decisions taken at project level will thus receive firm political support. A public participation as part of a comprehensive regional governance was not included in the pilot regions.

How can companies be attracted to join?

Companies think primarily in terms of their own financial benefit when it comes to the decisions and commitments they make. Whether companies that are deeply rooted in a region depend on the region’s image and infrastructure or their scope reaches beyond the region, they have a general interest in being included in regional policy issues. It is vital to be able to offer them actual participation in decision-making process and projects. Good responses are likely when the cooperation is about regional clusters, technology transfer or chains of value added, or focuses on mitigating the increasing lack of skilled workers by establishing cooperative training and qualification. Transparency is important, so that everyone involved is informed at the outset about the cooperation’s objectives and expected benefits. A company will not realistically commit to something when it cannot expect a financial gain.

How can the phases of developing supra-regional partnerships be differentiated and what do they look like?

The ‘development phases’ outlined below need to be understood as a process in which phases can overlap, or individual steps may be carried out in parallel. Results may become adapted or improved a posteriori in specifications/updates.

1. Launch phase:

Before supra-regional partnerships are founded/constituted, they are usually preceded by an initial phase during which the demarcations, objectives and expectations of all potential partners are specified; strategies are developed; strengths and weaknesses identified and evaluated; and necessary actions defined.

2. Organisational structure, constitution

A decision is taken on the organisational structure and the ‘rules of the game’. These include: cooperation as equal partners, definitions of processes, responsibilities, conflict management, communication and reporting methods. All these points are put together in a framework agreement.

3. Taking stock

All the potential relevant for the project work is analysed in depth. This is essential under the overarching goal of “Growth and Innovation” to mobilise the available scientific and economic potential necessary for creating clusters. To date, knowledge about these potentials has been surprisingly meagre – at least in large-scale frameworks.

4. Implementation

This is when the ‘day-to-day work’, the actual project work, starts.

How can the willingness to cooperate on the part of individual regional players in supra-regional partnerships be enhanced?

The players’ willingness to cooperate is inevitably influenced by their personal opinions. This is why we need to reach out to the players and ‘meet them where they are’. If this is neglected, conflicts may ensue and have negative repercussions on the partners’ willingness to cooperate or even the cooperation overall. The following points need to be taken into special consideration:

- communication problems,
- insufficient information,
- lack of transparency.

How important are the players’ individual interests?

The players’ willingness to cooperate stands or falls by the possibility they are given to implement their own interests or expected benefits. This constitutes a major challenge for supra-regional partnerships. If such preconditions cannot be fulfilled or established at the operational level, i.e. the project-based level, they can mean the death of a project. In the case of core projects, a failure can pose a considerable threat to the entire partnership.

What type of marketing do supra-regional partnerships need?

A partnership requires marketing within the region and beyond when it comes to explaining the idea, objectives and content behind it. Internal marketing is necessary to ensure that the players and stakeholders’ identification with the partnership is maintained and strengthened. External marketing is necessary in order to be able to generate projects and to strengthen the partnership as an ‘instrument’. This means that each marketing effort has to be aware of the different target groups to address and of the different contents and messages to convey.

The pilot projects offer a host of good examples for targeted marketing, e.g. web pages and regional campaigns.

What is the role of state-level or sub-region level regional planning?

Generally speaking, all cooperations should be supported by committed sub-regional and state-level planning policies. Whether state-level regional planning should play an additional role within the communities of joint responsibility is a question which needs to be answered depending on the individual case. It is undoubtedly useful, but not an imperative if there is no established ‘playmaker’ at the outset, e.g., a well-organised metropolitan region.
But there is no alternative to having the participation of sub-regional planning since communities of joint responsibility actively influence the development of the sub-regions.

The representatives from regional planning authorities are the most important expert voices of the sub-regions during the decision-making processes within the communities of joint responsibility.

How can sectoral policies support supra-regional partnerships?

A supra-regional partnership can be strong in cross-departmental and cross-sectoral issues provided that everyone involved wants and accepts it. This is why relevant departments need to be given the opportunity to participate in wording the supra-regional partnership’s strategic objectives. Additionally, relevant administrations need to be able to influence the supra-regional partnership’s agenda. Political institutions must then adopt and process these objectives and make them part of their strategies. If that is the case, the departments and supra-regional partnerships can support each other. Secure funding reaching beyond the launch phase is indispensable for supra-regional partnerships so that the institutional framework is maintained and project work can be carried out.

What do trans-boundary supra-regional partnerships require specifically?

Supra-regional partnerships across national borders are the subject matter of an independent MORO. A few special aspects are the following:

- There is hardly any supra-regional partnership without cooperation across national borders. However, the trans-boundary cooperation and its organisation are usually not the partnership’s main objective or content. Instead, trans-boundary cooperation is included when it makes sense in the sub-region or project.
- Trans-boundary cooperations are generally confronted with particular challenges. The varying degree of experiences in cooperating and the different spatial structures along the German border require region-specific solutions. An efficient cooperation requires support from the Federal Government, the Länder, and the EU.

The pilot regions, geographical frameworks, organisation, projects

Figure 5: Map of the pilot regions
Regional partnership in northern Germany / Hamburg Metropolitan Region (MORO Nord)

The pilot region at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (m.)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area (km²)</td>
<td>39,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating Länder</td>
<td>Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of rural districts and county boroughs (including Hamburg)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International partner</td>
<td>South Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of municipalities (including county boroughs and Hamburg)</td>
<td>1,821</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

population figures as of 2010

The business sector, politics, administration and academia from four Federal States are acting in concert – for growth and innovation in northern Germany. The idea has been anchored in the minds of the people in the regions through a multitude of projects.

The partnership included the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, six districts in Schleswig-Holstein and eight rural districts in Lower Saxony (Hamburg Metropolitan Region). In Schleswig-Holstein, Lübeck and the Schleswig part of Schleswig-Holstein was included, in Mecklenburg it was West Mecklenburg and Central Mecklenburg/Rostock. The south of Denmark is an additional partner.

The partnership’s range of subjects and objectives

The MORO Nord partnership was characterised by the wide range of subjects it covers. The original aim was to better integrate the sub-regions and improve cooperation in the sub-regions as well as the entire region. The Hamburg Metropolitan Region hoped to gain increased visibility at the European and global levels. Areas further away from the centre expected project-related cooperation and enhanced relations with the Hamburg Metropolitan Region.

How the cooperation was organised

The partnership evolved from the application to take part in the research project “supra-regional partnerships”, but it was also a continuation and summary of existing, to some extent bilateral or project-related relations. Its central steering body was the steering committee where all relevant partners were represented. It was supported by the secretariat of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of the Interior and the project management of HafenCity Hamburg University. Project leaders were in charge of implementing the individual sub-projects. Every sub-project had a member of the steering committee assisting it as a link to the steering committee.

The projects and their results

Sub-project
Qualified northern Germany – Lack of skilled workers and technology qualifications

Objectives
There is an increasing lack of engineers and natural scientists. “Qualifiziertes Norddeutschland” (qualified northern Germany) aimed to offer attractive qualifications for graduates of grammar schools in northern Germany, and to recruit skilled people to work where they are needed in the region. The cooperation between schools and vocational training institutions and the business sector was to be enhanced, self-employment initiatives encouraged, and the creative potential of northern Germany promoted.

