

# 2024 Voluntary Local Review for the County of Oldenburg

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the global Sustainable Development Goals at the local level



# Legal details

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# Introduction

Dear fellow citizens,

In December 2023, the County of Oldenburg received the "Municipalities for Global Sustainability in Lower Saxony" award. Prior to this, a recommendation for action had been drawn up, titled "Local implementation of the 2030 Agenda – The County of Oldenburg on its way towards becoming a Municipality for Global Sustainability". The County Administration's goal was to align the county's development with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

In spring 2024, the opportunity presented itself to prepare a local sustainability report - the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) - with support from the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) through interagency cooperation. We are publishing this sustainability report to reflect our current status and progress made towards reaching the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda at the local level. To this end, we are presenting regional data and indicators, as well as activities, projects and measures realised in the county, and are positioning them in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are all facing major challenges related to local and global crises. It is not only the rapidly progressing climate change that has become very noticeable also in our region that shows how urgently communities must accept their responsibility towards all human beings, now and in the future. I would like to thank our advisor Ms Hannah Heinevetter and the entire SKEW team, as well as my colleagues from the County Administration, who have worked hard to advance this project.

I am personally dedicated to ensuring that the County of Oldenburg remains an attractive place to live and do business, for ourselves and future generations alike. To achieve this, all of us need to sustainably change the ways in which we act and think. This is a shared responsibility that we must take on for our own good and to the benefit of our children.

Dr. Christian Pundt County Administrator Facts & figures of the County of Oldenburg

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# Introduction

Voluntary Local Reviews in the context of the 2030 Agenda Context, methods and structure of this report







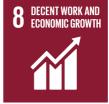








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# **Voluntary Local Reviews in the** context of the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development was adopted by the UN member states in 2015 and it comprises 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are further substantiated through 169 associated targets (see 05 Appendix). These goals cover environmental, social and economic issues and are directed at all **UN member states** in the Global North and South. The agenda aims to trigger profound political and societal changes.

The 2023 Global Sustainability Report ⊕ stresses the urgency of resolute policies in the "decade of action" between 2020 and 2030 to allow for attainment of the goals. The 2030 Agenda serves as a universal reference framework and informs federal, state and communal policies in Germany. The agenda calls for regular reporting to document the progress made. This occurs nationally via so called Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) which are submitted on an annual basis to the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Germany submitted these reports in 2016 and 2021.

**Communities** play a **key role** in implementing the 2030 Agenda, as many of the targets are within their area of responsibility. The 2030 Agenda therefore underlines the importance of local authorities and the need for cooperation between the different levels and stakeholders. Municipal stakeholders are called upon to translate the global goals into local requirements, and this process is referred to as SDG localisation. Over 200 German municipalities have already signed a sustainability declaration at the local level.

More and more municipalities are reporting about their SDG contributions in so-called Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) that have been gaining importance since 2018. VLRs allow for national and regional reports to be enhanced using local experience with regard to coordination, accountability and transparency. The role of VLRs goes beyond monitoring, as they promote a bottom-up approach to SDG localisation, the transformation towards sustainability, and sharing of experiences. This is also reflected in the growing number of local stakeholders that are represented in UN forums.

The County of Oldenburg, too, has been dedicated to promoting sustainable development for a while now, and it received the "Municipalities for Global Sustainability" award in December 2023. A baseline review was performed as part of the Municipalities for Global Sustainability in **Lower Saxony III** project, to highlight the ways in which the tasks and projects of the County Administration are linked to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

To present its progress and measures for implementing the SDGs in a transparent way, the County of Oldenburg has now prepared its first Voluntary Local Review (VLR). The purpose of the VLR is for the county to systematically document the local implementation of the sustainability **goals.** At the same time, it is also intended to promote exchange with other municipalities at the international level. Another aim of the report is to identify specific challenges and accomplishments, based on which targeted recommendations for action can be developed for the years ahead. With its VLR, the County of Oldenburg commits to sustainable development, as well as strengthening cooperation between administration, policy-makers and the civil society.





# Context, methods and structure of this report

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This Voluntary Local Review represents the status quo with regard to sustainable municipal development in 2024, and it summarises the progress made in implementing the SDGs. To allow for a holistic perspective of sustainable development, the county decided to attach equal importance to all 17 SDGs. This VLR has been prepared as part of the Municipalities for Global Sustainability, Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) project run by Engagement Global's Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) plays a central role when it comes to municipal development policy in Germany. It supports municipalities, cities and rural counties in their efforts to actively promote global sustainability in line with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. In 2024, four municipalities – the County of Oldenburg, the Enzkreis County, and the cities of Regensburg and Geestland - were selected to prepare a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) in German and English.

This VLR is divided into two main chapters. The first part comprises a basic introduction to sustainable development processes in the County of Oldenburg. This includes a short profile of the County of Oldenburg, contextualisation of the VLR vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda, the fundamental structure and methods, as well as core statements concerning the 17 SDGs and an overview of key sustainable development milestones. The second part is dedicated to the **status quo and progress** made over the past few years with regard to the 17 individual Sustainable Development Goals.

To be able to get all relevant specialist offices that are linked to sustainable development - directly or indirectly - involved in preparation of the VLR, an interagency kickoff event was held in summer 2024. The Specialist Office for Climate Protection, Climate Adaptation and Sustainability took the lead in this important process.

The kick-off event was followed by systematic baseline review by the County Administration. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered in this context. Relevant activities of the County Administration that contribute to sustainable development were listed. These include strategies and concepts for action, specific projects and measures, political decisions, specific goals, as well as cooperations and networks. In addition, the most important accomplishments and results achieved in the different fields were documented.

In the Appendix there is also a **table** that was prepared based on the SDG portal of the Bertelsmann Foundation. The table shows a comparative analysis of **indicators** recorded between 2017 and 2022, and it clearly illustrates the developments and progress with regard to sustainable development in the County of Oldenburg.

Following completion of the editorial revision, we cooperated with a graphic design office to give the report a visually appealing form and present the information in a clear and structured way. To allow for international comparability, the VLR was translated into English and published in German and English.



# 2 The County of Oldenburg in the context of sustainable development

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# Short profile of the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg is located in **north-western Low-er Saxony** and part of the Metropolitan Region Northwest Germany. The 1,603 square kilometres big county features a diverse landscape that is characterised by agricultural land, nature reserves and moorlands. The northern and eastern parts of the County of Oldenburg are located in direct vicinity to the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. To the north-west, the county borders the City of Oldenburg, while its southern part is characterised by the open spaces of the Wildeshauser Geest, one of Lower Saxony's biggest geest areas.

The moorlands and flood plains of the river Hunte are home to a rich flora and fauna. The county's natural diversity makes it particularly attractive for active people and nature lovers. The **Wildeshauser Geest nature park** that covers a large part of the county, attracts many tourists and offers an extensive network of hiking and cycling paths through idyllic landscapes.

The County of Oldenburg includes the town Wildeshausen, the municipalities Dötlingen, Ganderkesee, Großenkneten, Hatten, Hude, Wardenburg and the municipality group Harpstedt with its eight affiliated municipalities. The County of Oldenburg has a total population of **around 135,000** (as of 31 Dec. 2023).

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#### Rural counties and their responsibilities

Alongside the municipalities, the rural counties represent the lower level of Germany's state structure. The counties complement the municipalities' activities and provide support to these, for example for handling mandatory tasks or through coordination of tasks for which the individual municipalities are too small.

The distribution of tasks depends strongly on the capacity of the individual towns and municipalities of a county. As the low-level administrative authority, the County of Oldenburg takes care of tasks such as:

- ► Motor vehicle registration
- Health services
- Danger prevention to ensure public security and safety
- ► Legal supervision of the municipalities
- ► Solid waste management
- County roads
- Public transport
- Approval and payment of social benefits
- ▶ Planning permit procedures

These exemplary tasks are handled by the county via its County Administration and municipal companies.



The county's particular economic strength is its diversity. Alongside traditional farming, in particular milk and meat production, it is home to numerous small and medium-sized companies from various industries that offer a wide range of jobs.

The county's good **traffic links** are one of its key advantages. The motorways A1, A28 and A29 and a well-maintained network of main roads provide for an optimal connection of the county with the nationwide transport network. There is also good public transport with regular bus and train connections to nearby towns.

**Tourism** has been gaining importance in the county, especially thanks to the attractive Wildeshauser Geest nature park and the moorlands. There are also many interesting historic buildings in the region, as well as a wide range of recreational offerings, such as cycling, hiking and canoeina.

It can generally be said that tradition meets modernity in the County of Oldenburg. Its diverse landscape, economic strength and good traffic links make it an attractive place to live and do business. The county offers a high quality of living that is shaped by its intact nature, rich cultural life and wide range of recreational offerings.



# Sustainability and the 2030 Agenda in the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg is dedicated to promoting sustainable development and its efforts are based on the goals of the 2030 Agenda of the UN, at the core of which lie the 17 SDGs that are to be reached around the world by 2030. Being part of the Municipalities for Global Sustainability → project, the County of Oldenburg aims to promote these goals at the local level and takes specific measures to reach the goals.

This **Voluntary Local Review (VLR)** is a key milestone with regard to this objective. This report provides for a comprehensive overview of the sustainable development measures taken to date. Its aim is to inform the general public and to act as a valuable guideline for future steps to be taken by the administration.

The County of Oldenburg accepts its responsibility to develop sustainable solutions that are in line with environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability. Sustainability is not just a local task, as climate change, poverty and flight, affect all levels of political action. This is why the county is also taking issues of global responsibility into account, for example by ensuring fair procurement and international involvement.

Close cooperation with the county's citizens is a key aspect of these efforts. The County of Oldenburg thinks of sustainability as a **joint task** that requires cooperation of various different stakeholders. The aim of this approach is to create a basis for sustainable development in the County of Oldenburg that caters not only for present-day needs but also preserves the quality of life of future generations.



Adoption of the 2030 Agenda at the UN **Sustainability Summit** 

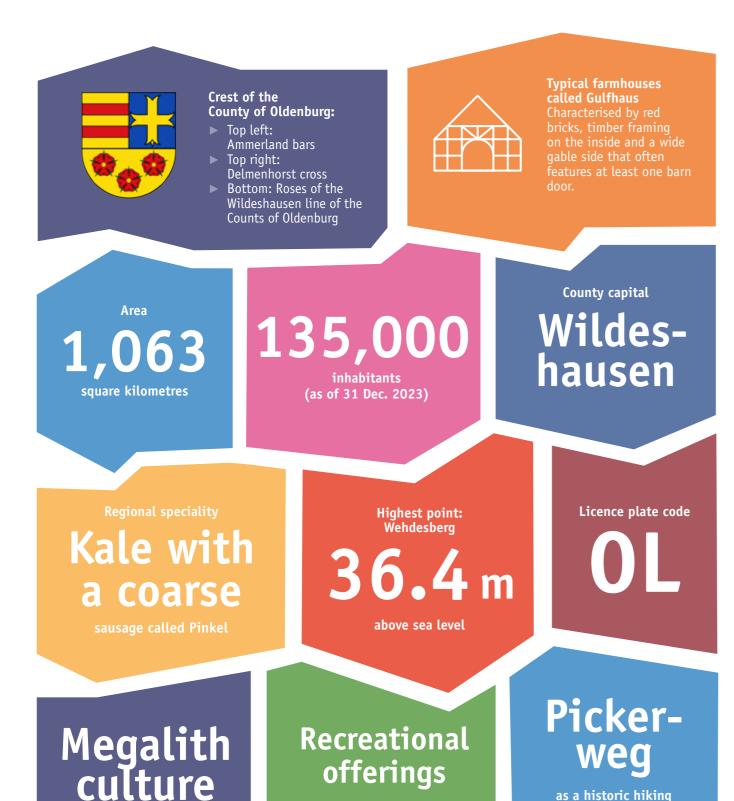
Establishment of climate protection management in the County of Oldenburg for implementing the climate protection concept, followed by 2030 Agenda projects

as a historic hiking

trail and part of the

Way of St. James

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Water sports on the river

Hunte, hiking,

horse riding, cycling

Ancient megalithic tombs





# 3 Implementation of the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals in the County of Oldenburg

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#### No poverty

The County of Oldenburg relies on comprehensive social security programmes to reduce poverty and increase the standard of living of disadvantaged groups. Families and single parents receive targeted support to ensure financial security.

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The County of Oldenburg promotes local farming and supports regional marketing and school meals to ensure secure food supplies and combat hunger.



#### Good health and well-being

The County of Oldenburg is committed to enhancing general and specific healthcare. People's health and well-being is improved by means of preventative health programmes and by promoting sports and exercise programmes.



#### Quality education

Access to high-quality education is being improved further in the county, in particular through digital education offerings and projects to promote sustainable development. The county ensures that all population groups have access to lifelong learning, aiming to promote equal opportunities.



#### Gender equality

Gender equality is actively promoted in the County of Oldenburg through a wide range of projects and initiatives that focus on gender-specific matters. Women in leadership positions in the County Administration receive support, measures to strengthen personality and counteract violence are implemented across the county, and men are involved as allies.



#### Clean water and sanitation

Protection of water as a resource is actively promoted in the County of Oldenburg to meet the challenges associated with climate change. A sustainable use of water and groundwater in particular is reviewed and improved continuously.



#### Affordable and clean energy

The County of Oldenburg actively promotes climate protection and the energy transition by advancing the expansion of renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar energy. The goal is to improve energy efficiency and significantly increase the share of regenerative energy used in the county. Information and support is provided to citizens to get them involved in the process.



#### Decent work and economic growth

The County of Oldenburg is committed to sustainable economic policy to promote medium-sized and innovative enterprises, for example. A basis is formed for resilient longterm growth in consideration of the diverse nature of the local business landscape.



#### Industry, innovation and infrastructure

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The County of Oldenburg relies on the expansion of digital infrastructure to ensure economic sustainability. A key goal in this context is to make fibre-optic connections available to all households across the county.



#### **Reduced inequalities**

High priority is attached to measures to promote equal opportunities in the County of Oldenburg. Social inequalities are reduced by means of programmes for integration of migrants and inclusion measures.



#### Sustainable cities and communities

The County of Oldenburg promotes sustainable development of residential areas by enhancing public transport and creating affordable housing. Furthermore, precedence is given to developments inside rather than outside existing settlements to safeguard the cultural identity of small settlements.



#### Responsible consumption and production

Sustainable consumption and eco-friendly production methods are actively promoted in the county. In addition to a gradual transition of procurement procedures based on fair and sustainable criteria, education initiatives and campaigns are realised to encourage the population to avoid waste and use resources more responsibly.



#### Climate action

The County of Oldenburg has set itself ambitious climate targets and is working actively towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, aiming to become climate neutral by 2045. Expansion of renewable energies, energy saving measures and adapting to climate change are encouraged in order to ensure a liveable future.



#### Life below water

The County of Oldenburg is actively involved in protecting and preserving aquatic habitats. Water quality is improved and biodiversity is promoted through a sustainable use of bodies of water and targeted renaturation projects.



#### Life on land

The County of Oldenburg actively supports the protection and sustainable use of land resources. Awareness of the matter of biodiversity is raised through education projects and by promoting eco-friendly practices, and biotope projects and measures to preserve or return endangered species are realised.



#### Peace, justice and strong institutions

The County of Oldenburg supports the preservation and expansion of strong and transparent institutions that advocate for equal opportunities, justice and the rule of law. Projects to encourage the civil society and civic engagement are playing a key role here.



#### Partnerships for the goals

The County of Oldenburg maintains strong regional and supra-regional partnerships and aims to increasingly address the 2030 Agenda topics in these partnerships. Exchange with other municipalities and cooperation through networks and other groups allow for global challenges to be addressed more efficiently.





NO POVERTY



# SDG 1 – No poverty

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

#### **SDG 1** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 1 is to **put an end to all forms of poverty** around the world. Millions of people are affected by poverty which restricts their access to basic resources such as food, water, education and healthcare. To reach this goal, measures must be taken to improve social security, create economic opportunities for everyone and ensure that basic needs are met.