Figure 6: MORO Nord – Regional partnership northern Germany / Hamburg Metropolitan Region (Secretariat MORO Nord)
Results

The concept of a Science Summer School was developed as a means to attract young learners’ interest in technology and science and to offer them the possibility to have their questions answered. It was successfully implemented in Itzehoe. In the meantime a network has been established between companies and training institutions. A network of start-up companies, young entrepreneurs and start-up centres facilitated a regular exchange entitled “Start up and get together – Norddeutscher Gründerdialog” (start-up and get together – a northern German dialogue among start-up companies).

Sub-project
Building bridges: development corridor
Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link

Objectives

A new bridge between the island of Fehmarn (Germany) and Lolland (Denmark) offers opportunities and development potential for the metropolitan region and its surrounding regions. A conurbation consisting of Hamburg and Øresund growing more closely together would have an international standing and be more visible at the global level. The “Brückenschlag” (building bridges) project was adopted. It states the willingness of the five STRING regions – Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Zealand (Denmark), the capital city region Copenhagen (Denmark) and Skåne/Schonen (Sweden) – to cooperate in, for instance, the fields of infrastructure, tourism, and the labour market.

Sub-project
Life sciences

Objectives

How can companies and research institutes work together more closely in life sciences/biotechnology? The joint “Norgenta” cluster management comprising players in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein was the starting point. The life sciences project was to incorporate additional initiatives and players from the partnership in the wider region.

Results

The aim to achieve closer cooperation was successfully reached: existing platforms, especially the ones related to marketing, can now be used jointly and thus more effectively. There was progress in jointly organising international trade fairs. Focal points in health management were defined, one of which is industrial biotechnology. This was done in a series of events attended by representatives from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein. Companies and representatives from academia met to get to know each other and develop joint activities in the future. The project partners expressed their general willingness to continue the cooperation after the MORO Nord project was completed.

Sub-project
Unmistakable – Northern Germany in the competition among regions

Objectives

The “Unverwechselbar” (unmistakable) project aimed to develop joint marketing strategies and implement pilot projects in order to increase the outward visibility of northern Germany as an attractive location for trade and industry and to improve its competitiveness in the international competition among regions.

Results

A competition among advertising agencies resulted in the creation of a logo which all the Länder in northern Germany were allowed to use free of charge. Shared activities, events and exhibition booths at national and international trade fairs are intended to display it as a sign of their link. The Länder of Northern Germany and several institutions have already expressed their interest to use this logo. It was already used in the context of the “Nacht des Wissens” (night of science) in Hamburg in November 2009.

Additional sub-projects

- Campus Nord – cooperation among universities
- Maritime economy
- Supra-regional logistics platform
- Kulturland Norddeutschland (cultural space northern Germany)
- Getting closer together – Linking rural areas to the centres
- Taking a stand – Rural areas in the supra-regional partnership
- Networking in the food production industry of the partnership region
- Belt Food – Networking in the food production industry of the partnership region
- The North’s Future in Crafts
- Partnerships along regional development axes
Highlight Partnership and building bridges

MORO Nord kicked off a sustainable cooperation network in northern Germany. During its lifetime new and durable partnership relations were established in projects and at the Länder level. These new structures include the regional players as well as the business sector. “We were able to create very close personal contacts with players within and from outside the metropolitan region in a way that did not exist before and will be continued even now that the project has been completed. This was an intrinsic success of the MORO process”, says Ernst Hansen, chairman of the MORO Nord steering committee. All this has paved the way for the new “Projekt-Partnerschaft Nord” (project partnership Nord) – an institutionalised network to succeed the MORO project.

These good partnership relations are the basis of another MORO Nord highlight: the “Brückenschlag: Fehmarnbeltquerung” (building bridges: development corridor Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link) project. It is a key project for the region of Lübeck/Hansebelt and was developed in a process in which the municipal level and the business sector were both heavily involved.

Crossing the belt is important not only for linking up with the Oresund region, but also for establishing a connection leading up to Stockholm and the entire northern European region. Before the MORO process was initiated, the region along the Fehmarn Belt had not been equipped as the large cooperation space it will become in the future. Ernst Hansen: “For the first time a shared approach for developing this meta-region became necessary. It will define which transport connections are necessary and how the potential for additional momentum can be tapped.”

The environment of trust and cooperation in the MORO process has helped to partially overcome the opposition in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to a bridge across the Fehmarn Belt. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania’s position is now characterised by pragmatism rather than opposition. Ernst Hansen: “Even if they do not ‘love’ the fixed link, they will try and define the benefits it offers for Mecklenburg”.

Following the close cooperation during the MORO project the district of Ludwigslust and the county boroughs of Lübeck and Neumünster applied for membership in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region. The Metropolitan Region was duly extended in 2012.

“Rooting diversity regionally”

Ernst Hansen, chairman of the MORO Nord steering committee until MORO 2010 was concluded

A wide range of projects – this is the hallmark of the northern Germany/Hamburg Metropolitan Region partnership. Ernst Hansen, chairman of the MORO Nord steering committee, talks about the reasons for this diversity and the opportunities it entails.

You had 14 different projects and project partnerships, more than any other pilot region. How did this happen?

Bearing in mind the size of the cooperation area, we wished to carry out different projects in order to root the cooperation in the region. Schleswig-Holstein consists of areas that are less developed and at the peripheries, but also other areas forming an economically strong ring around the metropolitan region. We intended to use the MORO project to find new answers to the question: what can we, the Land government do to prevent the divide from widening?

MORO Nord extends to parts of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Lower Saxony. Did that make the process more complicated?

Including Lower Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania was an absolutely necessary part of the project in view of creating cooperation across a large space. It was not always easy to coordinate this great number of players, but we also gained a lot of new momentum for the rural areas.

How were these many projects, these many ideas developed?

Not by sitting around a round table! We collected ideas in many large-scale workshops and gradually turned them into complete projects. The impetus provided by the regional players, e.g., the business sector in particular, were tremendously important. The special thing was that MORO Nord had mayors, district commissioners, business representatives, and representative from the Land governments working together across hierarchical levels.
How did you manage to mobilise all these players?

Many players participated in the MORO process because they had very specific ideas about the cooperation. The Chambers of Industry and Commerce and the representatives of the business sector have played a special role. The “Fehmarn Belt-building bridges” projects and our new concept for developing a shared logo are examples of the industry’s commitment. A shared logo as an umbrella brand name for the whole of northern Germany was requested. In addition to other brand names, e.g., Hamburg, it can be used as a link during trade fairs, in brochures and events.

Do you also recognise some deficits in the cooperation?

We would have liked the municipalities to cooperate more closely and get involved more intensely. We will focus on integrating this level more in the future.

The Hamburg Metropolitan Region is strong anyway. Has it nonetheless benefited from MORO Nord?

At the beginning the representatives of the city of Hamburg were sceptical. They already had their administrative bodies, funds and projects for the metropolitan region in place. Receiving support for new cooperation approaches with Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and the north of Schleswig-Holstein was not a strong focus for them. They were afraid the large dimension of the partnership would weaken the metropolitan region. In the course of the project these concerns lost significant ground and the opportunities offered by the larger MORO approach became more and more apparent.

Was your aim to convince the Hamburg Metropolitan Region about MORO successful?

Yes, it was. Issues such as food production and knowledge and technology transfer are cases in point. The existing potential has become clear, not least in the shape of the very successful regional conference of MORO Nord and the Hamburg Metropolitan Region on knowledge transfer in December 2010 and some projects on cluster cooperation in the food production industry.

What has changed for the areas further away from Hamburg?

A comprehensive study on “Ländliche Räume in der großräumigen Partnerschaft – Entwicklungspotenziale in Norddeutschland” (rural areas in urban-rural partnerships – development potentials in northern Germany) has been highly useful for recognising the strengths and resources available in the rural areas and identifying subjects for future cooperation.

The universities proved to be difficult partners. There was “opposition to overly close cooperating/networking”. What was the reason for it?

This project has had a difficult history. In the past, several regional governments tried time and again to have universities work more closely together to achieve savings. Against this backdrop the universities had their doubts about an approach to institutionalise cooperation in the sub-project “Campus Nord”. The time does not yet seem to have come for establishing a cooperative system of universities in northern Germany. This does not mean that we should not strive to make northern Germany more competitive as a university location within the region and beyond. However, Campus Nord was successful in making it possible to develop shared university marketing and in agreeing to harmonise the different university databases over the long term.

What importance do you attach to integrating the rural areas?

An urban-rural cooperation is only as successful as its integration of the rural areas. In our follow-up project, the “Projekt-Partnerschaft Nord”, we intend to have local authorities much more integrated into the cooperation, and to pursue an approach based on broad acceptance in the municipality.

How does this integration work from Hamburg’s perspective?

Very different interests come into play. Hamburg’s neighbouring Länder and the rural areas need to voice their interests with sufficient commitment.
Cooperation and networking in the north-east

The cooperation extends from the Baltic Sea ports in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to Berlin to the south of Brandenburg. It aims to create a strong European region. The economy and the transport sector are especially important.

The partnership consists of the Länder Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. It includes the capital city region Berlin-Brandenburg, additional areas fulfilling the functions of a metropolitan region, but also rural areas, structurally weak areas with a rapidly declining population, and areas connecting them to other metropolitan conurbations.

The partnership’s range of subjects and objectives

The region has enormous potential as a logistics hub between the German Baltic Sea ports and the capital city region Berlin-Brandenburg. It additionally contributes to raising the profile of the Central European corridor between the Baltic and the Adriatic Seas. This is why topics such as the economy and the labour market, infrastructure, transport and logistics were the central theme of the projects. The partnership aims to create the best possible network for the strengths and potentials of the sub-regions so that they can fuel the economic development of the entire region.

How the cooperation was organised

More than twenty institutions cooperated in the MORO project: the spatial planning authorities of Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania; the Ministries of the Economy and economic investment corporations of the Länder; the Chambers of Industry and Commerce; rural districts; municipalities; and the port management companies of Rostock and Sassnitz. Numerous sector-based networks, businesses and academic institutions were also taken on board on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the five modules and sub-projects, specific task forces were set up. They worked together closely and presented the results of their shared work. The decisions for the project were taken by the steering committee, consisting of the chairpersons of the five modules/sub-projects. Twice a year all the partners got together for regular meetings to discuss project results and plan the project phases.

The projects and their results

Sub-project

Creating more economic links - cooperation in the entire region

Objectives

- Improving networks among existing sector-related market places for cooperations and networks in four sectors: energy industry; mechanical engineering and metal processing; food production industry; and logistics,
- disseminating information about these offers,
- conducting surveys about the need for research and development the companies cannot do themselves.

Identifying complementary competences at research and development institutions.

Results

A survey among experts revealed that cooperative relations between networks and companies in the three Länder existed in only few fields. There was, however, widespread interest in such cooperative relations. Insufficient information about existing activities and structures of the neighbouring Länder – with the exception of Berlin and Brandenburg - was mentioned as a significant impediment to establishing cooperations. Better information and communication proved to be the ‘key’ to intensifying cooperation.
Sub-project
Linking regions
(cooperations between regions)

Objectives
- developing the regions’ strengths and potential by sector,
- linking, profiling and implementing the logistics potential and the significant economic centres of the region,
- securing the availability of skilled workers for the region’s economy.

Results
From the perspective of areas more remote from the metropolitan regions, two action fields for growth and innovation were best suited for further cooperation in a large-scale partnership:

1. Improving the regions’ transport connections to the Berlin-Brandenburg airport, the central train station and the road network. These would improve the access of the four partner regions.

2. The four regions can benefit from the major city’s hub function for the exchange of knowledge and information. This requires the Länder of Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to coordinate traffic projects with the Federal Government.

Sub-project
HUB 53/12 – the logistics network
Güstrow • Prignitz • Ruppin

Objectives
- Creating a profile for the logistics hub, securing or re-using the rail infrastructure for freight transport,
- Supporting the establishment of rail-related businesses,
- Working together at administrative level to develop strategies jointly and make better use of synergy effects,
- Establishing the region as a ‘by-pass’ at the interface between Scandinavia/Baltics and Central, South and South-East Europe.

Results
During the MORO project the foundation for the cooperation was set, and the brand name HUB 53/12 was established in the region. Additional municipalities, the so-called clover region west of Neuruppin consisting of the municipalities of Kyritz, Neustadt (Dosse), Wusterhausen and Gumtow, were recruited to join the HUB 53/12 logistics region. After a political decision was taken in the summer of 2010, the rail route between Neuruppin and Neustadt (Dosse), which had not been any rail traffic for years, will be used again for transport freight. Logistics providers in the HUB region are using HUB 53/12 as a platform for presenting their companies.

Sub-project
Trans-boundary action plan – establishing a shared trans-boundary economic area for the Lower Oder Valley by including the metropolitan region Szczecin

Objectives
It is a good start when the prospects and the potentials of a region have been identified, but this needs to be followed up by decisive action. The local players in the Lower Oder Valley agreed that it would only make sense if they acted jointly. Mayors and senior officials of the thirty German and Polish municipalities met to discuss ways to cooperate. They decided to adopt a “trans-boundary action plan” in order to accelerate the region’s development as the “Wirtschaftsraum Unteres Odertal” (Lower Oder Valley economic area). The MORO project’s objectives were the following:

- to find out where cooperation is possible with other municipalities in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and with the metropolitan region Szczecin to create an economic and science centre at the Lower Oder River,
- to establish future structures for securing the necessary sustainability of the cooperation and for improving the region’s image internally as well as externally.

Results
On an informal platform, trans-boundary cooperation between the municipalities participating in the action plan was achieved in the fields of trans-boundary tourism, crafts and trades, landscape, land use, nature conservation as well as culture and communication. This cooperation was expanded to include the “Daseinsvorsorge im ländlichen Raum” (public services in the rural area) project. But a trans-boundary cooperation needs a long-term solid financial basis to succeed. It would be desirable for the European Union to fund these approaches through its support framework.

Additional Sub-project
Study “Joint responsibility area Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania”
qualification of workers, and securing their availability.

The sub-project “Logistics network Güstrow Prignitz Ruppin” illustrates this aspect best. Its aim is to develop a structurally weak region into a logistics hub between Hamburg, Berlin, and the Baltic Sea ports. Frank Segebade: "At the beginning, this was only a vision. But soon the first freight trains will be put onto the rails. Without MORO we might have never gotten that far." Other sub-projects such as German-Polish cooperation will also be continued after the pilot project has been completed.

"There is strength in diversity."

We wish to continue the approach of cooperating and networking in the north-east. An interview with Ms Petra Hintze, managing director, Neubrandenburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce:

Which is the most important result for the pilot region?

Partners from the business sector cooperate if there are specific occasions, problems or ideas and objectives. Corporations think and act in functional spaces, not in administrative units. This successful cooperation is the best evidence for administrations’ ability to work across borders. We have found out that our strengths lie in the diversity we have in our region.

Are there benefits for the region after the project has been concluded?

We now need to find out where these cooperative approaches can be continued or new ones developed. Examples:

• the Baltic Sea ports as gateways to the world in the logistics industry and freight transport,
• clinics and spa located on the Baltic Sea and in land-locked areas and health management,
• research potential in biotechnology
• the rural area and its potential for food production and energy generation, including research,
• metal working and processing,
• agriculture/agricultural science and food production industry.