# Nationally

In Germany, a country with functioning minimum benefit systems, this is not so much about absolute, life-threatening poverty, but rather about **relative poverty** that is reflected, in particular, by limited opportunities with regard to material, societal and cultural participation. Combating it therefore requires a comprehensive approach that covers various policy areas, such as education, equal opportunities, family, health, housing and labour policy. Key measures include:

- ► Prevention of child, youth and old-age poverty through education and welfare programmes
- ► Reinforcement and adaptation of social security systems (e.g. basic income, pensions)
- ► Promotion of equal opportunities and labour market integration for disadvantaged groups
- ► Improving income justice through fair wages and tax adjustments
- ► Development of affordable housing and welfare infrastructure
- Support for the civil society in fighting poverty and social inclusion





# In the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg can contribute to achievement of SDG 1 by providing targeted support for people who are particularly affected by poverty, such as people requiring care, single parents and asylum seekers. The county is committed to ensuring comprehensive social security and combating poverty, this includes

- Financial protection of care services, in particular for people with a low income
- ► Facilitated access to care through affordable care services and daycare facilities
- Welfare programmes such as housing benefit and food aid
- Ensuring a minimum standard of living, e.g. through affordable housing
- Promoting decentralised accommodation for asylum seekers to improve their social integration and access to the labour market
- Support with regard to SGB II (basic provision for job seekers) and SGB XII (subsistence allowance) for asylum seekers to enable access to social benefits



### **SDG 1** Projects and activities

#### Preventing a loss of housing

The local courts have an important task: they must inform the welfare agency when an action for eviction is filed due to the tenant's inability to pay. This is done to allow the welfare agency to check, whether it can cover the outstanding rent payments as a loan, as is enshrined in the German Social Code.

However, outstanding rent is frequently not paid, despite the fact that the conditions for such support are usually present. The main reason for this is that the affected individuals do not get sufficiently involved and often fail to submit the necessary documents, such as evidence of the housing costs or bank statements. It is often difficult to determine the exact reasons for this lack of contribution. The County of Oldenburg offers support services to avoid a loss of housing and avert such action. The socio-psychiatric service → with its coordination office for welfare matters helps affected individuals in submitting an application for their outstanding rent to be covered by means of a loan. This assistance is also based on the German Social Code and it aims to support people in challenging housing situations to help them keep their apartment and protect their human dignity.

Homelessness (2022)



0.079 %

#### Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany

#### Article 1: Human dignity

(1) Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority.



Advice leaflet. Source: County of Oldenburg.



Support service for tenancy issues. Source: County of Oldenburg.



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Affected individuals receive the Blauer Schirm leaflet from the emergency service. Source: County of Oldenburg.



Information leaflet on cost reimbursement for contraceptives. Source: County of Oldenburg.

# Blauer Schirm – cooperation of the emergency service and the welfare coordination office

The emergency service and the socio-psychiatric service, and in particular the welfare coordination office, cooperate closely to support people in difficult situations as effectively as possible. It frequently happens that the emergency service is called when there is no acute medical emergency but the affected individual needs help, nevertheless, owing to health or welfare-related problems.

A cooperation with the socio-psychiatric service has been established to prevent repeated emergency service responses while still providing appropriate help to affected individuals. These people are offered advice, support or referral services, aiming to identify impending welfare and health emergencies early on and to prevent these.

Everyone involved benefits from this approach: the affected individuals receive support that is tailored to meet their needs, and the burden on the emergency service is reduced, allowing it to focus on acute medical emergencies.

### **Covering the cost of contraceptives**

The County of Oldenburg offers financial support for contraceptives. This aid is available for people who receive certain state benefits, such as asylum-seeker support, citizen's income, a subsistence allowance or a basic income for elderly people and those with reduced earning capacity. Reimbursement of costs is available for people whose main residence is in the County of Oldenburg, who have received the benefits mentioned above for at least three consecutive months, and who are at least 22 years old. Submitting the corresponding online request to the socio-psychiatric service is a straightforward process.

Percentage of people receiving benefits according to Book II / Book XII of the German Social Code (2022)



6.056 %

27



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Advice services in Ahlhorn. Source: Ilka Plange.

### Ahlhorn advice café in the County of Oldenburg

To prevent citizens from slipping into poverty, it should be the goal to ensure advisory services for all situations in life. One place where such help is offered is the Ahlhorn advice café  $\odot$  , which is run in cooperation with the Delmenhorst Deaconry/Oldenburg Region.

The advice café is a central point of contact for services such as social counselling, advisory services related to employment and tenancy, and debt relief support. Its key target group are migrants who are often at risk of poverty.

Established in 2019, the café has since become an important point of contact for migrants, and support is available from Romanian, Arabic and Spanish native speakers, as well as in other languages as needed. Access to regular support options is facilitated by overcoming language barriers. With its relaxed atmosphere, the café is also a place that allows people to network and enjoy a social life.

# **Prevention chains in Lower Saxony:** a healthy childhood for all

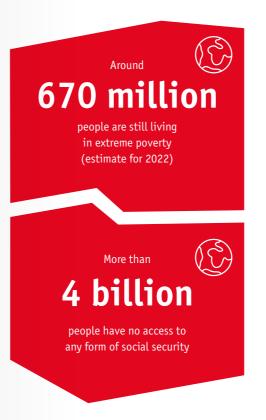
The "Prevention chains in Lower Saxony" → project was launched in Ahlhorn (municipality of Großenkneten) in 2017. It aims to offer support for children and their families early on, aiming to improve the living conditions of children, to reduce social disadvantages and improve education opportunities for all children.



Project logo. Source: Landesvereinigung für Gesundheit und Akademie für Sozialmedizin Niedersachsen Bremen e. V.

Child poverty (2022)

9.34 %



Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

#### SDG 1 Outlook

The County of Oldenburg offers a wide range of **support** and advice services to prevent poverty. Particularly vulnerable groups are addressed, as these are at an above average risk of being affected by poverty. On the one hand, the County of Oldenburg implements current laws and therefore measures that are legally enshrined and stipulated. However, there are also various voluntary offerings and initiatives that go beyond legal requirements.

The goal is to maintain a cooperative network of local stakeholders to allow for people, who are often threatened by poverty, to receive optimal support and guidance to match their personal circumstances. Existing services such as the Ahlhorn advice café, Blauer Schirm or the structures for preventing a loss of housing are to be maintained in this context, to be developed further in line with requirements and be expanded as far as possible and necessary.

# SDG 2 – Zero hunger

nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

#### **SDG 2** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 2 is to end hunger around the world, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Around 733 million people were suffering from hunger in 2023, and 2.3 billion people were affected by a moderate or severe lack of food security.



# Nationally

Measures in Germany focus in particular on promoting sustainable agriculture and food production and a balanced diet with regard to environmental, economic, social sustainability and nutrition-related aspects. Natural resources, such as soil, water, air and biodiversity form the basis for this.

As a general rule, the following areas are relevant to German municipalities with regard to SDG 2:

- ► Nutrition advice
- Organic farming
- ► Nitrogen surplus

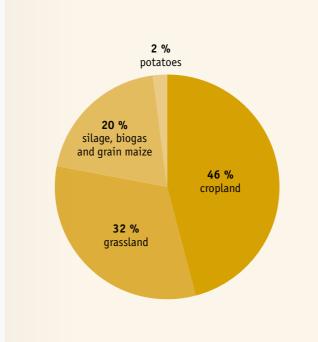
Germany's agricultural policy is largely handled in the European context through the Common Agricultural Policy (EU-CAP). As a response to the persistently high nitrogen surplus in Germany, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection implemented an amendment of the fertiliser ordinance in May 2020. In addition to this, there is the goal to realise an integrated national nitrogen strategy, and the "Activity Programme for Integrated Nitrogen-Reduction" is currently being implemented in this context.



# In the County of Oldenburg

#### The County of Oldenburg is a farming region:

- Around 32 % of agricultural land is grassland
- ► Around 46 % is cropland
- ► Some 20 % is used for growing silage, biogas and grain maize
- 2 % is used for growing potatoes









# The County of Oldenburg as a model region for organic farming

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The County of Oldenburg supports the "Niedersächsischer Weq" ("Lower Saxon Way") initiative ⊕ in its goal to increase the share of organic farming in Lower Saxony to 15 % by 2030. As part of the "Organic Model Region" ⊖ funding project, a concept has been drawn up to promote organic farming as a sustainable form of agriculture in the County of Oldenburg, to develop it further and to thus contribute to Nidersächsischer Weg at the state level.

Organic farmland in consideration of water and nature protection (2024)



### **Awareness-raising measures**

Producers share their knowledge with consumers at information events. There are specialist events and workshops in which new prospective distribution channels are highlighted to producers, informing them about the process required for a farm conversion. Consumers attach more and more importance to conscious consumption and want to know, where their food comes from and how it is produced. This development has led to a growing interest in organic products, however, these are often not produced regionally.

Organic farming plays a key role with regard to protecting the environment and animals, as well as promoting the development of rural areas, nevertheless. Organic farms in

#### Status quo: share of land used for organic farming in the County of Oldenburg:

- At the start of the Organic Model Region funding project in mid-2021: 2.6 %
- **2024: 3 %**
- ► Goal of the organic model region project determined in a broad participation procedure: 4 %

Number of instructions pursuant to §43 of the Infection Protection Act (IfSG) (2023) by the health authority

1,959



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the County of Oldenburg frequently offer visits and tours for producers and consumers, aiming to convince them of the benefits of organic farming.

A combination of regional and organic agriculture is a very promising future prospect, as it allows consumers to choose organic products that were produced in the local area. They can thus make an even greater contribution to sustainability, while supporting local businesses.

The **staff canteen** of the County of Oldenburg is setting a good example by using organic and regionally sourced produce.

Canteen in the administration building of the County of Oldenburg in Wildeshausen. Source: Claas Schöbel.



# **Support for school canteens**

All pupils in the County of Oldenburg should have the opportunity to have a meal at school. To realise this, school canteens or school meals are subsidised indirectly by the County of Oldenburg, that covers the expenses of caterers, such as energy costs, rent and costs for purchasing equipment. As far as possible, meals are healthy and regionally sourced.

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Nitrogen surplus in farming (2021)



87.43 kg/ha



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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

#### SDG 2 Outlook

The agricultural sector of the County of Oldenburg is facing challenges, but there are also some promising opportunities. Supplying food for people in local towns is considered a great opportunity. The development of resilient **supplier relations** is promoted further, despite high tenure costs. A diverse use of cropland is to be increased, focussing on food production. Planning provides for the production of crops for human consumption, such as chickpeas, oat, broad beans, flax and vegetables to be promoted in particular.

A political decision made by the county committees provides for regional and bioregional value chains to be advanced in cooperation with the Wildeshauser Geest nature park. To this end, a joint project is currently being developed to strengthen local farming and promote sustainability in the region.



# SDG 3 – Good health and well-being

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

#### **SDG 3** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 3 is all about ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. This is the basis for prosperity, social cohesion and participation in society.

The **German healthcare system** is generally considered **exemplary around the world**, however, the corresponding structures must be developed further to ensure future viability and sufficient, nationwide, high-quality healthcare and care. In addition to ensuring optimised, homogeneous healthcare for all, prevention is also a priority. A particular challenge is posed by **demographic changes**, which are making extensive healthcare and care services necessary.



# Nationally

The following aspects are particularly relevant for German municipalities to allow for local implementation:

- Ensuring high-quality healthcare, health promotion and prevention (concerning physical and mental health)
- ► Strengthening care and support services



# In the County of Oldenburg

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There is a hospital in the town Wildeshausen that offers inpatient and outpatient care for the catchment area. The **comprehensive healthcare services** are rounded off by medical-care centres, a specialist clinic for orthopaedics, family doctors, specialist doctors and therapists.

The **health authority** of the County of Oldenburg monitors infection protection and hygiene in public and healthcare facilities. It promotes preventive healthcare, for example through school entry health examinations and dental examinations and provides advice and guidance to various groups of people, such as those affected by mental health issues.

The County of Oldenburg is also home to a number of health resorts, making it a popular destination for convalescents. The town Wildeshausen was awarded this title back in 1977.



#### **Projects and activities**

# County of Oldenburg healthcare region

- ➤ Improving healthcare close to people's home
- ► Boosting health promotion
- ► Promoting primary prevention

Support for innovative healthcare projects as well as health promotion and primary prevention measures is available from the healthcare region.

Basic supply close to home (2022) Pharmacy





"ERLEBEN" is an innovative project of the healthcare region that is dedicated to increasing the survival rate of people suffering cardiac arrest. 

The goal of the project is pursued by means of a notification app. After the rescue directing centre has been informed, the app is designed to send first responders to emergencies so they can start giving the patient cardiopulmonary resuscitation as quickly as possible, before arrival of the emergency service.







Bewegungspass. Source: County of Oldenburg

# BewegungSpass

The County of Oldenburg healthcare region supports, among others, the Delmenhorst/Oldenburg-Land sports region by handling the BewegungSpass programme. 

→ This exercise programme has a number of goals:

- ► To encourage children to exercise
- ➤ To introduce regional sports activities and their providers
- ► To train children in traffic safety

The programme is evaluated annually by the Delmenhorst/ Oldenburg-Land sports region.



Playful dental care instruction. Source: County of Oldenburg.

#### Midwives centre

In 2019, the County of Oldenburg set up a joint midwives centre  $\supseteq$  in cooperation with the town Delmenhorst and the Delmenhorst Institute for Health Promotion. The centre helps to improve the supply structure by facilitating access to midwife services and ensuring continuous support throughout the entire perinatal period. The goal is to offer a central point of contact for people who are pregnant, giving birth or who have recently given birth, and to put them in touch with local midwives.

### Returning to an active life

"Returning to an active life" is a project that is offered in cooperation with the Achternmeer-Hundsmühlen e. V. judo club ⊕. It is a rehabilitation exercise group for participants suffering from mental illness. The idea behind it is for the proven anti-depressant effect of exercise and sports to have a positive impact on participants.

#### **Dental consultation hour for children**

The youth dentistry service of the health authority invites children from the age of six months to attend the dental consultation hour for children. Parents receive advice on general oral hygiene in this context, and the first tooth is also examined, if it is already there.

# Nursery entry examination and promotion of school readiness

In its school entry examinations, the health authority has identified an increase in health and developmental issues in children starting school in certain places, where children were more frequently not ready for school, than in other parts of the county. These regions are characteristically home to many families with a large number of children, inconvenient housing conditions, a lack of financial resources and parents with a low level of formal education. Among the issues that were identified more frequently,

for the age group and less access to healthcare.

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A nursery entry examination was implemented for nurseries in the affected region because of this, allowing for health and developmental issues to be detected in children as young as three, and for support measures to be taken. The goal is to provide assistance early on, and to ensure school readiness at the time of the school entry examination.

#### Heat and health protection

Owing to climate change and the related extreme weather events, in particular an increase in hot spells, various groups of people are increasingly in need to support. Among these are babies and infants, pregnant people and senior citizens. This is why the County of Oldenburg healthcare region has increased its focus on the issue of heat and health and has been providing information materials  $\bigcirc$  on the matter.

Heat and health protection, Source: © Janine Lancker,



#### Staff in nursing homes (2022)

Full-time equivalent in care homes per 1,000 people requiring full or partial inpatient care

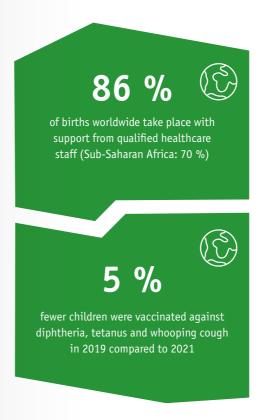
889.12



Nursing home places (2022) Available inpatient places per 1,000 inhabitants aged 65 and up

67.81





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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

#### SDG 3 Outlook

Comprehensive medical care is ensured through a **solid** healthcare infrastructure with hospitals, medical-care centres and specialist clinics. Since 2015, the County of Oldenburg healthcare region has also been working on local measures to promote the health of its population.

Achievements to date include the implementation of prevention measures, initiatives to encourage children to exercise and mental-health promotion through specific programmes. However, there are certain challenges that will increasingly burden the healthcare and care sectors, in particular demographic changes and the ageing population. Climate change and the related health risk, such as heat spells, also require particular attention.

Over the next few years, the county plans to increase its focus on preventive healthcare measures. Another challenge to be addressed is to sustainably ensure healthcare services in consideration of the increasing skilled workers shortage. At the same time, stronger regional cooperation gives rise to opportunities to improve digitised healthcare and advance mental health initiatives.

# **SDG 4 – Quality education**

Ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

#### **SDG 4** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

**Education** plays a **central role** for a successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. SDG 4 aims to promote inclusive, fair and high-quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Education is key to a self-determined life and participation in society, business and politics. In line with the **lifelong learning** approach, this includes all phases of life from early childhood education through to adult education.