What does the future hold?

The metal and energy sectors in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg look promising for a cooperation aiming to establish new markets, procedures and products. We also see a potential for Berlin as a market for organic produce from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The cooperation in the logistics network Güstrow/Prignitz/Ruppin will undoubtedly be continued. A number of companies, chambers of industry and commerce, associations and trade unions have set up a north-south initiative so that the regions along the north-south axis can benefit from the expected growth potential. December 2010 saw the first conference co-hosted by the three Länder Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, during which approaches for future regional cooperation were discussed.
Cooperation requires structures and content: representatives from three different Länder are developing a cross-border cooperation model and have decided to become a family-friendly region.

The urban areas Chemnitz/Zwickau, Dresden, Halle/Leipzig and the rural areas between them make up the core of the Central German Metropolitan Region. Permanent partners for the cooperation include the “ImPuls-Region Erfurt-Weimar-Jena” together with the city of Gera in Thuringia; the cities Dessau, Roßlau and Magdeburg in Saxony-Anhalt; and additional areas of a more rural nature all around the metropolitan region. The higher-order centres of Chemnitz, Dresden, Halle, Leipzig and Zwickau were responsible for the cooperation. Together with the Länder Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia they developed a flexible cooperation model.

**Central German Metropolitan Region**
(formerly called Saxon Triangle)

**The partnership’s range of subjects and objectives**

The Central German Metropolitan Region is developing very dynamically. The power of its players and local institutions for innovations is especially decisive for its growth potential. The work of the Central German Metropolitan Region is motivated by the guiding principle of establishing the necessary framework conditions.

**How the cooperation was organised**

The working group "supra-regional cooperation", one of altogether five working groups in the metropolitan region, was the organisation in charge of coordinating the pilot project region Central Germany. The working group consisted of representatives from all the central contact points of all cooperation partners.

The urban areas Chemnitz/Zwickau, Dresden, Halle/Leipzig and the rural areas between them make up the core of the Central German Metropolitan Region. Permanent partners for the cooperation include the “ImPuls-Region Erfurt-Weimar-Jena” together with the city of Gera in Thuringia; the cities Dessau, Roßlau and Magdeburg in Saxony-Anhalt; and additional areas of a more rural nature all around the metropolitan region. The higher-order centres of Chemnitz, Dresden, Halle, Leipzig and Zwickau were responsible for the cooperation. Together with the Länder Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia they developed a flexible cooperation model.
The projects and their results

Sub-project
Successful cooperation in a polycentric metropolitan region (governance)

Objectives
The metropolitan region has two central action levels: the urban areas of Chemnitz-Zwickau, Dresden and Halle/Leipzig and the overall metropolitan region. For some time now, some projects have been carried out with a third cooperation level, i.e., the Thuringian ring of cities and the higher-order centres of Saxony-Anhalt. This third level also includes the rural districts in the surroundings of the greater metropolitan region, and corresponds with the cooperation area covered by the pilot project. Although all three levels had prior cooperation experience, the cooperation among all them is a major challenge for the metropolitan region.

The sub-project focuses on further developing an effective governance structure for the metropolitan region. It aims to establish a clearly defined division of labour at the different cooperation levels and, at the same time, to pave the way for effectively interlacing the levels. Integrating peripheral areas and areas located in between the urban areas was particularly taken into account.

Results
The discussion and consultancy process resulted in a proposal to organise the supra-regional partnership as a registered association (e.V.) consisting of the representatives of the metropolitan region – ranging from the urban areas and rural districts up to the Länder. The association’s objectives and organisation were defined as follows:

- The association will have a members’ meeting, a board, a steering committee and a secretariat as its permanent bodies.
- Working groups and projects will be established as needed.
- The metropolitan region’s council, simultaneously serving as the members’ meeting of the association, will lead politically and have overall responsibility for the metropolitan region. The association’s board will be the legal representative and general manager of the region. The members will reflect the region on a proportional basis.
- The steering committee will be responsible for coordinating the Central German Metropolitan Region’s operations and give advice to the council.
- Based on the number of its higher-order centres, each urban area will delegate voting representatives to the steering committee.

Sub-project
Family-friendly metropolitan region

Objectives
The impact of demographic change is increasingly showing in the economic development of the Central German Metropolitan region. Young, creative and highly qualified people find soft factors such as family-friendliness very important when choosing where to live and work. As a multitude of best practices and approaches existed in the region, a decision was taken to further develop and communicate family-friendliness as the region’s strength. It includes elements such as:

- creating family-friendly living and working conditions to reconcile work and family life,
- establishing family-oriented human resources policies in companies and organisations in the metropolitan region,
- incorporating family-friendliness aspects in municipal decision-making processes,
- supporting local family-friendliness alliances.

Results
A plethora of successful initiatives, measures, and projects concerning family-friendliness in the cooperation area was researched and compiled in systematic lists. Service gaps and necessary action were identified. The research was used as a basis for developing guidelines for family-friendliness in the region. In the meantime, these guidelines have become applicable in all member cities of the metropolitan region. They deal with reconciling work, training and family life; communication and participation; living conditions and residential environment; education and vocational training; and also include leisure time, sports and culture.
Examples:

- sustainably guaranteeing high quality and quantitatively extensive and needs-based child care facilities;
- reviewing municipal government decisions and municipal facilities for their family-friendliness;
- adapting homes and residential environments to the needs of families;
- taking into consideration the specific needs of parents who are still enrolled at university;
- providing a balanced leisure and sports infrastructure for families.

The guidelines provide guidance not only for political decision-makers but also for private landlords and housing associations and for public and private education providers.

**Sub-project**

**Balancing interests in polycentric partnerships**

**Objectives**

In many joint activities of the supra-regional level, it makes cooperation among the sub-regions difficult. The MORO project included a pilot study on best instruments to reconcile different interests at the supra-regional level.

**Results**

In a first step, existing examples were extensively researched. Then, a combination between a structural fund and a package solution as a possible approach was tested in more detail.

**Structural fund:** This approach has the advantage that it does not require direct monetary compensation between the partners, which would be difficult to justify. If instead a fund is established, the community and all partners still benefit indirectly from the developments.

**Package solution:** Every cooperation content and project is discussed and adopted in one package. The basic idea is to generate a mass of subjects to be negotiated before deciding in favour or against a project. This would increase the possibility to create a better balance between benefits and obligations. In a nutshell, it would be possible to offer a partner rewards in one project for accepting compromises in another.

This experiment resulted in the following findings:

- The representatives from the twenty-four institutions developed and adopted a consensus-based proposal within the given time. It included all the items required. The players earmarked funds for the 2014-2020 period; established the budget for the first two years of 2014 and 2015; and agreed on projects to be implemented in the first two years.
- For the cooperation to succeed, unbiased chairmanship, a climate of trust, and clear and acceptable governance rules are indispensable.
- The preconditions for establishing and managing a regional structural fund require further discussion.

**Additional Sub-project**

**Linking business and academia**

**Highlight**

**Family-friendliness as a factor for a region’s attractiveness**

Providing good conditions for families is an important contribution to economic development. The Central German Metropolitan Region has understood this and dedicated a sub-project to this issue. The decision was also influenced by the “Family Atlas 2007” issued by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The atlas shows how well work and family life can be reconciled in the region. Almost fifty per cent of mothers having at least one child under three hold a regular job. The percentage of working mothers is even two thirds in mothers with at least one child between three and six.