#### The SDG 4 and implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

Education also improves people's understanding of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs and gives rise to broad acceptance and willingness to implement them. After all, it is essential for the entire world population to work together to implement the SDGs.



# Nationally

A person's social background still has a strong impact on their education prospects in Germany. It is therefore a key goal to **achieve equal opportunities** across all areas of education. **Education for sustainable development** (ESD) is another essential aspect, as it enables people to think and act in future-oriented ways.

The relevant topic areas of German municipalities can be summed up as follows:

- Promotion of high-quality, inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning for all human beings (early childhood education, school education, further education)
- ► Realisation and promotion of education for sustainable development



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# In the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg is working hard to make **high-quality education** available to all of its citizens. The county is home to seven special-needs schools and 14 secondary schools, and the county is directly responsible for a number of these. In addition, there are two community colleges and two external sites of the Oldenburg community college.

#### Education facilities in the County of Oldenburg:

- 2 community colleges
- ► 14 secondary schools
- 26 primary schools
- 7 special-needs schools

**Education is a key factor** for the county, since many aspects of a working society are based on education, and it also supports social cohesion. Alongside traditional school education, the County of Oldenburg also promotes non-formal and out-of-school education, which will be gaining importance in the future in the context of encouraging sustainable development and the role of responsible behaviour.



Homework supervision Source: Jan Fomboh.

### **SDG 4 Projects and activities**

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Language tutoring. Source: County of Oldenburg.



Preparation class. Source: Ilka Plange.



Logo of the integration office. Source: County of Oldenburg.

### **Integration assistance ⊙**

- ► Children who need more support in academic learning owing to their family circumstances can take part in homework groups. The goal is to help these children to develop a successful educational biography, if their parents struggle to instruct their children in preparation and follow-up work linked to the content taught at school, for example due to a lack of German language skills, space or a quiet place for learning.
- A holiday language camp for primary school pupils with a family language other than German is held once a year during the school holidays. Up to 30 children are granted the opportunity to spend five days experiencing the German language and way of speaking holistically through games, movement and
- ► The "German for everyday life" language class was designed for migrants from the EU who are shift workers, and able to attend thanks to the flexible schedule. Further language classes especially for children are available to teach them basic German skills in a playful manner and aid their integration
- As part of a model project, the County Administration cooperates with the Wildeshausen community college to give children and teenagers living in emergency housing in Wildeshausen access to education and ensure that the obligation to attend school is met. The "preparation class" model project takes place five days a week and comprises an education programme for children of primary-school age (6 to 10 years) with 240 hours of teaching and another one for secondary-school age pupils (11 to 16 years) with 300 hours of teaching. Two curricula were drawn up for this purpose, specifying the essential learning content and methods and the didactic approach.

#### **Inclusion in education**

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With its action plan for inclusion → that is to be implemented from 2027 onward, the County of Oldenburg focusses on its responsibility to ensure inclusive, equitable and high-quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, by actively removing barriers, facilitating access to support services and counteracting discriminatory structures. The goal is to work together to advance a process towards equal participation of people with disabilities, including in education.

education policy that the County of Oldenburg seeks to attain. This requires fundamental changes across the entire education sector. Apart from time, such changes also require comprehensive participatory processes, which are currently being implemented by the regional advice and support centre for inclusive schools, aiming to offer all children and teenagers the opportunity to transition from special-needs schools to other types of school.

#### **Digital education network**

There are many interesting topics with regional links and committed providers of environmental education programmes in the nature park region. With its digital education network  $\odot$  for nature-oriented offerings, the nature park supports communication and cooperation among the education providers and provides a clear digital overview and presentation of the facilities and programmes.

#### **Regionales Umweltbildungszentrum** Hollen e. V.

The regional centre for environmental education (RUZ Hollen) is an out-of-school education facility dedicated to promoting education for sustainable development (ESD) that receives financial support from the County of Oldenburg and the town Delmenhorst. Since 1996, the RUZ Hollen → has been offering a range of courses for pupils from the County of Oldenburg and the town Delmenhorst, focussing on nature and the forest, food and agriculture, energy conservation, and science.







Source: Regionales Umweltbildungszentrum Hollen e. V

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# School drop-out rate (2022)

Share of pupils leaving school without a school leaving certificate (state average: 3.69 %)

3.22 %



# **Energy-saving project at schools**

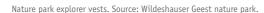
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Energy-related renovation work  $\bigcirc$  has been successfully carried out in recent years at almost all schools for which the county is responsible, including with support from the national climate protection initiative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action. Energy consumption and  $\mathrm{CO}_2$  emissions were significantly reduced as a result. To enable them to reduce energy consumption even more, the users of the premises are comprehensively instructed about climate-friendly behaviour. This gives rise to further reductions with regard to electricity, water and gas consumption and pupils are granted the opportunity to get actively involved and to contribute to climate action.

#### **Nature Park Schools**

Nature Park Schools → are a nationwide project of the association of German nature parks, allowing pupils to get to know nature parks as diverse places for learning and experiences, and to explore the natural and cultural offerings near their schools. The title Nature Park School is awarded to schools that are located in nature parks and that specifically enshrine topics related to their nature park and education for sustainable development (ESD) in their education programmes.

Gut Spascher Sand, Grundschule Neerstedt and Hunteschule are already certified Nature Park Schools. The higher level secondary school Dietrich-Bonhoeffer Ahlhorn is currently undergoing the approval procedure. In this context, so-called nature park explorer vests are provided for pupils to explore the nature park on their own or with instruction. The vests come with useful materials and tools for understanding and observing nature, Participation in the Junior Ranger programme





# Participation in the Junior Ranger programme

The nationwide Junior Ranger programme is an ongoing programme of Nationale Natural Natural Landscapes"). Its goal is to promote high-quality education work in large protected areas, and to motivate children and teenagers (aged 7 to 14) to get actively involved in nature conservation. In the county, the programme is based in the Wildeshauser Geest nature park, and in 2024 it was handled in cooperation with the Sager Schweiz scouts education facility for the first time. Planning provides for the programme to be expanded further in the county.

#### **Eco-Schools certifications**

The Eco-Schools certification 

has been established by the State of Lower Saxony and is associated with a tried and tested school network in which various schools from the County of Oldenburg are involved.

The school communities of Eco-Schools around the world pursue the goal to increase willingness to act sustainably and fair by implementing a range of specific projects and measures linked to the schools' organisation over the course of two years. In the most recent project period from 2022 to 2024, the schools Graf-Anton-Günter-Schule 

→ and Schule am Habbrügger Weg → received the certification, for example.



Credit: MelkiNimages

Basic supply close to home (2021) Primary school

1,493 m



# **Certified nature and landscape guides** (CNLs)

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In 2021, the Wildeshauser Geest nature park trained certified nature and landscape guides ⊕ (CNLs) for the first time. The training programme takes place in cooperation with the Alfred Töpfer academy for nature protection and various other regional partners. CNLs are ambassadors of the Wildeshauser Geest. Their tours are about experiencing nature, as well as learning about local and cultural history. This allows for a comprehensive programme of high-quality nature and landscape tours that focus on aspects that are typical of the region for various target groups. As a result of strong demand, another course is to be held in 2025.

Number of trained nature and landscape guides in the County of Oldenburg (2024)



14







Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

47

#### SDG 4 Outlook

The County of Oldenburg aims to realise an inclusive and fair education landscape. In addition to high-quality school education, access to out-of-school education offerings is also being improved to ensure equal opportunities for all human beings. Integration of sustainable development issues in education processes is another priority.

The County of Oldenburg has established an **inclusion office** in order to sustainably embed the issue of inclusion in its structures. Over the next few years, the focus will be on creating and expanding inclusive structures and increasing public relations work linked to this issue. This will take place, in particular, through regular conferences on inclusion, the first of which is to take place in autumn 2025. An inclusion award is presented annually in the education sector.







# **SDG 5 – Gender equality**

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

#### **SDG 5** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality and enable all girls and women to make their own decisions. **Equal rights for all genders** are a universal human right that includes equal opportunities with regard to participation in political, business and public life.

On its way towards achieving gender equality by 2030, the world still has a very long way to go. Harmful practices are declining, albeit not to the same extent as the population is growing. One in five girls still gets married before turning 18. The worldwide gender-related income gap continues to be huge.



# Nationally

**Equal opportunities** in the labour market are a priority of German gender equality policy. This includes, for example, the assumption of leadership roles, compatibility of work and family life, elimination of gender-specific pay gaps and a repositioning of social professions that are practised primarily by women.

In consideration of the fact that all forms of **gender-specific discrimination and violence** are still a frequent occurrence in Germany, it is another key aspect to take preventative measures and support people affected by violence, as well as improving the corresponding support structures. Another priority is to create the conditions required to allow for fair sharing of gainful work and care duties.





# In the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg works actively towards achieving gender equality. In this context it focusses in particular on **structural and societal discrimination of women**, which is to be corrected by means of various projects across all levels of coexistence in society.

The current **gender equality plan**of the County of Oldenburg pursues the following goals:

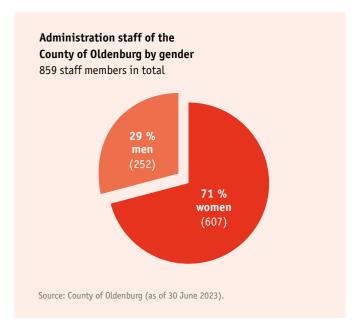
- Eliminating under-representation, i.e. to balance the share of men and women working in the departments of an authority
- Improving compatibility of gainful work and family duties

Municipal gender equality officers are advocating for the realisation of these goals by promoting gender equality, eliminating discrimination, supporting women in leadership roles and raising awareness of the issue of gender equality through sensitisation, consultation and regular monitoring.

On 30 June 2023, a total of 859 people were working for the County of Oldenburg: 607 women and 252 men. This means that 70.66 % of staff members were female.

# The gender equality work of the County of Oldenburg is based on a number of legal provisions:

- It is stated in Article 3 of the Basic Law that men and women shall have equal rights. The state promotes such equality and works towards eliminating any disadvantages.
- Article 15 of the Equal Opportunities Law of Lower Saxony provides that the County of Oldenburg must prepare a gender equality plan every three years.



#### **SDG 5** Projects and activities

Gender equality in all matters and raising of awareness of the issue of violence against women and girls in various contexts, is an ongoing task for the County of Oldenburg. Public campaigns and events are held every year on International Women's Day (8 March) and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November). We cooperate closely with local institutions, such as the domestic violence support centre (women's shelter), the "Aufwind" consulting service for girls and women, the "Wildwasser" advisory centre against sexualised violence, and the conflict consultancy point for pregnant women. The domestic violence work group meets on a regular basis to ensure a smooth flow of information and cooperation between the different professions to ensure optimised protection for victims of domestic violence.

# Frauen und Wirtschaft e. V. support association ⊙

There is a wide range of mutual business relations between the County of Oldenburg and the neighbouring towns and municipalities, where qualifications play a central role.

#### FRAU.MACHT.DEMOKRATIE

The "Frau.Macht.Demokratie" mentoring programme → of Lower Saxony's Ministry for Social Affairs, Labour, Health and Equal Opportunities aims to increase political participation of women before the 2026 local elections. The share of women in municipal representation in Lower Saxony is currently about 31 %. The programme provides for interested women (mentees) to receive guidance from experienced politicians (mentors) to help them get involved in local politics. The programme is organised by Vernetzungsstelle für Gleichberechtigung e. V. (gender equality networking office) with regional support from local gender equality officers. The County of Oldenburg provides active support for the mentoring programme.

Share of women in the county parliament (2019)







FRAU. MACHT. DEMOKRATIE. poster. Source: Vernetzungsstelle für Gleichberechtigung e. V.

# "Ask for Lilo\*" – living safely in the County of Oldenburg

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Back in 2020, the gender equality officers for the County of Oldenburg and the Wildwasser Oldenburg association developed a prevention and help service for large events in rural areas. The programme's goals are to make party goers feel safe and to raise awareness of issues such as sexualised violence and date-rape drugs. The service "Ask for Lilo\*" offers support for people who feel unsafe while partying. The code "Ask for Lilo\*" allows affected individuals to turn to trained staff members to discreetly ask for help. The goal of the initiative is to lower the psychological barrier for seeking help and to make people who attend events feel safer.



association and County of Oldenburg.

# Rights of women and men – equal opportunities for course participants

A mixed-gender team of advisors from counselling centres attends integration courses to introduce support services such as the domestic violence advice and intervention office, the Aufwind advice centre for women and girls, the women's and children's shelter, as well as providing information about social work at schools and the youth office. The advisors also speak about the development of gender equality and about prevention of violence in Germany, as well as addressing the course participants' requirements.

# Language learning with childcare services for female refugees

The State of Lower Saxony provides funding for language classes for female refugees, but does not cover childcare expenses. This is why the Wildeshausen community college and the Wildeshausen multi-generational house have developed an offering  $\ \ )$  that includes on-site childcare for young children while the course takes place. The county covers the childcare costs. The course is designed to support the participants based on their personal circumstances. Participants receive information about their local area and healthcare, and are introduced to free digital language learning opportunities. Planning provides for the course to end with an A1 exam. The children are taken care of in a well-equipped room of the multi-generational house.

Ratio of employment rates of women and men (2022)



89.29 %



Participants of the pottery class during the award ceremony for the 11th art and culture award. Source: Ilka Plange.



Red shoes outside the communal centre. Source: Ilka Plange.

# Pottery class for female refugees

Girls and women who are refugees are the target group of the pottery class that was initiated by the Wardenburg refugee aid organisation and is delivered by a ceramic artist. The course offers a safe space for refugees to process their experiences of flight and rootlessness through creativity, as well as strengthening artistic skills and encouraging personal development. The goal of the class is to promote integration and expression of the participants and to empower them. The project is one of three winners of the 11th art and culture award of the County of Oldenburg.

### "Zapatos Rojos – Red Shoes" 2023 – art project to raise awareness of femicide

With their "Zapatos Rojos - Red Shoes" project, the gender equality officers of the County of Oldenburg took a stand against violence against women. 

On 20 November 2023, they arranged 133 pairs of red shoes outside the communal centre to raise awareness of femicide in Germany. The shoes represent the 133 women who were killed by their partner or ex-partner in 2022. The art project was originally initiated in 2009 by the Mexican artist Elina Chauvet. The event also included an accompanying reading by the author Margherita Bettoni. Visitors were invited to write down their thoughts on the issue and to put the notes inside the shoes. The idea behind this was to increase awareness of femicide and to initiate change.

Ratio of median income of women and men (2021)

81.66 %





53

Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

#### SDG 5 Outlook

Gender equality will remain an area for the administration to focus on in the years ahead, but it is also an issue of societal life that requires attention and support from various stakeholders.

A wide range of projects and activities is to be continued and newly initiated to increase public awareness of gender equality and the related fight against violence against girls and women. Men and boys are to be motivated to act as **allies and supporters** by highlighting positive role models. Further increasingly important issues include empowerment of women to strengthen them in their personal development and for assertiveness and self-defence to be encouraged.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

#### **Introduction and relevance**



# **Globally**

SDG 6 is to ensure availability and sustainable management of **water supply and sanitation** for all. This includes:

- Access to drinking water and sanitation / hygiene
- Waste-water management and water pollution control
- ► Long-term availability of water, efficient use of water and promotion of integrated water resource management

In 2022, about half of the global population suffered from severe **scarcity of water** for at least a part of the year. This is intensified increasingly by climate change and gives rise to significant risks to social stability. Despite some improvements in the areas of water supply and wastewater removal, both aspects are still not ensured sufficiently: at the current rate of progress, 2 billion people will still live without clean drinking water and 3 billion without safe sanitary facilities in 2030.



# Nationally

**Groundwater** is Germany's **most important source of drinking water**. However, water plays a key role in view of agricultural production and the conservation of ecosystems, too. To ensure that natural and semi-natural water cycles and the supply with water are maintained, **water resources** must be **protected** against pollution and overuse.

The following aspects are particularly relevant for German municipalities against this background:

- ► Ensuring high water quality and preventing water shortages
- ▶ Protection of ecosystems that rely on water
- Ensuring municipal wastewater removal and sanitation





# In the County of Oldenburg

**Protecting and preserving groundwater reserves** and the **quality of surface waters** is among the **core tasks** of the County of Oldenburg.

A range of projects are being realised in the County of Oldenburg to ensure reliably good **quality of ground and surface water**. These goals can be reached through monitoring, approval and licensing procedures, plan approval and permission procedures.

The following areas are covered by the County of Oldenburg:

- ► Wastewater removal: Reduction of the strain on bodies of water into which wastewater is discharged to a minimum, to avoid a deterioration of quality.
- Water body maintenance and expansion: Finding solutions that are in line with the requirements for discharging rainwater and conserving such bodies of water as natural habitats for plants and animals.
- ► **Soil protection:** Ensuring that impact on the soil from pollutants and fertiliser is reduced to a minimum in cooperation with other authorities. Soil and water protection are closely linked.



Groundwater monitoring well. Source: County of Oldenburg.

# **Groundwater monitoring well and** continuous monitoring programme

2024 Voluntary Local Review County of Oldenburg

The EU Water Framework Directive and the German Water Resources Act provide that groundwater must be managed in such a way that a good chemical status is achieved. According to these provisions, the status of groundwater is considered to be good when the quality standard of 50 mg/l of nitrate is not surpassed.

However, a baseline review in the State of Lower Saxony in 2009 revealed a poor groundwater status in the county. In order to improve the data situation for the entire county and to allow for a differentiated account of the status, the county has built up its own network of monitoring wells and a monitoring programme → for determining groundwater quality. The monitoring programme was launched in 2013 and could be expanded further in subsequent years. The nitrate content is currently determined once a year at 56 monitoring wells. A nitrate concentration below 50 mg/l has been reported for more than half of the monitoring wells, and in some cases it was even below 1 mg/l.

# **Groundwater management concept**

The County of Oldenburg strives to steadily improve its (ground)water bodies. To this end, ideas and projects/ measures are to be developed that can make a meaningful contribution to sustainable progress in this area, also in the future. Key goals include improvements to water storage, improving precipitation drainage and regulation of discharge into surface waters.

To reach these goals, the County of Oldenburg is, for example, involved in the strategic committee for water management in the Weser-Ems region and the Zukunftsregion4Klima project, in which various work groups discuss a range of topics, such as possible technical measures and



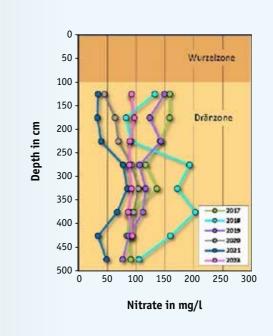
Taking a groundwater sample. Source: County of Oldenburg.

#### Work group

A work group of representatives of relevant stakeholders such as water suppliers, authorities and industry is to be established to develop a groundwater management concept. The work group is to discuss ideas and suggestions and to assess their feasibility and effectiveness.

Nitrate depth profiles show the pollution situation in the transmission zone (unsaturated zone below the root zone and above the groundwater level)

2024 Voluntary Local Review County of Oldenburg



Source: County of Oldenburg

resource awareness. The aim of the project is to determine practicable and feasible water protection measures for sustainable management and climate adaptation.

#### Nitrate deep scanning project

The nitrate deep scanning project ⊕ was launched in 2017 in cooperation with Kreislandvolk Oldenburg e. V. ⊖, due to the poor condition of the groundwater.

The goal is to learn about the transfer of nitrate below farmland and a possible areal ingress of nitrate into the groundwater.

To this end, samples are taken to determine nitrate at a depth of up to 5 metres below ground in selected locations across the County of Oldenburg.

The results for the County of Oldenburg to date are as

- ▶ Nitrate depth profiles for 2023 reflected both good and very high nitrate values in individual field sec-
- Results vary strongly, depending on the type of soil, the type of crop and the farming system, while all operators comply with the provisions from the fertiliser ordinance.
- ► It is clearly recognisable that catch crop cultivation, allowing the soil periods of rest and reduced soil processing can contribute to a reduction of nitrate leaching.

#### **Drinking water dispensers**

Free drinking water is available from dispensers in the administration buildings of the County of Oldenburg, such as the communal centre and the municipal town halls.

This service is also available to citizens free of charge in some shops in the county. Furthermore, about 20 drinking water dispensers are installed at primary and special-needs schools.

#### Water protection areas

Water is our most important nutrient, which is why protecting the public drinking water supply is a top priority. For water to be used as drinking water for human beings, it must have a high degree of purity and be free of any pathogenic micro-organisms or substances that are harmful to human health. Drinking water is considered to be the most carefully examined nutritional component in Germany.

In the County of Oldenburg, drinking water is sourced exclusively from groundwater and has a very high quality. So-called water protection areas ⊕ are designated to ensure that drinking water can be sourced sustainably. The top priority in these water protection areas is to protect the groundwater against any harmful impact.

#### **Drinking water protection**

- ► There are currently seven drinking water abstraction areas in the County of Oldenburg.
- ► The water protection areas are divided into protection classes I, II and III. Particular activities are banned or require approval in the different protection zones.



Poster of the trink!wasser initiative Source: 00WV and County of Oldenburg

# **Monitoring of lakes**

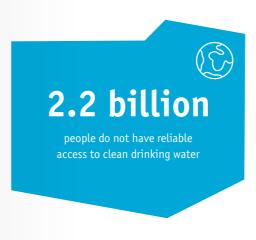
The health authority of the County of Oldenburg is in charge of monitoring five bathing lakes during the official swimming season between 15 May and 15 September.

Checks are performed by taking water samples to ensure that the bathing lakes pose no health risks. The samples are in particular examined with regard to the presence of bacteria, which can indicate faecal pollution and harmful germs. The quality is categorised based on the results from the past four bathing seasons, with categories ranging from "excellent" to "inadequate". If the threshold value determined in the bathing water ordinance for Lower Saxony  $\ominus$  is surpassed, a bathing ban is imposed. Signs are put up to inform about any bathing bans, and this can also be looked up in the Bathing Water Atlas.  $\ominus$  The water quality in all five bathing lakes in the County of Oldenburg has been classified as "excellent".

Quality of bathing lakes (2024 and previous years)



# excellent



59

Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

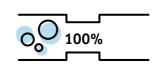
#### SDG 6 Outlook

The County of Oldenburg continues to strive to promote and protect water as an essential resource for coexistence in society. The measures and projects that were initiated in the county to date are to be continued and developed further as far as possible.

It is clear that the **challenges related to climate change** are having a particularly strong impact on the area of water with all its facets and that this will be the case increasingly. Preserving natural resources is an ongoing task of utmost importance.

From the point of view of the County of Oldenburg it is therefore inevitable that the **use of water**, and of groundwater in particular, must be subject to continuous assessment, both socio-politically and in legislative. This includes that such demands must be taken into account for any new technologies, new circumstances and new requirements.

Wastewater treatment in the County of Oldenburg (2021)



100 %

# SDG 7 – Affordable and clean energy

#### **Introduction and relevance**



# **Globally**

SDG 7 is to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Safe, environmentally friendly and affordable electricity and heat supply is an essential prerequisite for social and economic development and is directly linked to environmental and climate protection.

#### Global progress with regard to SDG 7

The number of people with no access to electricity has gone down from 958 million (2015) to 685 million (2022). The number of people without access to clean cooking fuels went down to 2.1 billion from 2.8 billion in the same period. In addition, the global capacity for generating electricity from renewable energy sources is increasing steadily.



# **₹ Nationally**

In the context of the energy transition, German climate and energy policy aims to **decarbonise energy systems** by promoting renewables, reducing energy consumption and increasing energy efficiency. This is how the overarching objective to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045 ⇒ is to be realised, that is currently being implemented in various sectors (energy industry, farming, industrial sector, buildings and transport).

In their endeavour to implement this SDG locally, German municipalities need to consider the following topics:

- ► Promotion of renewables
- Increasing energy efficiency
- ► Ensuring access to affordable and reliable energy supply



# In the County of Oldenburg

Expansion of renewable energies is pursued further in the County of Oldenburg. Since 2023, more than twice the amount of electricity used in the County of Oldenburg has been produced here from renewable sources. As of 2024 the eight municipalities of the county have:

- ► Numerous **photovoltaic systems** with an installed capacity of 167 MWp
- ▶ 83 biogas plants with an electric power output of around 76 MW
- ▶ 141 **wind turbines** with an electric power output of around 370 MW

Another 16 wind turbines with around 79 MW are currently under construction or at the approval stage.

#### A brief explanation of megawatt peak (MWp) or kilowatt peak (kWp):

The maximum electric power output of a solar energy system at optimal levels of sunlight is referred to as the peak power or peak performance. It allows for a comparison of the performance of modules and systems.



The Wildeshausen communal centre. Source: County of Oldenburg.

# **SDG 7 Projects and activities**

### **Integrated climate protection concept**

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In 2014, the county prepared an integrated climate protection concept  $\ominus$  that outlines steps for reducing the county's own greenhouse gas emissions. The county aims to be greenhouse gas neutral by 2045. A key component for reaching this goal is the expansion of renewables. More than one gigawatt hour of electricity is already being generated from renewable energy sources, according to current figures.

# Reconfiguration of the Regional **Development Programme (RDP)**

The County of Oldenburg is currently in the process of reconfiguring its Regional Development Programme (RDP). Among the issues addressed in the RDP is the steering of a future expansion of wind energy. County-wide compatible planning at the municipal level allows for locations for wind energy to be designated as preferred areas. The county plans to designate a further 2,400 ha of land for wind turbines, in order to achieve the land contribution value of 2.1 % by 31 December 2027 and of 2.72 % by 31 December 2032, as specified by the state government.

#### Charging station infrastructure (2022)

Charging stations per 1,000 residents





Electric cars 3.1 %, plug-in hybrids 1.6 %



# Regional energy concept: photovoltaics

The regional energy concept for photovoltaics *⊙* (REC: PV) was initiated in 2023 and is being drawn up by the association of municipalities Kommunalverbund Niedersachsen/ Bremen e. V. in cooperation with member municipalities of the regional association, including the County of Oldenburg, and a planning office. Expansion in open spaces, as well as on roof surfaces and sealed surfaces is considered in this context.

The fundamental idea is that the goals of the energy transition must be reconciled with other goals, such as sustainability and spatial optimisation, as part of a locally feasible political framework. Planning provides for the REC:PV to act as a recommendation for action for municipalities, including a list of criteria, guidelines and a location strategy.



Plug-in solar device. Source: Werner Wolff.

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# Funding for plug-in solar panels

The County of Oldenburg has set itself the goal to promote an increased use of solar energy, in order to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. To this end, funding → has been made available for plug-in solar panels. A funding amount of between 200 and 250 euros is available, depending on the wattage of the power inverter. Pluq-in solar panels are an option for all citizens to contribute to decentralised generation of renewable energy. The County of Oldenburg has by now subsidised more than 2,000 plug-in solar power devices.

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**Electricity from renewable** sources (2021) kW per resident

4.033 kW



#### **Energy saving advice from the County** of Oldenburg

Plenty of information on saving energy can be found on the county's website and is divided into the following categories:

- Lighting
- Heating and ventilation
- ► Hot-water consumption
- Cooking and baking
- Freezers



Annual energy reports *⊙* have been published for the County of Oldenburg for over ten years now, to give an overview of electricity and heat consumption. In addition to current consumption in the county's own buildings, the report also includes comparative figures that allow for classification and evaluation. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are also specified.

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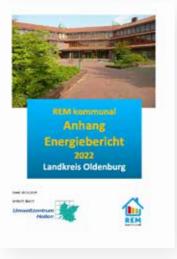
The energy reports show, for example, where consumption is comparably high to provide the county with a solid basis for further reduction measures.

### **Photovoltaic systems**

Photovoltaic systems are being installed on the roofs of the county's own buildings ⊙, and the electricity generated from solar energy is mostly used for internal consumption. Various buildings are already equipped with photovoltaic systems, such as the communal centre, the health office, the schools Graf-Anton-Günther-Schule in the city of Oldenburg, Gymnasium Wildeshausen, Gymnasium Ganderkesee, Schule am Habbrügger Weg in Ganderkese (special school focussing on learning, emotional and social development), as well as the women's and children's shelter in Wildeshausen. Photovoltaic systems with a total capacity of 1,214 kWp have been installed on the roofs of the county's own buildings to date.

#### **Energy Municipality award**

In April 2023, the Renewable Energy Agency awarded the County of Oldenburg the title Energy Municipality of the Month *→*. This title is awarded to municipalities that are exploiting the local opportunities for developing renewables in creative and innovative ways. Expansion of renewables is being advanced gradually in the county.



Cover page of the energy report. Source: County of Oldenburg



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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

#### SDG 7 Outlook

The County of Oldenburg is committed to climate protection and the energy transition. It seeks to increasingly cover its energy demand with regenerative energy, to operate energy-efficiently and to sustainably exploit its regional potential. To this end, renewables and an increase of **energy efficiency** will remain highly relevant over the next few years. The county undertakes to further promote this development and provides support wherever possible. Alongside expanding photovoltaic systems on its own buildings, the county focusses on encouraging citizens to realise their own photovoltaic projects. Corresponding advice and information services are being steadily expanded, to be able to offer as much support and information to citizens as possible.

Expanding renewables has been an explicit aim for many years. By 2027, the County of Oldenburg is going to designate preferred areas for wind turbines, in order to realise a land contribution value of 2.1 % by 31 December 2027 and of 2.72 % by 31 December 2032. Photovoltaic systems also account for a considerable share of renewable energy sources, not least thanks to funding available for plug-in solar panels, but also due to the panels installed on the roofs of the county's **properties**.



# **SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth**

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

#### **SDG 8** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 8 is to promote lasting, broad and **sustainable eco- nomic growth**, as well as full productive employment and **decent jobs** for all people around the world. These are some great challenges, considering that over 200 million people worldwide are unemployed, and another more than 200 million people are living in extreme poverty despite being employed.

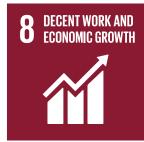
Sustainable economic activity must therefore reconcile a strong economic performance with safeguarding of the natural basis of life and social responsibility. A sustainably viable global balance is to be ensured in this way, while **prosperity of the entire society and solidarity** are increased at the same time.



# Nationally

Central goals in Germany are to enable people to live a self-determined and financially secure life through appropriate remuneration, safe jobs, workers' rights, social security and good working conditions, for example with regard to family-friendliness. Further aspects include the goal to secure skilled labour and the ways in which the issue of digitalisation is handled. The following topics are particularly relevant for German municipalities against this background:

- ▶ Promotion of sustainable business activities
- Support for companies seeking to realise sustainability
- Promotion of good work
- ► Encouraging sustainable tourism





# In the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg is characterised by a broad mix of industries from the industrial, trade, service, craft and agricultural sectors, as well as by small and medium sized companies. Located between Bremen and Oldenburg as major regional centres, the County of Oldenburg benefits from an efficient traffic infrastructure. This includes road and rail connections, in particular, that ensure quick supra-regional reachability and are beneficial to the county's economic development. The County of Oldenburg features some attractive tourist and recreation destinations that are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. The Wildeshauser Geest nature park with its diverse and unique cultural and nature-related offerings and education opportunities plays a central role here.

**Sustainable action** plays an important role for the county's current and future activities. The County of Oldenburg contributes to sustainable economic development through memberships and active involvement in associations that are also dedicated to the sustainable development goals.



The WLO team. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.

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### Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft für den Landkreis Oldenburg mbH

The County of Oldenburg understands itself as a reliable partner of the business world and strives to cater for the requirements of businesses. The business development agency for the County of Oldenburg (Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft für den Landkreis Oldenburg mbH, WLO) → has been in charge of this task since 1967. The WLO represents the interests of the business sector and provides support, advice and information for businesses in the county. It aims to close any gaps between EU, federal and state funding. Key development factors include energy, digitisation and demographics. Sustainable operation and resilience of companies have been and continue to be the priorities of business development in the county.