The Central German Metropolitan Region wishes to use this favourable starting position to further promote family-friendliness in all sub-regions as a factor for the region’s attractiveness. Jan Opitz from the spatial planning office in Leipzig says: “The working group on family-friendliness has prepared a guidance document which addresses the potential but also the deficits of the metropolitan region as a family-friendly region. Its target groups are municipal decision makers, but also every other local player shaping family-friendliness. It intends to draw attention to necessary action to be taken. It aims to help increase the region’s attractiveness for families. The working group is co-chaired by Jasmin Boland from the secretariat of the metropolitan region and Professor Jörg Klewer from the Zwickau West Saxon University. The latter is the first representative from outside the municipal administration to hold such a position. As a scientist he provides new impetus to the work of the working group. It is currently conducting blanket surveys among all political leaders of the cities and rural districts of the Central German Metropolitan Region. Jan Opitz: “Family-friendliness in the region will be better evaluated and will gain value as a subject in the municipalities’ planning and decisions. On this basis, the guidelines for family-friendliness can then be further developed.”
Partnership among urban areas

Cities play an important role in the Central German Metropolitan Region. An interview with Jan Opitz, chair of the working group on supra-regional cooperation of the Central German Metropolitan Region, from the city of Leipzig’s spatial planning office:

Which is the most important result for the Central German Metropolitan region?

It is the partnership model among the urban areas. The partnership is open for membership to all urban areas of the three Länder making up Central Germany. Integrating the cities of Magdeburg, Dessau-ROLlau, Gera and Jena into the metropolitan region was a first step. In this context decisions were taken to change the region’s name into “Central German Metropolitan Region”; to develop a corporate design; and to define new focal points.

Are there benefits for the region after the project has been concluded?

The MORO project helped to implement numerous steps of essential importance for the region in a very brief period of time. These included, for instance, clear regulations on integrating the sub-regions and the players from the business sector, academia, and civil society into the operational side of the partnership. The sub-project on family-friendliness was a test run for such an approach and was a success. A stable work basis involving experts from the sub-regions was established, including partners from academia and the civil society. The sub-project will now be continued as an independent working group on family-friendliness.

What does the future hold?

The axiom of being equal partners leads the way. For the partners and sub-regions of the metropolitan regions this means they can participate and will not be decoupled from the development of the stronger partners. Using operational interfaces, different sub-regions and players will be taken on board for the work in the metropolitan region on a case-by-case basis and depending on subjects and projects. A tool for balancing interests will be developed and introduced and will support this process in the future.

WKI Supra-regional partnership “Wissen-Kooperation-Innovation/W-K-I” (knowledge-cooperation-innovation)

Academia and the economy are working together more closely, thereby creating the framework conditions for additional innovations.

The pilot region Frankfurt/Rhine-Main – Central Hesse – Rhine-Neckar – Western Palatinate consisted of the metropolitan region of Frankfurt/Rhine Main comprising Aschaffenburg, Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Gießen, etc.
Hanau, Mainz, Offenbach, Wiesbaden, Worms; the Central Hesse area comprising Gießen, Marburg, Wetzlar; the metropolitan region Rhine-Neckar comprising Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg; and the Western Palatinate area comprising Kaiserslautern, Zweibrücken and Pirmasens. The pilot region comprises conurbations, urbanised areas, and rural districts.

The partnership’s range of subjects and objectives

The W-K-I partnership’s core challenge was that the four regions had not cooperated before, were not perceived as one unity from the outside, and did not have a shared history as its starting point. The regions were competing for skilled workers and senior managers as well as for companies and research institutions, which was another problem for the partnership. On this basis, an answer was sought to the question whether a cooperation between the business sector and academia (in the field of life sciences) would lead to an increase in growth and innovation.

How the cooperation was organised

The project region set out to tackle an ambitious issue in a very large and diverse framework (its sub-regions had little experience in mutual cooperation) with a very lean organisational structure. Unfortunately, this approach did not prove viable when the project ended. Many sub-projects did not reach the phase of implementation due to that.

Examples: Sub-project Analyses

Objectives

A monitoring system was planned to analyse the specific strengths that already existed and to monitor their development. At the same time the following aspects were to be analysed:

• what are the unique selling points of the four regions?
• what innovative R&D approaches already exist?
• what new products or products are being developed?
• which factors can improve the climate for innovation in the region?
• what links are there among companies and between companies, universities, and research institutions?

The findings were intended to be the basis for promoting further cooperation in the field of life sciences.

Results

The sub-regions were not homogenous in the preconditions they offered for the field selected of life sciences. They did not have the same number of companies, research institutions in the same density and focus. Their experience varied greatly and as a result, so did their expectations. In the course of the MORO project it became clear that the life sciences industry in the MORO region in its diversity and specific focuses promises extensive potential for the future. This potential needs to be tapped.

Sub-project

Future factory

Objectives

The sub-project aimed to create a better network among the companies in this industry, but also between the companies and specialised university and research institutions, so that they could cooperate better in the future. The potential partners were to get to know each other and agree on subjects to cooperate in. A strengths-weaknesses analysis and a risks-benefits analysis were planned. Objectives for possible cooperations and ideas for joint projects were to be defined. At the same time, the foundations for expanding the life sciences field of competence were to be prepared.

The sub-regions of the MORO region hold specific strengths in the field of life sciences and host outstanding companies and research institutions:

• almost complete value added chains (research-production-services system)
• more than fifty competence networks in innovative industries
• industrial parks and technology centres with a focus on life sciences
• international trade fairs and congresses.

The project’s powerful partners are another asset. These included the following:

• BioRegion Rhine-Neckar-Triangle e.V.
• Frankfurt Innovation Centre Biotechnology GmbH
• HA Hessen Agentur GmbH – Hessen Biotech
• Frankfurt Chamber of Industry and Commerce

Some of the companies and research institutions had prior experience of working with partners from the four regions when the project was started. Some others, however, had not yet known about other companies’ and research institutions’ strengths, nor were they aware of cooperation potential.

Results

Various approaches were discussed with regard to the subjects and the organisational structure in pooling the potential in the life sciences industry across the four W-K-I regions. Additional steps towards creating innovations in life sciences in new frameworks were not possible within the project’s lifetime.

Additional sub-projects

• supra-regional cooperation of existing projects
• networks
• communication components
With its supra-regional partnership on “Wissen-Kooperation-Innovation/W-K-I” (knowledge-cooperation-innovation) MORO was the starting point for new structures to be established. An interview with Stefan Germer from the secretariat of the West Palatinate planning community and Maren Preuss from the Rhine-Neckar regional association:

What is the most important result of W-K-I?
The project was the first cooperation of its kind in the region. In the project lifetime, it had a very positive influence on a specific cooperation approach in one of its sub-regions (Rhine-Neckar-West Palatinate). The project generally encouraged the development of cooperative structures and of a ‘culture of cooperation’. This applied in particular to players from the public sector.

Are there benefits for the region after the project has been concluded?
The newly developed ‘culture of cooperation’ would ideally serve as the basis for governance structures to facilitate future cooperations. We have identified many ways in which the sub-regions are already linked with one another or will be in the future. These links will constitute the basis for formal agreements on supra-regional cooperative relations on the basis of specific fields of action and specific projects.

Regional products, specialties, but also services and technical products of a high quality – the rural area has a lot to offer. Urban and rural areas both benefit from improved chains of value added in the region.

The partnership consists of a core of county boroughs and densely populated districts and their network of rural areas.
• The primacy of public policy applies.
• The cooperation covers only those metropolitan issues which cannot be dealt with at a sub-ordinate level.
• All decisions need to be taken on a consensus basis.
• In its projects, the Metropolitan Region is bound by the principles of excellence, supra-regional significance, and subsidiarity.