In its strategic paper titled "MUT:Zu 2030 – Mittelstand, Unternehmen, Transformation: Zukunft 2030" ("Courage for 2030 – mid tier, companies, transformation: future 2030"), the County of Oldenburg defines a strategic framework for business development → between 2022

and 2030. This programme is addressed especially at small and medium-sized companies in the county and sets out twelve strategic objectives:

- 1. Maintaining and enhancing the business-friendly climate
- 2. Maintaining and promoting the mix of industries
- 3. Facilitating business formation and ensuring succession
- Promotion of the business sector with the sector's own involvement
- 5. Reducing bureaucracy
- 6. Boosting regional marketing
- 7. Knowledge and technology transfer
- 8. Using federal, state and EU funding in targeted ways
- 9. Networking and cooperation
- 10. Sustainable economic development
- 11. Material support
- 12. WLO team: central point of contact for businesses

The WLO has also signed the 2024 Diversity Charter. The goal of the charter is to advance recognition, appreciation and inclusion of diversity aspects in the working world.



Focus areas of the WLO's advice services. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.



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WLO logo. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.



Diversity Charter logo. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.



Logo of the regional skilled labour association for the Northwest. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.

Level of long-term unemployment (2022)

Unemployed for over 1 year

1.15 %

Gross domestic product (2021) per resident

€27,478.91





# Commercial Land Development Concept for the county

The Commercial Land Development Concept provides for a comprehensive analysis of the existing land structures and future potential for commercial use in the county's municipalities. It records the currently available commercial land and assesses its suitability for future business activities, in particular with regard to sustainable and resource-friendly use. This includes:

- Observation of the principles of sustainable land development
- Creation of synergies and cycles that are as seamless as possible within a local area and its adjacent neighbourhoods
- Inter-municipal approaches to resource-friendly and sustainable commercial land development
- Coordinated development of associated traffic and settlement structures

#### **Skilled labour associations**

The eight regional skilled labour associations (Regionale Fachkräftebündnisse, RFKB) → are successful in promoting the concerns of the skilled labour initiative for Lower Saxony. The RFKB are making a vital contribution to the implementation of the skilled labour initiative for Lower Saxony, they set useful impulses for improving the skilled labour supply in the region, and help to further develop the structures for ensuring skilled labour for the region.

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#### **Zukunftsregion4Klima**

Four counties with a shared goal: a sustainable and future-ready region. To make this come true, the counties of Ammerland, Cloppenburg, Oldenburg and Vechta have joined forces as the "Zukunftsregion4Klima"  $\ominus$  ("Pro-climate future region"). The counties aim to initiate joint projects that will benefit the entire region: projects that strengthen the lively natural and cultural spaces and promote resilience against climate change.

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# Women and business coordination office

The women and business coordination office was established to support women, for example, in the case of any labour market-related difficulties and problems in finding a job, following an interruption of their professional activities, and those who wish to start a business in the region. The office cooperates closely with regional companies in order to develop family-friendly working opportunities. The coordination office is a project of the Frauen und Wirtschaft e. V. support association that is funded by the County of Oldenburg and the towns Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, as well as the municipality of Stuhr, and it also receives considerable financial support from state and EU funds (ESF, European Social Fund).



Further training programme 02/2024. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.



Logo of the Women and business coordination office. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.

### Wildeshauser Geest nature park

The Wildeshauser Geest nature park contributes to economic development by promoting tourism that does not only create jobs locally, but also gives rise to infrastructural improvements. In addition, the nature park has a positive impact on local businesses, as it promotes marketing of regional products, which is beneficial for farmers and consumers alike. The nationwide day of the regions takes place once a year, around thanksgiving day, for example, and is the most important event platform for regional business activity, as well as representing a lively regional culture. Over several weeks in September and October, numerous stakeholders from industries such as farming, arts and craft, and catering present everything the Wildeshauser Geest nature park has to offer.

#### Points reached by Wildeshauser Geest nature park (2023) At least 300 of 500 points are requi

At least 300 of 500 points are required for certification as a "high-quality nature park"

333

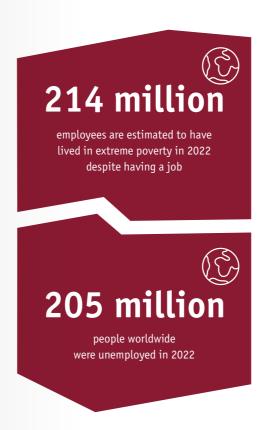




Logo of Zukunftsregionen in Niedersachsen. Source: Business development agency for the County of Oldenburg.



Logo of Wildeshauser Geest nature park. Source: Wildeshauser Geest nature park.



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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

#### SDG 8 Outlook

Sustainable business activities and resilience of companies are to remain the priorities of business development in the County of Oldenburg over the next few years. In its strategic paper titled "MUT:Zu 2030 – Mittelstand, Unternehmen, Transformation: Zukunft 2030" the county sets out its strategic objectives for the years ahead, as well as the desired direction of development.

The County of Oldenburg is characterised by its diverse mix of industries. It is therefore both prudent and necessary to adopt a broad approach to supporting local businesses. This is why the County of Oldenburg will continue to offer a range of material **support options for companies**.

**Business formation** and **company succession** provide for an essential basis for new jobs. In order to preserve the diverse mix of industries, no particular industries will be favoured when it comes to supporting start-up projects and succession plans in the County of Oldenburg, also in the future.

Requirements with regard to land and its resources can vary greatly, for example with regard to construction of roads and housing, installation of rail networks and power lines, agricultural and forestry use, expansion of renewable energies, designation of land for industrial use or shopping centres, business parks or tourism. It is therefore a great challenge now and for the future to carefully balance interests and take all three levels of sustainability into account.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

### **Introduction and relevance**



# **Globally**

SDG 9 is to establish **resilient infrastructure** around the world, to promote **inclusive** and **sustainable industrialisation** and foster innovation. These three aspects have a wide range of interlinking points, such as in the areas of digitisation or information and communication technology.

Alongside economic aspects, **innovations** can potentially make significant contributions with regard to present-day challenges including climate and resource protection and demographic change. Innovation also plays a key role in view of promoting **sustainable industrialisation** with more efficient and cleaner production.



# Nationally

The following areas are relevant for German municipalities in implementing this SDG:

- ► Promoting **innovation**
- Supporting sustainable industrialisation and start-ups
- Establishing a sustainable infrastructure, in particular with regard to information and communication technology

The term **infrastructure** covers both technical and social infrastructure (e.g. regarding transport, energy, water/wastewater, education and healthcare). Various requirements (e.g. concerning health, climate protection and adaptation, conserving natural resources and equal participation) must be taken into account when planning and designing infrastructure.





# In the County of Oldenburg

To ensure comprehensive access to a strong internet connection, broadband development has been steadily advanced in the County of Oldenburg. Particular attention has been paid to private individuals with a connection with 30 megabits per second (Mbps) or less, and those who had no internet access to date.

In the context of digitisation, the County of Oldenburg also seeks to ensure secure, quick and **user-friendly interaction** between citizens, organisations and the administration. The county has already initiated various projects as successful steps towards this goal, and the process is being gradually advanced.







# Comprehensive broadband expansion in the County of Oldenburg

Broadband expansion in the County of Oldenburg has been comprehensively pursued via three funding projects  $\bigcirc$ , in order to supply people with fast internet connections and to thus facilitate their access to information technology, also in areas in which the telecommunication companies do not develop the fibre-optic network independently.

# An overview: the three broadband expansion funding projects in the County of Oldenburg

- 1. **Funding project** (2018 and 2019): provision of a reliable bandwidth of at least 50 Mbps for 2,746 households, 218 companies in 10 business parks.
- Funding project (2020 and 2021): provision of fibre-optic connections (to the building) for another 1,215 households and 35 school premises that are managed by the municipality.
- 3. Funding project
  - a. Business park project (2022 and 2023): provision of fibre-optic connections (to the building) for 596 companies in 25 business parks.
  - b. Private homes project (since 2023 until the end of 2025): 3,451 private homes are to be provided with fibre-optic connections (to the building). It is currently being reviewed, whether another around 1,200 private homes can be added.

# **Digital communal centre**

A wide range of services is already available at the digital communal centre  $\bigcirc$ . These services comprise close to 150 online submissions from A to Z. Citizens can register by creating a user account to use these services.

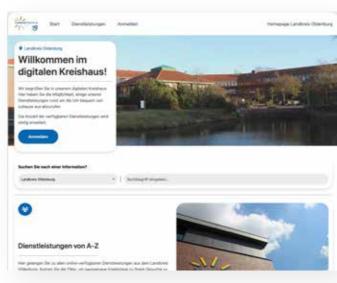
### **Provision of online forms**

The range of online forms available is being gradually expanded, for example through so-called one-for-all ("Einer für Alle", EfA) services. 

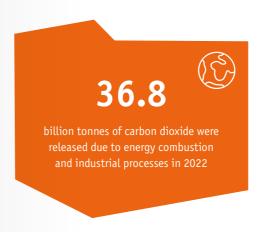
These are based on the approach that services for citizens are digitised using a uniform design by one federal state, and can then be used by the other states, too. This helps to save resources and makes it easier for citizens and administrative bodies to complete or edit forms.

# Prehistoric centre in Wildeshausen

Wildeshauser Geest is not only a significant North German hub for megalithic tombs, but also home to the Pestruper burial ground, the biggest remaining barrow cemetery in the West of Europe. Planning provides for this tourism potential to be exploited with the new prehistoric centre in Wildeshausen → that is to be set up by the "Urgeschichtliches Zentrum Wildeshausen e. V." association. As a branch point along the road of megalithic culture, the centre will give its visitors diverse insights into the region's grave sites. The heart of the centre will be an exhibition focussing on the thousands of years old tombs, their development history and their cultural significance.



Home page of the digital communal centre. Source: County of Oldenburg.



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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

### SDG 9 Outlook

The County of Oldenburg plans to realise further funding programmes over the next few years to be able to supply every household with a fibre-optic connection, regardless of the currently available Mbps values. The goal is to close any remaining gaps in the broadband network and to ensure high-speed internet access across the entire county. These projects depend on future funding opportunities, municipal finances and the activities of telecommunication companies. An industry dialogue and a market survey are planned in this context, to determine the number and details of households and businesses that have not arranged for an upgrade of their internet access themselves. The corresponding political decision concerning a possible further funding project and the share of costs covered by the municipality will be made based on these findings.

Broadband supply -Private households (2022)



88.95 %

Start-ups (2022)
Business formations per
1,000 inhabitants



6.47

Total length of all county roads (2021)

281 km



# **SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities**

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

### **SDG 10** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 10 is to **reduce inequalities** around the world, both within and between countries. Inequality with regard to income, education, health and social participation can have a negative impact on social cohesion.

# These are some of the aspects and measures that are linked to a reduction of global inequalities:

- Reduction of systemic barriers
- Support for disadvantaged groups
- Promotion of equal opportunities
- ► Fairer business structures
- Progressive fiscal policy
- Access to social and public services
- Strengthening the position of developing countries through global processes, such as fair trade relationships and development cooperation



# Nationally

Germany can contribute to SDG 10 through a range of measures for reducing inequality and boosting **social cohesion**. These include:

- ► Further development of education offerings and social security systems
- Progressive fiscal policy to allow for a fairer distribution of wealth
- Promoting gender equality
- ► Anti-discrimination measures
- ► Effective migration and integration policy

On the global scale, Germany can contribute to a reduction of global inequalities through fair trade relations and development cooperation in the areas of education, infrastructure and technology transfer.





# In the County of Oldenburg

With regard to SDG 10, the County of Oldenburg's focus is on **promoting equal opportunities**, for example through the following measures:

- ► Increasing education and training opportunities for disadvantaged groups
- Realisation and further development of social support programmes, such as affordable housing and social benefits
- ► Fair **distribution** of public resources
- ► Comprehensive healthcare
- Promoting integration of people with a migration background

The county also cooperates with **neighbouring regions** to encourage sharing of experiences and to reduce regional inequalities.



### **SDG 10** Projects and activities



The integration team. Source: County of Oldenburg.

### **Integration projects**

Integration of migrants is among the most important tasks of society. This is why the County of Oldenburg supports integration projects that are dedicated to promoting a respectful coexistence of different cultures on equal footing. These initiatives include voluntary services, as well as local integration projects focussing on sports, education and cultural exchange. Among their target groups are refugees, women and children.

### Open-ended action plan for integration

The County of Oldenburg is committed to aiding integration of migrants as a group that needs special protection. The goals of the open-ended action plan  $\odot$  are too pool integration tasks and to build and establish networks with local stakeholders. Planning provides for selected target areas and groups to be addressed in a differentiated manner and for the integration work to be put into concrete terms in future updates of the plan.

### Priorities of the action plan

These are the central areas of action of the concept for increasing the quality of life and degree of participation of the affected individuals in the County of Oldenburg:

- Access to language and education
- Access to advice and support services
- ► Encouraging social participation through integration projects
- Provision of language support

### **Cross-sectional task:** building network structures

A county-wide network must be established to allow for coordinated integration management. Dialogue structures must be stabilised with all relevant stakeholders and cooperation must be promoted for this to be a success. Binding cooperation structures must be created to this end both within the County Administration and externally, and social and advice services for refugees and migrants must be coordinated, designed and consolidated.

Share of the population that has a migration background



15.7 %

### Language support pool

79

To allow for easier communication between new arrivals and the receiving society, the County of Oldenburg has established a language support pool. 

Language support is particularly important with regard to access to medical, school and public services, as new immigrants tend to not (yet) speak the language of the receiving society. The pool can help to avoid misunderstandings and promote participation in society. The language support pool is being gradually expanded and adapted to the requirements of immigrants.

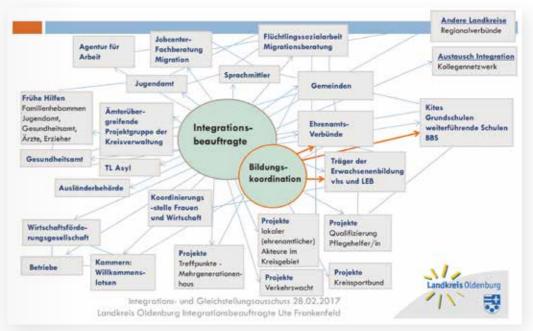
Language support pool with 96 linguists for (2024)

Arabic Turkish Bulgarian 30 languages

# Municipal recommendations for implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Round-table discussions on the issue of inclusion were held by five work groups between 2012 and 2014 to draw up recommendations  $\odot$  for the areas of education, training/work, recreation/sports/culture, housing and accessibility. These recommendations have been coordinated in a broad citizen involvement process with people with and without disabilities, and were adopted unanimously by the county parliament. Their goal is the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the County of Oldenburg, as well as to contribute to protecting and promoting the rights of people with handicaps.

Sprachmittlerpool





County-wide integration concept (LKO). Source: County of Oldenburg (as of February 2017).

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An inclusion office was set up in summer 2024 to promote the process towards an inclusive society in cooperation with the civil society and with federal and state support. The inclusion office acts as a transfer and networking point and pools all activities related to promoting an inclusive society. Its goal is to strengthen and permanently establish aspects related to inclusion in the County of Oldenburg. A broad interpretation of inclusion that covers discrimination and disadvantages of people is adopted in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

### Promoting inclusion projects in the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg promotes a whole range of inclusion projects, such as:

- ► Inclusive cooking classes
- Workshops on issues such as sexuality and handicap
- Networking of the domestic violence work group (with women's representatives)
- Inclusive sports and clubbing events
- Exhibition for people with disabilities dedicated to preventing sexualised violence
- Setting up municipal representation offices for people with disabilities staffed by volunteers
- ► Improving access to digital services for people with disabilities

# **Evaluation and further development** of the municipal recommendations for implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The inclusion office is currently in the process of evaluating the recommendations from 2014 and developing them further, as well as exploring the current general conditions in the County of Oldenburg. An action plan is to be drawn up in 2026 and implemented from 2027 onwards. In addition, the inclusion office is organising inclusion conferences and preparing inclusion reports about the municipal tasks.

### Optional position of a representative for people with disabilities

There has been a full-time position for a representative for people with disabilities in the County of Oldenburg since 2001, to allow for low-threshold consultation services for people with disabilities. These include support for applications, such as for disability certificates, parking permits, and coordination with integration support facilities. Enhanced representation of people with disabilities in the municipalities is also promoted. Further activities include public relations work and presentation of an annual inclusion award, aiming to raise awareness of the issue of inclusion.