The MORO project on the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region constitutes such a partnership. It is a demonstration of how rural areas can benefit from cooperations within a metropolitan region. It starts off with three fields of action: strengthening chains of value added in the region; clusters in rural areas; and trans-boundary cooperation.

How the cooperation was organised
The council of the Metropolitan Region is responsible for taking decisions. It represents the project within but also beyond the region. It consists of legal representatives from the sub-regions and co-opted members, i.e., representatives of the Bavarian government, the administrative regions, and the district councils of the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region. There are six fora: economy and infrastructure; science; transport and planning; tourism; culture and sports; and marketing. Roughly 400 players from the business sector, academia, culture, and the administration contribute to the fora with their expertise. Each forum has a technical spokesperson and a political spokesperson, e.g., lord mayor, mayor, or district commissioner. They also each have a managing director. These are usually town councillors from different municipalities of the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region. Together with the council’s executive board they make up the steering committee of the metropolitan region. The council’s executive board consists of the ‘triumvirate’ of district commissioner, lord mayor and mayor. The marketing association is primarily run by the regional business sector, and develops as well as implements a marketing strategy.

The projects and their results
Sub-projects
Chains of value added in the region
Objectives
The cooperation between existing regional initiatives in the field of chains of value added was to be improved, and a campaign developed for the entire metropolitan region. For marketing purposes, the aim was to establish the “Original Regional aus der Metropolregion” (originally regional from the metropolitan region) initiative as an umbrella brand for regional produce and services, and to then have it used more widely by regional and local initiatives. This would also help the sense of identity within the metropolitan region.
Results
A range of activities was carried out during MORO’s lifetime, among them the cross-regional campaign “originally regional”. Its objectives were the following:

- to maintain and expand the creation of goods, services, and jobs in the region,
- to reduce traffic by enabling proximity between producers and consumers,
- to strengthen regional awareness,
- to increase the consumption of regional products and services,
- to contribute to the quality of life.

Many projects and initiatives intending to promote regional products and services have only a small customer base. They need bigger markets. The “originally regional” campaign has helped increase linkages between the rural areas and the conurbations and provide access to a larger market.

In a parallel effort a demand for regional products was generated. The environmental agency of the city of Nuremberg and the secretariat of the metropolitan region have brought together institutional caterers, such as the Nuremberg clinical centre and city canteens, with regional suppliers at a round table. Nuremberg’s city council decided that 25% of all the produce in official institutions should be regional. New marketing and logistics structures became necessary to serve this demand. Additional sub-regions, such as the city of Lauf on the Pegnitz River and the district of Central Franconia, are endeavouring to comply with quotas for regional produce.

The “originally regional” campaign has encouraged the founding of more regional initiatives. These are able to make use of the pool of experience from the network of existing initiatives. It is not yet clear whether a decentralized organisation and the co-existence of different organisational approaches are viable. If the initiatives increase in number, it will become even more important to discuss introducing uniform, product-related quality standards and pertinent quality mechanisms.

Sub-project
Green metropolitan region

Objectives
The project aimed to enhance the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region’s attractiveness as a “Green metropolitan region”, to further develop its green infrastructure, and to enhance awareness of it. For this purpose, proposals on how to create better profiles and cooperation among the nature parks in the region were to be prepared. Another objective was to promote intra-regional tourism and to create more goods and services in the region. The quality of life was to be turned into a more important factor of the region’s attractiveness.

Results
The nature parks in the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region contribute greatly to the quality of life in the region. They provide a link between agriculture, ecology, and the economy. The following sub-projects were implemented during the overall project’s lifetime:

- The ten nature parks present themselves to the citizens of the metropolitan region in a travelling exhibition and a brochure.
- The region presents itself on the www.metropolregion-im-gruenen.de website. Links provide more information about everything the nature parks offer and on places to see and things to do.
- A special list of excursion ideas for school trips has been compiled for teachers.
- The regional media present weekly tips for excursions.

A close link to the forum on tourism, promoting intra-regional tourism under the motto “satisfy your wanderlust close to home”, has provided additional benefits. More possibilities for nature parks can be imagined, i.e., incorporation into regional chains of value added or specialisation in providing the region with regenerative energies (bio mass and solar energy). Joint applications may be possible within an interconnected biotope system.

Additional sub-projects

- clusters in rural areas
- trans-boundary cooperation

Ideas and innovative approaches turn into (pilot) projects. An interview with Dr Christa Standecker, managing director of the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region’s secretariat.

What is the most important result for the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region?

We were able to show in specific projects that large-scale urban-rural partnerships generate concrete benefits. By focusing not on the divide between urban areas and rural areas but instead on existing and potential linkages, we were able to provide new momentum for the region’s development. Using MORO we showed that the Bad Windsheim Declaration signed by the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region as a strategic and political policy document on joint responsibility does more than pay lip service.
Are there benefits for the region after the project has been concluded?

MORO enabled us to turn innovative approaches into (pilot) projects and to successfully implement them. A beginning has been made. We will continue the projects. They will be enhanced and applied sustainably to the entire framework of the metropolitan region.

What does the future hold?

The Bad Windsheim Declaration is a binding commitment for all the players in the metropolitan region. Additionally, the Free State of Bavaria was intrigued by the success of the MORO project. A cooperation centre for partnerships between rural areas and the agglomerate of the metropolitan region Nuremberg will continue the urban-rural partnership in the metropolitan region in new projects and activities planned for the 2010-2013 period. The Bavarian Ministry for Economic Affairs will provide the necessary resources.

Highlight

Overcoming cultural barriers

MORO saw to it that the cultural barriers between urban and rural mindsets were overcome. Nuremberg’s Lord Mayor Ulrich Maly says: “Even I had to stop and learn that things are different in the rural areas and that people are confronted with different types of problems.”

As the pilot project went on, all players involved developed an increasing understanding for the different ways in which urban and rural areas may perceive the same political issues. In the city, demographic change is discussed under the heading of an aging society, whereas the countryside sees it as problem of large abandoned strips of land. While Nuremberg does not have enough child care facilities, the rural areas have to think of different ways to use their facilities as there are hardly any children to use them. Public institutions have a different meaning in rural areas. A pub, for example, if it is the last one of its kind, is of great importance to the people’s life in the countryside. They fight for its survival, whereas too many pubs and restaurants are a nuisance for city dwellers.

Ulrich Maly says that MORO helped the representatives from urban and rural areas to understand how the other side feels. He mentions the secondary home tax levied by Nuremberg. Smaller municipalities are not happy about it as it makes students move to Nuremberg in order not to pay the tax. The small municipalities are concerned that those who are originally from rural areas will lose their attachment to them. Ulrich Maly: “We need to review the situation again and decide whether we should keep the tax or not.”

The model region at a glance

| population (m.) | 5,3 |
| total area (km²) | 15 400 |
| participating Länder | Baden-Württemberg |
| partner regions | Stuttgart, Heilbronn-Franconia, East Württemberg Neckar-Alb, Northern Black Forest |
| number of rural districts and county boroughs | 20 |

European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart

A region is preparing a concept to develop its urban and rural areas jointly. It reinforces its concept by adding specific projects to promote economic development. The concept focuses on the transport and logistics sectors as well as on promoting the attractiveness of the region for trade and industry and on funding innovations.