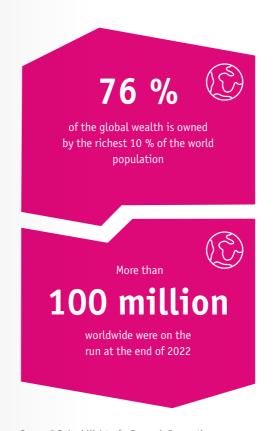
Inclusive cooking and language classes for displaced children are two of a number of micro-projects realised in the County of Oldenburg. Source: County of Oldenburg

Naturalisation (2022)

Share of the foreign population that was granted German citizenship

1.85 %





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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

### SDG 10 Outlook

A reduction of systemic barriers and support for disadvantaged groups are key to reducing inequalities. Aiming to create equal opportunities, the County of Oldenburg seeks to increasingly provide education and training opportunities for migrants in particular. Language and job training classes are offered to promote integration, and the county strives to further expand social support programmes and to improve access to affordable housing. The language support pool is to be expanded to help reduce language barriers and facilitate access to services.

Tailor-made solutions are needed owing to the diversity of needs and all stakeholders must cooperate in a co**ordinated manner.** The skilled labour shortage poses a challenge that could affect the implementation of these projects.

The open-ended action plan for integration aims to improve integration work and promote networking with local stakeholders. Planning provides for the concept to be updated in the future to allow for its contents to be differentiated further and put into more concrete terms.

In the area of inclusion, the newly set up **inclusion office** is currently in the process of evaluating the recommendations for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and developing them further.

# **SDG 11 – Sustainable** cities and communities

and modern energy for all.

### **SDG 11** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 11 is the central goal for all cities and municipalities around the world. Municipalities need to ensure that any (further) development is inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Sustainable, integrated urban development combines social, economic and environmental objectives in this context, as well as taking the interests of relevant stakeholders into account.

In doing so, municipalities are increasingly facing present-day challenges such as climate change, resource shortages, demographic change, and migration.

More than half of the world population is currently living in towns and cities, however, urban areas are faced with countless complex challenges. What's more, the share of people living in urban areas is forecast to go up to 70 % by 2050.



# Nationally

The following aspects play a particularly important role for German municipalities when it comes to implementing

- ► Realisation of integrated urban development
- ▶ Promotion of sustainable neighbourhoods and affordable housing
- ► Reduction of **space use**
- ► Promotion of sustainable mobility
- ► Implementation of comprehensive **emergency**
- ► Improving air quality and noise protection





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# In the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg with its county capital Wildeshausen as the administrative centre is home to a population of around 135,000. The region is characterised by its extensive landscape and nature reserves. The county features an excellent traffic infrastructure, despite its rural character, making it attractive both as a place to do business and a place to live.



Flooded land. Source: Manuela Schöne.

### **SDG 11** Projects and activities

# **Regional Development Programme** (RDP)

The wide range of requirements with regard to the use of land are controlled at the European, national, state and local level by means of a tiered planning system.

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In order to adapt regional development to new requirements and ensure its future viability and compliance with legal provisions, a new RDP is currently being drawn up for the County of Oldenburg based on the basic structure of the programme that is no longer in force.

### Requirements with regard to land and its resources can differ greatly:

- Construction of roads and housing
- ► Installation of railway networks and energy lines
- Agriculture and forestry
- Designation of industrial sites, shopping centres, business parks and areas for tourism

### **Housing Concept (HC)**

To be able to make statements concerning existing housing and to forecast future requirements of the local housing market, the County of Oldenburg decided to prepare a Housing Concept (HC). The currently valid first update of the Housing Concept includes an analysis of the development of the entire housing market in the County of Oldenburg in terms of quantity and quality, as well as highlighting perspectives and recommendations for action for the period up to 2030. The approach to building affordable rental housing that was coordinated with the municipalities is also determined in the HC. Planning provides for the next update to focus on the period from 2026 to 2030.

# Regional housing market analysis and strategy "MORO - Wohnungsmarktbeobachtung und -strategie"

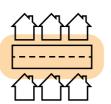
"Affordable housing for all" is the political goal stated by the municipal association Kommunalverbund Niedersachsen/Bremen e. V., aiming to respond to the growth and demographics-related challenges and effects in the housing market. It also decided to prepare a regional housing market analysis ⊕ and strategy as a cooperative regional development project. Initial joint challenges and areas where action is necessary were identified in the housing market analysis (2016 to 2018), as well as creating the basis for a shared understanding of the issue in politics and administration. The overall direction for drawing up the housing market strategy was determined following adoption of the housing policy guidelines (2019), and the strategy itself was adopted by the members in their meeting in December 2020.

### Green house numbers

The green house number  $\ominus$  has been presented in the County of Oldenburg in cooperation with Lower Saxony's Climate Protection and Energy Agency since 2017. It has been awarded 102 times to date for achievements in the areas of energy-efficient refurbishment and construction. The clearly visible plaques are an inspiration for other citizens. In addition, lectures about sustainable refurbishment are held to inform property owners and craftspeople about sustainable refurbishment.

Funding programmes are available for refurbishment of listed buildings. Construction measures on 67 listed buildings took place between 2019 and 2023.

Proportion of settlement and transport area in relation to total area (2022)



14.85 %



Presentation of green house numbers. Source: County of Oldenburg.

# Regional town centre and retail concept of Kommunalverbund e. V.

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Town and village centres are to be preserved and strengthened in our region, and their development is to be encouraged. Alongside services, catering outlets and good infrastructure, it is the retail landscape that makes the town centres in our county diverse, lively and attractive. Local supply is to be safequarded for the population and balanced supply structures are to be encouraged. Coordinated joint action is necessary to allow for availability of public services to be ensured in the long-term: the contracting parties of the area planning contract associated with the regional town centres and retail concept have agreed on a joint strategy  $\ominus$  with regional goals, foundations and procedures, aiming to assist towns and municipalities in area planning.

# Regional mobility concept / association of municipalities

Cycling is to be made safer and more attractive in the Bremen region, and to be regarded a form of transport that is on par with other modes of transportation, thus contributing to future-viable and climate-friendly mobility. Planning provides for different requirements linked to cycling to be addressed gradually: for both slow and fast cycling, and for transport of people and goods. Based on an expert report, a concept ⊙ that outlines the future-oriented approach has been drawn up in a cooperation between towns and municipalities, as well as the purpose association for transport for Bremen and Lower Saxony and Lower Saxony's state authority for road construction and traffic.



Junction in the municipality Hatten. Source: Wildeshauser Geest nature park.

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### The network of cycling and hiking paths in the Wildeshauser Geest nature park features...

- ▶ a comprehensive network of 1,200 km of cycling paths
- ▶ 20 themed cycling routes ranging between 20 and
  - that are presented in a free booklet  $\ominus$
- ▶ 20 circular hikes, described in a hiking brochure from 2023 →
- > 330 km long megalithic culture holiday road and cycling route across north-western Germany
- ▶ Bicycle counters that monitor usage and are used as a basis for improving the cycling infrastructure

### Rents (2022)

Average basic net rent per square metre

€7.90



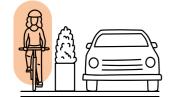
### **Reconfiguration of disaster protection**

The link between climate adaptation and disaster preparedness is gaining importance, following events such as the 2023 flooding. Extreme events in particular tend to hit those the hardest that are lacking political and planning-related opportunities. It is therefore all the more important to take long-term measures to prepare for the effects of climate change, to ensure availability of funding and (human and material) resources to make good any damage caused in case of an emergency. Mobile dykes are particularly important in this context, as they can be set up in the critical spots in the event of flooding to prevent consequential damage.

### Volunteering card

"Ehrenamt ist Gold wert" ("Volunteering is worth a mint") is the motto of a campaign for issuing volunteering cards to committed volunteers from the County of Oldenburg. These cards can be applied for from the State of Lower Saxony. Holders of the cards receive discounts from public facilities and various providers from the areas of sports, culture and recreation. The idea behind the campaign is to provide an incentive for volunteer work and to promote public welfare.

Length of bicycle lanes next to county roads (2021)



Local recreation space (2022) per resident



102.45 m<sup>2</sup>





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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

### SDG 11 Outlook

The County of Oldenburg implements the **central places concept** (prescribed by the state planning authority) by focussing on central locations for housing developments in the county and strengthening the local centres. This allows for local supply for the population to be ensured and for the existing living conditions to be maintained in the county. The principle to **promote developments inside** rather than outside existing settlements is followed for commercial and residential property developments, in order to protect the nature and landscape. Sealed surfaces are to be reduced and brownfield sites are to be unsealed and made usable once again. This also helps to strengthen existing neighbourhoods. Housing developments on a moderate scale are encouraged in the smaller municipalities to promote their preservation.

Aiming to ensure the availability of public services, the County of Oldenburg is committed to ensuring that local supply outlets are developed in line with requirements and can be reached by all citizens. To ensure this, local supply sites of particular importance are identified outside the central towns.

The County of Oldenburg also encourages independent developments in smaller municipalities and villages. The goal is to enable the people who live in these municipalities to create local housing. The character and unique nature of the municipalities and villages is to be preserved. This also includes that additional land can be made available to local companies, if needed. The size of plots that are designated for owner-use depends on the requirements of the local population and is determined within the framework of planning law.

The cultural landscape of the County of Oldenburg is characterised by existing buildings and settlements. The nature and special characteristics of these essential settlement structures are to be preserved as far as possible, as these contribute to the **character** of the County of Oldenburg and encourage identification of the population with its region.

251 km

# SDG 12 – Sustainable consumption and production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

### **SDG 12** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 12 is to ensure sustainable consumption and production behaviour and it addresses both **lifestyle changes** and changes to business practices. The goal is pursued based on a number of components:

- ► Reduction of the connection between growth and prosperity and the use of **natural resources**
- ► (More) efficient use of natural resources
- Preventing or reducing pollution and emissions
- ► Consumer behaviour that takes environmental and social aspects into account when it comes to buying, using and disposing of products and services

More than 12 tonnes of raw materials were used per head for production and consumption as the global average (2019) and 17 % of the food produced was thrown away.



# Nationally

### In its national programme for sustainable consumption

• the Federal Government lists measures for reducing the negative social and environmental impact of consumption across various areas of everyday life, such as food and mobility. Local procurement is a key aspect when it comes to sustainable consumption and production behaviour.

The following topics are particularly relevant for German municipalities with regard to implementing the SDG:

- Promotion of sustainable consumption and resource use
- ► Encouraging sustainable disposal
- ▶ Realisation of sustainable procurement and contracting



# In the County of Oldenburg

There is a whole range of concepts, tasks and projects to promote sustainable consumption and production in the county:

- ➤ **Solid waste management:** Role as disposal service provider and preparation and implementation of the solid waste management concept
- ► Sustainable and fair **procurement**
- Realisation and planning of platforms and activities for reuse, reutilisation, repair and upcycling of furniture and items of everyday use



# **SDG 12** Projects and activities

### Sustainable procurement

Sustainable procurement is about making eco-friendly, socially responsible and commercially viable decisions when sourcing goods and services. In addition, procurement can be an opportunity to strengthen the local economy and improve the quality of life of the region's inhabitants. Particular attention is being paid to the following aspects in the County of Oldenburg:

### ► Procurement of eco-friendly products

Favouring products that were produced in environmentally friendly ways, e.g. made from recycled materials or with a small CO<sub>2</sub> footprint.

### Conservation of resources

Selection of products that are easy on resources, e.g. by being durable, repairable or using less energy. An increased use of digital documents helps to reduce paper consumption.

### ► Local procurement

Supporting local businesses and reducing transport distances to minimise the strain on the environment.

### Procurement of certified products

Favouring products with recognised environmental or social certification, e.g. Fairtrade, Blue Angel, FSC, Energy Star.

# Solid waste management and the solid waste management concept of the County of Oldenburg

§ 6 section 1 of Lower Saxony's solid waste act provides that the County of Oldenburg is responsible for public waste disposal in the county. The County of Oldenburg also has to prepare a solid waste management concept for a period of at least five years into the future, and to update it on a regular basis. The solid waste management concept "2024 plus" from 2024 is the most recent version. In addition to outlining the current status, the concept includes recommendations and decisions that are to be implemented over the next few years. The concept is used as a quideline for future activities and developments for public solid waste management in the County of Oldenburg.

Amount of solid waste per resident (2022)

470 kg





**Number of Fairtrade Towns** in the County of Oldenburg (2024)



Solid waste management concept: 2024 plus. Source: County of Oldenburg.



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### Verschenk-Markt Landkreis Oldenburg

INSERATE - BEREICH - KATEGORIEN - RUBRIKEN - TERMINE - III III

Home page of the give-away website for the County of Oldenburg. Source: County of Oldenburg.





Logo of the Repair Café in the County of Oldenburg. Source: County of Oldenburg.

### **Repair Cafés**

Events dedicated to fixing items rather than throwing them away have been held across the County of Oldenburg since 2017. The idea of the Repair Café ⊕ events is to repair broken items to extend their useful life. Citizens meet at fixed dates and try to repair their faulty items they have brought along with the help of volunteers who are experts at repairing things. These meetings are also an opportunity to swap items that are no longer needed or do upcycling, i.e. to give items a new function or a more attractive appearance. These measures promote social cohesion, reduce waste and consumption and therefore contribute to climate protection.

Number of places where Repair Café events are held in the County of Oldenburg (2024)

### **Give-away market**

The County of Oldenburg has set up a digital "give-away market" 

→ where furniture and items of everyday use can be swapped or given away. Items that one person no longer needs can be passed on to other citizens that still have a use for them. The give-away market promotes a reuse of items and therefore helps to reduce waste and disposal costs. The platform is also a way for its users to get in touch with each other and it therefore contributes to social cohesion in the county.





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#### Fairtrade in the County of Oldenburg

There are currently 897 towns and municipalities in Germany that meet the criteria  $\bigcirc$  for using the title Fairtrade Town. 

Among these are four municipalities in the County of Oldenburg:

- ► The municipality of Wardenburg
  - ⇒ since 2015
- ► The municipality of Hatten
  - → since 2019
- ► The municipality of Ganderkese
  - → since 2019
- ► The municipality of Hude
  - → since 2020

Source: https://hatten.de/nachhaltigkeit/fairtrade.php



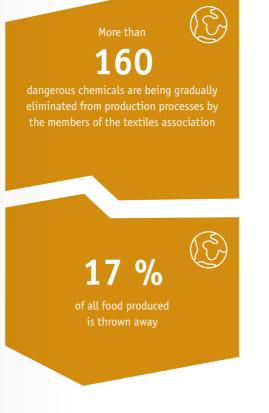
Award ceremony of the 2024 Clean Landscape campaign. Source: County of Oldenburg.

# "Clean Landscape" campaign

Every year, between 1 September and 31 March, the County of Oldenburg holds a competition titled "Saubere Landschaft" ("Clean Landscape")  $\supseteq$  in which rubbish discarded in nature is collected and disposed of. The competition is addressed, for example, at families, neighbourhoods, local associations, village communities, schools and any other local organisations. Its particular goal is to raise awareness of environmental matters among the population. In 2024/2025 the campaign takes place for the 50th time.

# "Don't throw me out" project

The regional centre for environmental education (Regionales Umweltbildungszentrum Hollen e. V.) ⊝ in Ganderkese organises the nationwide "Wirf mich nicht weg!" ("Don't throw me out!") initiative  $\odot$  to counteract food waste. Information about the issue is shared in awareness-raising workshops at schools. The idea is for children to learn about responsible use of food at a young age. In addition, there are further events such as cooking classes and lectures. There is also an associated podcast for anyone who is interested in the issue that is available via all popular portals.



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Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

### SDG 12 Outlook

In addition to **involvement** in and support of various projects and activities for promoting sustainable consumption, the areas of procurement and solid waste management are the key tasks and levers for the County of Oldenburg with regard to this SDG.

Implementation of the Global SDG

The county seeks to gradually reorganise its procurement activities based on further sustainability criteria, in addition to the environmental and social aspects that are already being considered in the county's procurement.

The recently updated **solid waste management concept** for the County of Oldenburg describes the measures and activities for the period up to 2029. A reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, waste consultation and public relations work are among the focus topics, alongside promoting waste avoidance and reutilisation.



# **SDG 13 – Climate action**

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

### **SDG 13** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 13 calls for measures to **fight climate change** and its consequences to be taken around the world. Climate change is among the greatest global challenges of the 21st century. By **limiting global warming to 2°C**, the damage caused to nature and human beings could be significantly reduced. An unrestricted increase in temperature would meanwhile lead to permanent and quicker change, such as even more extreme weather events, warmer oceans, melting ice and rising sea levels. If climate change is not slowed down, sea levels could, for example rise by between 63 and 101 cm by 2100, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.