The partnership’s range of subjects and objectives

Regional cooperation has been on the agenda for Stuttgart and its surroundings ever since the regional association Stuttgart was founded in 1994. Regional planning, economic development promotion, suburban trains and infrastructures were part of an integrated policy for regional development, and created a close-knit network. Furthermore, the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart funded infrastructures and conducted an active Europe-focused policy extending as far as setting up its own representation in Brussels.
By doing so it promoted the external integration of the high-tech region in the southwest.

Commuters and commercial transport, networks, regional promotion of economic development and tourism marketing regularly cross the borders between Stuttgart and its four surrounding regions, Heilbronn-Franconia (to the north), East Württemberg (to the east), Neckar-Alb (to the south) and Northern Black Forest (to the west). The regional associations of the regions have therefore prepared a concept for their development according to which centres of international significance work together with urban and rural areas, central and peripheral areas as well as strong and weak areas.

How the cooperation was organised

The partnership was primarily in the hands of five regions: the Stuttgart regional association, the regional associations Heilbronn-Franconia, East Württemberg, Neckar-Alb and Northern Black Forest. For the sub-regions it was important that the objectives and obligations be coordinated among all the parties as equal partners. The interests of the more centrally located areas and those of the more rural area were to be taken into consideration on equal terms. The actual cooperation was conducted in regular steering meetings of the five regional associations’ administrative representatives. The Councils of Elders of the regions were responsible for political coordination and cooperation. Overall coordination was in the hands of the Stuttgart regional association.

The projects and their results

Sub-project
Concept for the development of the region
Objectives
A de-centralized settlement pattern, a traffic infrastructure which is broad in scope, a diverse and charming landscape, economic strength, high technological standard, a climate for innovations in many fields, a first class address for academia and research – the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart stands for all the above.

The MORO project comprised objectives such as the following:

- to confront the impact of demographic change and simultaneously maintain the region’s development opportunities,
- to intensify efforts so that land use is reduced,
- to create a better network of transport infrastructures and to develop them further.

Results

The five regions’ Councils of Elders reviewed, specified and adopted the regional development concept. The regions defined shared objectives, actions, measures, and projects for a sustainable and coordinated development of the regional structure and infrastructure, and for the use of public spaces.

There was agreement on mutual consultations to be conducted in issues of land allocation. The municipalities were informed and offered advice. Shared funds were applied for within the framework of national and European funding programmes.

A train day was organised in May 2010 in the context of a project focused on rail links. The event showed that the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart has diverse requirements for rail mobility: improving the currently restricted connections to some centres (e.g. Heilbronn, Tübingen, Reutlingen), securing or improving its current integration into the long-distance transport network, improving its accessibility in Europe-wide rail connections.
Sub-project
Projects for promoting economic development, attractiveness as a location, and innovation

Objectives
An effective promotion of networks and clusters is decisive for remaining competitive in the future and being a prosperous and growing economy. The MORO project pursued the following objectives:

- to make existing networks and cluster initiatives of the regions known to each other and to enhance their cooperation, especially in the networks for photonics (using optics in information processing) and for virtual engineering (digital descriptions, modelling, simulations and optimisation of products),
- to promote cooperation with networks of business angels. A business angel or angel investor is a financial sponsors investing in young and innovative companies, often giving them advice and helping them expand their connections. Capital-seeking start-up companies are given the opportunity to present themselves to the investors,
- to promote cooperation in the field of design. (This is an area of myriad competences in industrial, jewellery, and furniture design to be found in some of the sub-regions of the metropolitan region, i.e., Stuttgart, East Württemberg, Northern Black Forest).

Results
The networks on optical technology (Photonics BW) and virtual engineering (VDC Fellbach) have shared a trade booth in trade fairs, have regular contacts with each other via their secretariats, and have hosted two workshops for members of the networks. This has created sustainable forms of cooperation among them and with third-party companies and research facilities.

The participants of the Business Angel Baden-Württemberg conferences, in Stuttgart in October 2008 and in Heilbronn in July 2009, were informed about business angel activities. There was a separate event at which business angels met with capital-seeking enterprises.

Events open to the entire region were organised to improve the communication about design and to make small and medium-sized enterprises more aware of it. Information on design competences in the metropolitan region was disseminated in publications: these help in marketing efforts.

Sub-project
Logistics in the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart

Objectives
A very high percentage of the companies in the metropolitan region are manufacturers. In all five sub-regions highly qualified enterprises depend on swift and reliable deliveries and dispatches. The MORO project pursued the following objectives:

- to define requirements for a logistics concept for the entire metropolitan region based on the problems observed, and to initiate pilot projects with a positive impact for the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart,
- to identify the logistics function of the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart with regards to its geographical location; economic and transport expansion; mix of freight; functions in major supply chains; relative importance of individual locations, including priority routes to hubs,
- to define the spaces needed for switching transport modes: road to road and road to ship,
- to define spaces for logistics use (existing ones as well as required ones) in the regional plans of the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart.

Results
The relevance of logistics became apparent in conversations and interviews conducted on the basis of a manual within MORO’s “Logistik in der Europäischen Metropolregion Stuttgart” (logistics in the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart) project with players in the field of logistics (planning, service providers / shipping companies, universities and carriers).

They were the source of information for the regional planning authorities on the lack of coordination in some aspects of logistics and possible approaches for future cooperation.

Highlight
Schedule for the entire region

The European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart showed a variety of untapped potential for cooperating with its neighbouring regions. Thomas Kiwitt, managing technical director of the regional association Stuttgart says: “As we were working together on a specific issue for some time, cooperation has become an established factor. MORO provided an important impetus.”

The cooperation has resulted in positive effects for rail users but also users of public transport. The supra-regional partnerships have discovered a shared interest: better transport connections not only within Stuttgart, but also to centres located further away. Thomas Kiwitt: “We have bundled our wishes and presented them jointly. The cooperation has strengthened the position of its members in negotiations with transport operators. Stuttgart as such has 2.5 million inhabitants whereas the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart represents five million inhabitants, i.e., half the population of the state of Baden-Württemberg.

A transport schedule for the entire metropolitan region is the ultimate goal. It is intended to have buses and trains run in regular intervals, and that good connections to the city centre and from one centre to another are offered. Thomas Kiwitt: “To have one school bus in the morning and another in the afternoon, and only when the schools are not on holiday, is not enough.”
The European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart intends to focus on increasing the efficiency of its infrastructure. An interview with Jeannette Wopperer, director of Stuttgart’s regional association:

What is the most important result for the pilot region “European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart”?

We succeeded in fleshing out the abstract ideas of what the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart should be about. Together we managed to make the model of joint responsibility more tangible by means of specific project work.

What does the future hold?

We expressed our ideas for future developments in a joint concept. It is being implemented in specific projects in a promising manner. By the way, this is also true for economic cooperation in cluster initiatives and networks. Our next practical steps will focus on increasing the efficiency in infrastructure: climate change and demographic change are also major challenges for the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart.

Are there benefits for the region after the project has been concluded?

Yes, of course. To me that is the long-term added value. As part of the pilot project we developed and tested new forms of cooperation in the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart in joint projects. They focused on subjects such as intensively coordinating our regional planning policies, using the different talents of the sub-regions in a targeted way in providing spaces for logistics purposes, and benefiting from the train day event. It was there that the project partners worded their decision to connect the rail hub with the European railways network and to rural sub-regions. We need to maintain and institutionalise this perspective of shared interests across all levels.

What will the future bring?

We expressed our ideas for future developments in a joint concept. It is being implemented in specific projects in a promising manner. By the way, this is also true for economic cooperation in cluster initiatives and networks. Our next practical steps will focus on increasing the efficiency in infrastructure: climate change and demographic change are also major challenges for the European Metropolitan Region Stuttgart.