# Nationally

The consequences of climate change are already noticeable in Germany. More frequent and more intense extreme weather events do not only have a negative impact on human health and infrastructure, but also on water management, agriculture and forestry. Torrential rain and flooding do not only pose risks to citizens but cause damage to buildings and agriculture, too, as well as giving rise to high costs for fixing such damage. Heat waves affect the quality of life of citizens, in particular in densely built-up areas. Prolonged drought leads to water shortages and drought stress, which is damage to vegetation. Severe windstorms are also increasingly becoming a threat. Against this background, German municipalities need to address SDG 13 with regard to the following aspects:

- ► Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through climate action
- ► Implementing activities for adaptation to the effects of climate change

The climate protection amendment entered into effect on 17 July 2024, following its announcement in the Federal Law Gazette. 

This amendment provides for stricter climate protection provisions and it enshrines that greenhouse gas-neutrality is to be reached by 2045.



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The climate protection team for the County of Oldenburg. Source: County of Oldenburg.





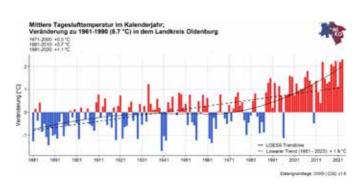
### In the County of Oldenburg

Climate change has been leaving its mark on north-western Germany for a while now. An increase in the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall, extreme drought and prolonged periods of hot weather could be observed in recent years. In 2018, for example, there was a particularly long period of dry weather with above-average temperatures from April to October combined with very little rainfall. In winter 2023/2024, on the other hand, large-scale flooding was caused by long periods of heavy rainfall. It can also be observed that strong winds are occurring more frequently and have increased in intensity, too.

Effective climate protection is only possible with **involvement** of citizens, businesses and the staff members of the municipal authorities. The office that is responsible for climate protection management in the county maintains a strong network with the county's municipalities and other stakeholders. The responsible administrative bodies of the individual communities share experiences and views in regular "climate meetings".

More staff will be added for this area, not only to be able to handle mandatory tasks, but also to be able to expand activities in the areas of climate protection and climate adaptation. § 18 of the Lower Saxony Climate Protection Act (NKlimaG) delegates certain mandatory tasks to the municipal authorities. Two additional personnel positions for tasks related to climate protection will be created in the County Administration. Planning also provides for two

more permanent positions to be added with federal funding. For the first of these positions, a funding request has already been approved for a **climate adaptation manager** who will be responsible for drawing up a **climate adaptation concept** for the County of Oldenburg and its municipalities by the end of 2026. For the second one, a request for funding has been submitted to the BMWK, aiming to hire a climate protection coordinator that will support the county's municipalities in **realising climate protection projects**.



Average daytime air temperature; development between 1961 and 1990 in the County of Oldenburg. Source: Climate change competence centre for Lower Saxony (NIKO) 2024

### **SDG 13 Projects and activities**

The County of Oldenburg has been actively implementing suitable projects and plans for reaching the federal government's climate protection target for a long time. In 2015 the County of Oldenburg launched its "WIR FÜR GUTES KLIMA" ("united for good climate") campaign with targeted measures for more effective local climate action based on an integrated climate protection concept. ⊖ Six fields of action with a total of 69 measures are defined in the climate protection concept. The county parliament adopted the decision that the County of Oldenburg including all of its municipalities is to become greenhouse gas-neutral by 2045.

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Numerous pioneering and future-oriented projects have already been initiated and launched in the County of Oldenburg. We are pleased to report the County of Oldenburg has received the nationwide "Climate Active Municipality" award twice. In 2015 the county won the award with its "Regional Energy Management" project, and received EUR 25,000 for further climate protection projects. Two years later, in 2017, the County of Oldenburg won the "Cooperative Climate Projects" category with its "Climate Alliance in Agriculture" project and received the prize money for a second time.

The county's Climate Protection Manager has been represented in the nationwide work group for municipal climate protection since 2015. The work group focusses on a practical approach to various issues related to municipal climate action. It also produces a number of publications with specific advice concerning present-day issues.

Share of renewables in overall energy consumption (2017)

196 %





Climate Active Municipality award ceremony in 2017. Source: Peter Himsel, German Institute for Urban Studies

# Climate protection in the County Administration

In order to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of the County Administration and promote an expansion of renewables, all roof surfaces of the communal centre and of all of the county's own buildings are to be equipped with solar panels, as far as this is structurally feasible.

Energy-related refurbishments have taken place in recent years in nearly all schools for which the County of Oldenburg is responsible. This allowed for significant reductions in energy consumption and  $CO_2$  emissions. Advice about climate-friendly behaviour is also given in schools, aiming to realise further energy savings. In addition to an education concept for pupils that includes, for example, the establishment and training of energy teams, the individuals in charge of technical matters are also involved. Energy consumption is also monitored, and the findings are presented in annual reports.

With its large number of successful measures realised to date and the related publicity campaigns, the County of Oldenburg strives to live up to its reputation as a role model and to reach many citizens and private businesses that will follow suit.

### **Construction and refurbishment**

Regular advice campaigns, lectures and information events about energy-efficient construction and refurbishment have been held in cooperation with Lower Saxony's Climate Protection and Energy Agency (KEAN)  $\ominus$  and the Lower Saxony Consumer Advice Centre  $\ominus$  since 2015.

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In addition to low-threshold advice services for citizens, the "Green House Numbers" competition → that is handled together with KEAN has proved particularly effective. More than 100 buildings received a green house number over a period of six years, marking them clearly as good examples of energy-efficient construction and refurbishment.

Since 2021, substantial funding has been available for residents of the County of Oldenburg every year, in order to promote the installation of so-called plug-in solar devices. More than 2,000 devices have been subsidised in the county since the introduction of the funding requirements. A funding amount of EUR 250 is available for plug-in solar devices with an inverter output of up to 800 watt.

Installation of new solar panels on the county's own roof surfaces (2023)

377 kWp





Greenhouse gas balance sheet for farming businesses. Source: Manuela Schöne

### Climate protection in farming

As part of the workshops for drawing up the climate protection concept, the idea was developed to offer greenhouse gas balance sheets for farming businesses, in order to raise awareness of emissions and to identify necessary adjustments that allow improvements in such businesses. The project has been a great success. Every year, the county provides funding for up to five lecture events designed to motivate people to take part in the project, as well as for 20 greenhouse gas balance sheets for individual businesses. The Chamber of Agriculture of Lower Saxony performs the consultations and prepares the balance sheets. The project is handled with support from Kreislandvolkverband Oldenburg e. V.  $\odot$ . The association holds events, as well as actively advertising the project to farmers. This measure has attracted nationwide attention in other municipalities as well as plenty of press coverage, and was selected as the winner ⊕ of the "Cooperative Climate Projects" category of the federal "Climate Active Municipality" competition.



"Wir für gutes Klima" logo. Source: County of Oldenburg.

### **Mobility**

Development of public charging infrastructure for electric cars has been an ongoing project across the entire county for several years. A comprehensive charging infrastructure concept was drawn up in 2024 in cooperation with Lower Saxony's state authority for road construction and traffic (NLStBV) and the county's municipalities. The goal of this concept is to give an overview of the potential, demand and suitable locations of the County of Oldenburg's charging infrastructure for the period up to 2030, and to create a basis for political decision-making and practical implementation.

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Four electric citizens cars, two 7-seat vehicles and two passenger cars, are available for citizens to call. Volunteers will then drive their fellow citizens to places such as doctors' offices, supermarkets or weekly markets. A fifth electric car is available to the vocational schools, where it is used for training apprentice mechatronics technicians, as well as being available for the caretakers to use. This project enables people in rather sparsely populated municipalities who require mobility services to have a more active social life and get involved in societal life. Experiencing electric vehicles first hand can also help to overcome any prejudices concerning electric mobility.

Number of subsidised plug-in solar devices (since 2022)







Source: Stiftung Zukunft Wald.

# School forest project

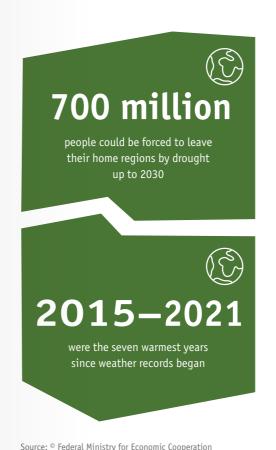
A school forest with various different trees, bushes and fruit trees has been created in the municipality of Dötlingen through cooperation between the County of Oldenburg (acquisition and provision of a suitable piece of land), the "Stiftung Zukunft Wald" foundation (donation of the trees that were planted) and the forest education centre of Lower Saxony's state forest authority for the Weser-Ems region (work input and basic forest maintenance). The pupils of a primary school and a special-needs school were actively involved in planting the trees, and the forest is used for educational purposes. There is also an educational trail with information about the different types of tree.



Children helping to plant the school forest. Source: Birte Otto



Electric citizens car. Source: Manuela Schöne.



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### SDG 13 Outlook

It is becoming ever more important that climate protection targets are reached and the related measures are taken. As of 1 September 2024, the existing climate action team reports directly to the administrator of the County of Oldenburg which significantly enhances the role of climate protection, climate adaptation and sustainability within the county's administration. The existing climate protection team is also enlarged to this end. The new positions will be realised through a combination of mandatory tasks according to the NKlimaG and two applications for funding at the federal level.

The great challenge to find suitable staff for tasks related to climate protection in the current labour market should not be underestimated in this context.

In addition to this, the County Administration is drawing up a climate protection concept according to §18 NKlimaG that deals with the emissions generated by its own administrative structures. The goal of this climate protection concept is to act as a role model and to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions generated by the administration to net zero as quickly as possible.

Climate protection and climate adaptation are ongoing **joint tasks** for all citizens.. In order to reach those it takes well-working public relations, exceptional target group related communication and optimised networking. A more intense use of social media and restructuring of the website www.wir-für-qutes-klima.de ⊕ are two important steps in this context.

Climate protection is a **cross-sectional task**, and many projects and measures have been realised with various different stakeholders. Measurable success is only possible through joint efforts of all stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, and the staff of the County Administration and the municipal authorities.



### SDG 14 – Life below water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

### **SDG 14** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 14 is to preserve and use **oceans**, **seas and aquatic resources** as a central **basis for life** around the world as a part of sustainable development. Ecologically intact maritime and coastal ecosystems play a central role for conserving biodiversity, food security, economic development and the climate system.

### How are oceans affected increasingly?

- ▶ Pollution (e.g. from plastic waste)
- Introduction of substances (e.g. from agriculture and the industrial and transport sector)
- Overfishing
- ▶ Global climate change

The origin of such stresses is frequently on land that is connected with the oceans via rivers.



# Nationally

The following areas are relevant for German municipalities with regard to SDG 14:

- Promotion of a high water quality in running waters
- Supporting the **protection** of maritime and coastal ecosystems
- Promotion of a sustainable **use** of aquatic resources



# In the County of Oldenburg

Water management is handled at the federal state level in Germany and a three-tiered approach is employed in Lower Saxony:

- The superior authority is the Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal and Nature Protection Agency that is in charge of controlling water management and the higher-level administrative procedures.
- The intermediary authority is the Weser-Ems County Government that is responsible for regional water management planning, relevant water legislation procedures and administrative tasks.
- The County of Oldenburg represents the lower authority that includes the water authorities of the counties and independent towns. It takes care of water legislation procedures, monitors bodies of water and is responsible for official decisions.

"Water is not a commercial product like any other but, rather, a heritage which must be protected, defended and treated as such ... It is necessary to develop an integrated Community policy on water."

Excerpt from the recitals to the European Water Framework Directive





# **SDG 14 Projects and activities**

### Plans and legal provisions

There are various strategies and plans on which the implementation of sustainable measures is based, the following are particularly relevant in this context:

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- ► Landscape structure plan → of the County of Oldenburg from 2021 (currently being updated)
- ► Water development plans → for individual bodies of water
- ► Management plans ⊝ for flora and fauna
- ► Legal provisions from the EC Water Framework Directive *→*

Planning and realisation of measures for running waters requires a high degree of coordination and participation, as such measures must take place in cooperation between various stakeholders. The relevant stakeholders include: the Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal and Nature Protection Agency, the lower-level water authority, the lower-level nature protection authority of the county, water and soil associations, fishery associations and land owners.

# **Quality of water body structures**

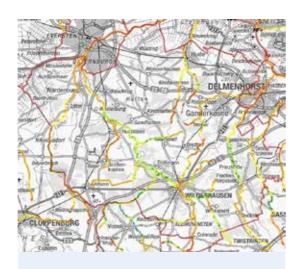
Compared to the rest of Lower Saxony, the structure quality of running waters is above average in the County of Oldenburg. Surrounding areas, riverbanks and riverbeds were examined between 2010 and 2014. The results show that the water body structure is classified as ranging between "moderately altered" (dark green) and "severely altered" (yellow) across large parts of the county. A near-natural water body structure that allows for a lower flow speed and more space for the body of water can have a positive impact on the flora and fauna and the overall quality of a body of water.

Action is still needed in a number of areas, despite this positive assessment. Measures must be taken to further improve the overall rating of certain stretches of river.

# Promotion of a high water quality in running waters

The protection and preservation of groundwater reserves and the high quality of surface waters are key tasks. The following aspects are relevant here:

- Minimising the burden on bodies of water into which wastewater is discharged to prevent a decrease in quality - this is ensured by means of various official
- Consideration of rainwater flow off and conservation of natural habitats for plants and animals in water body management
- ► Reduction of the impact of pollutants and fertilisers through regulatory soil protection



### Water body structure quality: legend

- Dark blue: unaltered
- Light blue: very slightly altered
- Dark green: moderately altered
- Light green: considerably altered
- Yellow: severely altered
- Orange: very strongly altered
- Red: completely altered

Water body structure quality in the county. Source: https://www.umweltkarten-niedersachsen.de/ The county has set up a groundwater monitoring programme with monitoring wells, aiming to establish a solid data basis for ensuring a good chemical status in line with the EC Water Framework Directive. Annual samples for nitrate testing are currently being taken at 56 monitoring wells.

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# **Extending the course of the river** Hunte

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The river Hunte ⊝ is the largest running water in the County of Oldenburg and it crosses the county from south to north. Large parts of the river have been considerably straightened and the flow is restricted by weirs. This has led to an altered river structure, species-poor vegetation and hydrological problems. Only around 8.3 km of the river's 60.8 km long course feature a near-natural structure.

In order to recreate the river's natural dynamics and improve the ecological quality of the body of water, two large-scale renaturation projects have already been realised. Planning is currently underway for the following further renaturation measures (in the area of Garmhausen near Colnrade):

- Lengthening and recreation of the river's winding course on a 1,100 metre stretch
- Removal of a weir

The aim of the redesign is to restore continuity for migrating species, to reduce the flow speed and to improve natural flood control.

Near-natural course of the river Hunte (2024)

8.3 km



#### Water touring and education along the Hunte

Along the river Hunte, there is an educational water touring path  $\bigcirc$  with information about the precious habitat and its biodiversity. In addition, three maps for water touring between Dümmer and Oldenburg have been created in cooperation with various stakeholders and interest groups from the areas of canoe touring and nature conservation  $\bigcirc$ .

Water touring. Source: Wildeshauser Geest nature park.



Loop in the river Hunte near Garmhausen Source: County of Oldenburg



Visbeker Aue. Source: County of Oldenburg.

# Recreation of biological continuity of Visbeker Aue at the Aumühle water power plant

Visbeker Aue, which is located between Wildeshausen and Oldenburg, is the most important side water of the river Hunte from an environmental point of view. Salmon, sea trout and lampreys were found to spawn in the lower part of its course. However, the Aumühle weir with its small water power plant is impassable for fish and aquatic organisms. To improve this situation, construction of a river bottom slide is to begin in 2025, aiming to establish a naturally reproducing fish population from the North Sea through to the source regions. The measure is complemented by environmental education activities that are designed to promote an understanding of biodiversity and biotope networks. The project is not a mandatory task of the County of Oldenburg, but is, nevertheless, considered a vital contribution to environmental protection and ecological improvement of the waterway network.