Testing new forms of cooperation

Representatives from Germany, Austria and Switzerland are working together in regional planning issues. A shared understanding of the future development in the region is emerging across national borders.

In this pilot region the German sub-regions are not involved as a ‘German’ region cooperating with partners on the other side of the border – instead, the region is per se a multinational one.

The partnership’s range of subjects and objectives

The Lake Constance region is located centrally within Europe. It is in close vicinity to very dynamic economic centres, but it consists of sub-regions which are basically at the periphery of the countries they are part of, and they are geographically far away from their respective capitals. Instead of a clear centre, i.e., a metropolitan region, there is a network of small or medium-sized regional centres. The region has gained its importance on the basis of the cooperation among its sub-regions. The Lake Constance region is therefore an almost perfect
model of an integrated area which extends over several national borders. The region has had a long tradition of inter-municipal and trans-boundary planning. The Lake Constance region is now confronted with new challenges: there are new concepts for regional development in the countries along the lake and within the European Union. They had not yet been specified for the international Lake Constance region.

How the cooperation was organised
The regional associations of Lake Constance—Upper Swabia and High Rhine–Lake Constance were in charge of coordinating the overall project. The St. Gallen University accompanied the project with its technical expertise and provided academic inputs. The International Lake Constance Conference and the regional planning commission for the Lake Constance were the higher level, cross-sectoral, and trans-boundary cooperation partners. The municipal side was integrated by involving the German rural districts and the municipal association Lake Constance. Additional partners were the Bavarian planning association Allgäu and the chambers all along the Lake Constance. The project saw itself as an open association. A ‘lean’ project structure was a general principle. It used the existing institutions of trans-boundary cooperation in the Lake Constance region.

The projects and their results
Sub-project Optimising the regional governance structures in spatial development
Objectives
The integrated Lake Constance region consists of diverse cooperation networks among the players relevant in the region, but a conflict management mechanism is lacking. The sub-project was planned to optimise the processes. A task force was set up to develop practical proposals for optimising regional governance structures.

Results
At the “Steuerung regionaler Entwicklung?!” (controlling regional development) forum organised by the Austrian Spatial Planning Conference and the Federal Chancellery of Austria in Vienna in November 2008, initial findings on a regional steering system for the European Integrated Area Lake Constance were presented and discussed. The trans-boundary governance structures in place were analysed and structured. In May 2009 they were coordinated with the MORO “Grenzüberschreitende Verflechtungsräume” (trans-boundary integrated areas) project. The secretariat of the International Lake Constance Conference provided the results of these analyses to the MORO discussions on the structural development of trans-boundary cooperation in the Lake Constance region. This happened, for example, in the context of strategic talks among the heads of government of the International Lake Constance Conference in July 2010.

Sub-project Spatial structure
Objectives
In the context of advancing the strategy for the Lake Constance a strong need for action was identified with respect to the region’s future spatial structure.

Discussions were planned on the following points:
• what is the best possible spatial structure for the region?
• how can the spatial functions be divided among the various centres and sub-regions?

The findings were intended to be implemented in decisions to be adopted by the political bodies. The International Lake Constance Conference and the spatial planning commission for the Lake Constance were the central bodies in this regard.

Results
The heads of government adopted a new strategy for the Lake Constance at their meeting as early as June 2008. The contents and questions of spatial development in the region were also discussed in the “Raumkonzept Schweiz” (spatial concept Switzerland) document, which included a chapter on the Lake Constance in its current policy.

The future spatial structure of the Lake Constance region was discussed in Friedrichshafen at the end of 2008 on the basis of the work already covered by the spatial planning commission for the Lake Constance and the DACH+ project (www.dachplus.org). The players involved came from the fields of spatial planning, the business sector, tourism, and the transport sector. The discussions resulted in an initial model for the spatial structure in the international Lake Constance region.

Throughout the year 2009 they were part of the political opinion-forming processes at the spatial commission for the Lake Constance region and the International Lake Constance Conference. The work of this module finally led to a follow-up project by the spatial planning commission for the Lake Constance on “Zukunft der Raumentwicklung im Grenzraum Deutschland-Österreich-Schweiz-Liechtenstein” (the future of spatial planning in the border area Germany-Austria-Switzerland-Liechtenstein). It was partly based on the model for the spatial structure of the International Lake Constance region developed in the framework of the MORO project.

Sub-project Spatial planning observation
Objectives
A trans-boundary spatial planning observation system was established between 2004 and 2008 in the course of the DACH+ project in the border area where Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein meet. It contains the most relevant indicators for the entire Lake Constance region and additional, neighbouring areas. The MORO sub-project aimed to develop a concept for how DACH+ can be sustainably used as a spatial planning system in the Lake Constance region.

Results
Initial ideas were presented in 2008. The spatial information system was updated in the course of the project. The main point was to establish connections with other relevant spatial planning information systems. This was particularly true for the Lake Constance statistics platform, for which pertinent agreements were reached with the other statistical offices. The information needs across the region were identified so that the requirements for a spatial information platform...
and a statistics platform would become clear. The interfaces between the various initiatives were coordinated and the exchange of data or information was discussed. As a follow-up, the regions and cantons making up the spatial planning commission have decided to jointly continue the spatial planning observation on the basis of the MORO expertise. The following measures were agreed upon and started in 2010:

- to supply a basic IT infrastructure, e.g., servers, operating system etc.,
- to supply the software-related infrastructure for the DACH+ geoportal,
- to develop the DACH+ geoportal to become more user-friendly,
- to improve the technical content of the information provided by the geoportal and add more services,
- to operate a web-based geoportal on an on-going basis.

Sub-project
Positioning the Lake Constance region as a knowledge and innovation region

Objectives
The Lake Constance region is primarily perceived as a tourist destination and as a region offering a high quality of life. It is rarely seen as an economically dynamic region in Europe, and its competitive economic structure is often overlooked. In the context of a specific implementation project, a strategy was to be developed and then implemented to position the Lake Constance area as a knowledge and innovation region.

Results
The activities focused on linking the MORO project with other on-going projects in the Lake Constance region. There was a particularly strong linkage to the “Temenwelt Bodensee” (Lake Constance themes and worlds) project which developed the bases for positioning the Lake Constance region as an economic and academic region. This project’s results are now being implemented in the “Internationaler Wirtschaftsraum Bodensee” (Lake Constance as an international economic area) project. Cooperation was established with other regional projects, i.e., with the “Wissensregion” (knowledge region) project. The Chambers of Commerce on the Lake Constance, economic investment agencies and universities of the region worked together. Positioning the Lake Constance region as an international integrated area will also be included in the discussions on the European Union’s future regional policies.

Wilfried Franke, director of the regional association Lake Constance-
Upper Swabia says: “We need to make better use of the still untapped potential in the European Integrated Area Lake Constance.”

What is the most important result for the pilot region?
We have become used to international cooperation at Lake Constance over many decades covering many fields. We have institutionalised it in many bodies. In this regard, MORO was mainly a continuation of on-going processes in the first place. The most important result for us was the exchange of experience with other border areas and our intention to make better use of the special potential these areas have. We intend to do so in the future on the basis of the initiative which brought us together. Developing a specific spatial planning category should be most useful in this effort, especially when it reflects the metropolitan functions of these border areas.

What does the future hold?
In addition to working together on strategic goals for the future we wish to establish a new INTERREG project and do what we can to have better coordinated and shared regional development policies around the Lake Constance. The regional authorities from all around the lake have already met to discuss this issue, inspired not least by MORO.
Contact points, links and bibliography

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Links & publications

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