Number of monitoring wells for nitrate testing (2024)

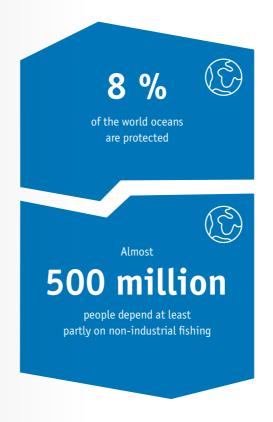


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Planned renaturation of the Hunte (2024)



1,100 m



Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

### SDG 14 Outlook

Life below water will play an important role in the County of Oldenburg, also in the years ahead. This includes the issues of water management, the promotion of a high water quality in running waters, and in particular a close cooperation and coordination with the relevant stakeholders.

Planning and implementation of the individual projects can take a few or even several years. The goal is to ensure that any changes are in line with environmental, economical and social demands and will have a positive impact on the long run.

### SDG 15 - Life on land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

### **SDG 15** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 15 is all about life on land and aims to

- protect and restore **ecosystems on land** and to promote their sustainable use,
- ▶ to ensure sustainable forest management,
- combat desertification,
- stop and reverse soil degradation, and to
- put an end to the loss of **biodiversity**.

**Intact ecosystems** are of vital importance to the ecological balance and human well-being. The use of natural resources exceeds the regenerative capacity in many places, and the loss of biodiversity has accelerated rapidly over the past few decades. Biodiversity plays a central role with regard to the regenerative ability and productive capacity of ecosystems.



# Nationally

The following aspects are particularly relevant for German municipalities in the context of implementing this SDG:

- Promotion of biodiversity
- ► Implementation of nature and soil conservation
- Provision and sustainable management of green
- ► Encouraging sustainable **forestry**

Alongside traditional conservation areas, areas designated as **national natural heritage areas** contribute greatly to the preservation and development of biodiversity in Germany, too. This is formerly federally owned land that has been transferred to federal states, nature protection organisations or foundations free of charge for permanent nature conservation purposes. Around 156,000 hectares of land across Germany have been classified as national natural heritage areas since 2008. The individual federal states are responsible for designating traditional conservation areas.



# In the County of Oldenburg

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The County of Oldenburg is home to the following reserves and natural monuments:

- ▶ 26 **nature conservation areas** with a total area of around 3,257 ha
- ► 60 designated landscape conservation areas with a total area of around 22,666 ha
- ▶ 345 protected **natural monuments**, such as particularly impressive individual old trees, lines of trees, or tree-lined streets, boulders, small moors, heathland bonds, heath areas and sandy dry grasslands
- ▶ 14 Natura 2000 areas/special areas of conservation and bird sanctuaries

The Wildeshauser Geest nature park that is in part located in the County of Oldenburg, became a designated conservation area in 1984. It is 1,530 km² big, making it Lower Saxony's biggest nature park, and one of the biggest ones in all of Germany.



Shore area. Source: Tilla Schulte Ostermann

### **SDG 15 Projects and activities**

### Diverse geest and moor landscape

The County of Oldenburg and the surrounding region are home to some very precious natural habitats. These socalled biodiversity hotspots are characterised by enormous biodiversity and are vital to the conservation of species. The goal of the "Diverse geest and moor landscape" project being implemented in the project area that also includes the counties of Cloppenburg and Vechta, include renaturation of bodies of water and moors, grazing projects, and maintenance of heath and sand habitats.

A wide range of activities with the following goals are needed to achieve this goal:

- ► The water in the moors must be preserved
- ► Running bodies of water must be restored to a more natural condition and
- ► Heathlands must remain open

Creating as many structures as possible plays an important role here, to be able to offer habitats for a large number of species. This is pursued through cooperation with local groups and associations, and a large number of tours, lectures and campaign days are organised, too.

### Landscape structure plan

The landscape structure plan ⊕ is a central planning tool for the development and protection of natural areas in the County of Oldenburg. Its purpose is to analyse, assess and permanently protect the ecosystem including the plant and animal life, soil, water, climate and air, and the landscape. The plan defines measures for conserving biodiversity and promoting a sustainable use of the environment. It is also the basis for further planning instruments, such as land use plans development plans, ensuring a qualified consideration of matters related to nature and landscape conservation.



### Cut-out sheets with regional animal species

What are stripe-winged grasshoppers and moor frogs? Cut-out sheets of various levels of difficulty were developed as part of the "Diverse geest and moor landscape" project to teach children about these and other animals that live in the region. The cut-out sheets  $\bigcirc$  introduce animals that are particularly typical of the regional habitats, seeking to motivate children to watch out for them on their next walk.

Cut-out sheets of regional animals. Source: Wildeshauser Geest nature park.

# 2030 nature park plan

The 2030 nature park plan for the Wildeshauser Geest nature park was presented in 2022. This plan is intended as a quideline for joint further development towards an exemplary landscape for sustainable development in the decade ahead, and it defines the basis of strategic work in four areas of action:

- Nature conservation
- Sustainable tourism
- ► Education for sustainable development
- ► Regional development

The 2030 nature park plan was created with involvement of a large number of regional stakeholder groups. This participatory approach ensures that the nature park plan is supported not only by members but also by citizens, institutions and associations. The plan is to be understood as an ongoing process to which any new societal concerns (mobility transition, climate change, etc.) are added.



Information board about the nature park care day. Source: Wildeshauser Geest nature park.



Natural landscape. Source: Sabine Alberg

### **Landscape conservation measures**

The Wildeshauser Geest nature park coordinates landscape conservation campaigns with support from the lower-level nature protection authority of the County of Oldenburg. The first nature park care day took place in the Wildeshauser Geest in February 2023, on which work was carried out on a historic embankment hedge with expert instruction (trimming of plants and planting of typical shrubs).

Students from the Gut Spascher Sand nature park school also took part in two heathland maintenance campaigns in the nearby heath area "Spascher Heide". Planning provides for further landscape care days to be held in the nature park in the future.

Number of landscape maintenance campaigns with Nature Park Schools (2024)







Project logo. Source: Wildeshauser Geest nature park.

Share of nature and landscape conservation areas (2024)

3.6 %



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Climate-friendly garden. Source: Martin Bruns



Inspiration and information about natural garden design can be found in the "Gärten im Landkreis Oldenburg" ("Gardens in the County of Oldenburg") ⇒ brochure.

Cover of the brochure about natural garden design. Source: County of Oldenburg

Total area of the 26 nature conservation areas in the County of Oldenburg (2024)





### **Climate-friendly gardens**

The climate protection team for the County of Oldenburg and the University of Vechta initiated the "Climate-friendly gardens and balconies" competition in 2021 and 2022. ⊕ Garden owners from the county submitted a wide range of entries, presenting their climate and nature-friendly garden designs. The winning gardens had the following

- ► Wide variety of plants
- Natural designs throughout
- Dry walls, small ponds and "wild corners"
- Green roofs

characteristics:

- ► Vegetable gardens, raised beds, herb spirals and greenhouses
- Compost heaps, rainwater tanks and flowering lawns
- Small share of sealed surfaces

There was a garden competition in 2023, too, which was held in cooperation with five other counties, the City of Oldenburg and the gardening magazine of Nordwest Zeitung.

### InsektenSchutzAkademie

The InsektenSchutzAkademie ("Insect Protection Academy") ⊝ is a project by the regional environmental education centre (Regionales Umweltbildungszentrum Hollen e. V.) in Ganderkesee in the County of Oldenburg that enjoys nationwide attention. There is a 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> big display garden with education offerings for pupils, lecture series, a virtual academy with teaching and information materials showing, for example, how gardens can be designed to be insect friendly.



Logo of InsektenSchutzAkademie Source: Regionales Umweltbildungs-

of global land areas are protected

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million ha of healthy and productive land

were lost annually around the

world between 2015 and 2019

of countries consider biodiversity in their development strategies and national reporting systems

Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

### SDG 15 Outlook

The County of Oldenburg is characterised by its large number of conservation areas and the Wildeshauser Geest nature park is well-known even outside Lower Saxony. It is the biggest nature park of the federal state and among the biggest ones in Germany, too.

Conservation, development, maintenance and sensitisation of the ecosystems will remain central concerns in the County of Oldenburg, also in the years ahead. It is very important in this context to get local people across all age groups involved, for example through joint landscape care campaigns, activities and competitions. This also helps when it comes to highlighting interdependencies in complex ecological systems and making background information understandable.

One of the biggest challenges that need to be tackled over the next few years is to stop the loss of biodiversity and to restore the condition of damaged ecosystems. These are, after all, the basis of our livelihood and they can help to mitigate climate change and its consequences. Key elements in this context include the preservation and further development of existing conservation areas and promotion of biotope networks.





# SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

### **SDG 16** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 16 is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

However, conflicts and organised violent crime continue to increase around the world: The number of people displaced by violence reached an unprecedented level of 120 million in May 2024. The number of civilian casualties in armed conflicts rose by 72 percent in 2023.

Good governance and a violence-free and inclusive coexistence, as well as structures based on the rule of law are to be promoted against this background.



# Nationally

The following topic areas that have local links are particularly relevant for German municipalities:

- ► Ensuring **public safety and security**
- Promoting public involvement and encouraging social commitment
- Creating an efficient and transparent administration including sustainable finances



# In the County of Oldenburg

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The mission statement of the **County of Oldenburg**  $\bigcirc$  references some of the topics of SDG 16 at the municipal level. Here is an excerpt:

### We are service providers for all residents.

The County of Oldenburg thinks of itself as a forward-looking public service provider for its residents that focusses on the public interest. The County Administration consistently realises the targets it develops and any political specifications and decisions through orderly fiscal management. This is how politics and administration seek to ensure a sustainable future for the county in consideration of current societal developments.

### Our focus is on human beings.

We want to ensure that all human beings in the county can coexist in harmony. We are dedicated to supporting people, companies and institutions in their legitimate concerns and to finding constructive solutions in line with the applicable laws and our guidelines. We approach our various regulatory tasks and services in an objective, legally compliant, efficient and people-oriented manner. In doing so, we attach great importance to transparent communication, respectful interaction and reliability, both internally and externally.



### Financial and budget situation

The County of Oldenburg was able to consistently generate positive annual results in recent years, enabling the county to look ahead from a sound position. To be able to master all challenges, investments were made in sustainably equipped schools, high-quality roads and cycling paths and various other energy-efficient buildings (communal centre, women's shelter, fire brigade headquarters, etc.) in the past. The financial situation does, however, falter again and again, despite the good initial position. The 2024 budget → accounts for new net borrowings of around 20 million euros, and a deficit of up to 20 million euros is expected in the profit and loss budget, too.

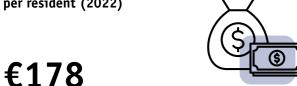
In order to adapt to this financial situation, the development must be steadily monitored and a supplementary budget may need to be determined. Necessary decisions related to the corresponding developments must be made to be able to produce strong financial figures once again. The required financial controlling/reporting activities are expanded.

Number of public political sessions of expert committees/the county parliament (2024)

28



Financial resources balance per resident (2022)



# County parliament information system

The County of Oldenburg has a publicly accessible county parliament information system → that enables citizens to take part in public meetings of the expert committees and in county parliament sessions. This promotes transparency, as well as providing a platform for active participation. Information about the different parliamentary groups and committees, a list of all members and useful resources, such as the minutes of sessions, are also available on the system.

# Citizen involvement in local public transport

A workshop  $\bigcirc$  on the issue of mobility in the County of Oldenburg was organised by the "Mobile Zeiten" traffic planning office in May 2023. Around 70 citizens took part in three rounds of discussions, in which opinions and requests concerning timetables, lines, networks and holistic mobility were gathered.

This was followed up by an online involvement campaign titled "Wegedetektiv" ("route investigator") and a presentation of the participants' results, based on which recommendations for action were prepared.

### Central results and requests determined

- More frequent bus services
- Extended service times for timetables
- Good direct and tangential links and links to town centres
- Flexibility without owning a car
- Recommendation for diverse links across the region



# Involvement in planning and approval processes

Citizen involvement is sought as part of the legally prescribed planning and approval proceedings. The County of Oldenburg attaches great importance to making sure that the information is provided accessibly and comprehensively. Additional information events on individual topics are organised for large-scale endeavours, such as the Regional Development Programme.

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# Open-ended action plan for integration (and updates)

The goals of the integration concept ⊕ are to pool integration tasks and to establish and stabilise networking structures with local stakeholders that are determined based on the strategic direction.

Central areas of action include:

- ► Access to language and education
- Access to advice and support services
- Encouraging social participation through integration projects
- Access to language support and
- Networking and a regional approach to municipal integration activities

Selected areas and target groups are considered in a differentiated manner in the updates, and integration work is put into more concrete terms.

#### Initial orientation class - emergency shelter in Hude

People have many small and big questions: what can I do where, which documents do I need when, and how does my phone work here? How do I open a bank account and how can I access medical care, schools and childcare?

The participants of the initial orientation class learn about the tasks of the emergency shelter, the municipality or town, the county, the job centre and other facilities, to help them navigate everyday life in Germany.





"Tanzrausch" poster, Source: County of Oldenburg

Information leaflet. Source: County of Oldenburg

### **Tanzrausch**

The County of Oldenburg organises an annual party for adolescents aged between 12 and 17, in cooperation with its municipalities. The event took place for the 16th time in 2024. The teenagers are picked up from selected points in their municipalities and returned home safely after they have enjoyed an evening of clubbing, great music and a range of activities. The special characteristic of the event is that it is completely alcohol and nicotine-free, aiming to show that no intoxicants are needed for a great party.

# Wildeshausen bridge project

The Wildeshausen bridge project ⊕ was initiated in 1991, and has been dedicated to looking after male and female juvenile offenders from the County of Oldenburg ever since. There are also practical activities, such as working in a bicycle workshop. There are also practical activities, such as working in a bicycle workshop.

# **Empowering girls**

A class titled "Mädchen Träume – Mädchen stärken" ("girls' dreams - empowering girls") is addressed at girls with and without disabilities, who would like to become more confident and assertive. They also practice to stand up for themselves. These important skills are taught to girls aged between 8 and 10 with the help of horses. Leading the horse they have to make themselves heard and listen to their instincts to decide what level of contact they are comfortable with. The girls also learn "Wen Do" self-defence techniques, and are encouraged to think about their own values and boundaries through role play.

Tax income per resident (2022)

**€1,227.96** 





117

Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

### SDG 16 Outlook

In line with its mission statement, the County of Oldenburg thinks of itself as a service provider for all resi**dents** and it strives to provide transparency and publicly available information to get citizens involved in its measures, projects and development. The reason for this is that participation of all remains very relevant to the everyday administration activities of the County of Oldenburg. This goal is realised by means of a wide range of projects, such as the county parliament information system, participation formats, support for refugees, and activities for young people. Continuation, further development and a possible expansion of these is an ongoing task that corresponds to our mission statement "Our focus is on human beings".

The budget of the County of Oldenburg is a central control instrument, as is the case for all municipalities in Germany. In addition to the budget being drawn up once a year, relevant issues are addressed throughout the year to determine the development of the financial situation, targets and key figures in consideration of the measures. This is the basis for further necessary decisions, such as changes to measures or updating of the budget plans.



# **SDG 17 – Partnerships** for the goals

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

### **SDG 17** Introduction and relevance



# **Globally**

SDG 17 is to reinforce **global partnerships** and to promote **cooperation** for sustainable development. To allow for the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals to be reached, it is essential that politics, the business world, academia and civil society cooperate across all levels, from the local through to the global level.



# Nationally

For Germany SDG 17 is about promoting and strengthening international cooperation and partnerships within the EU, but also around the world. Alongside financial support and transfer of know-how, Germany also plays a key role in global organisations and initiatives for improving access to technology and education. Central goals include the establishment of strong, transparent institutions and promotion of a fair trade system.





# In the County of Oldenburg

The County of Oldenburg strives to increasingly focus on regional and local partnerships and to continue its European partnership activities. Cooperation with neighbouring counties, towns and municipalities, as well as local businesses and organisations helps to address shared challenges more efficiency, such as climate protection, mobility and social justice. Projects can be realised more quickly and in a more targeted manner, if ideas, resources and knowledge are shared. **Networking** also improves the county's resilience and contributes to local implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



### **SDG 17** Projects and activities

The County of Oldenburg is actively involved in a large number of associations, institution and organisations, where it is usually represented by its administration.

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### Voluntary memberships include

- ► Kommunaler Arbeitgeberverband Niedersachsen ("Municipal Employers' Association for Lower Saxony")
- ► Lower Saxony's County Association ("Niedersächsischer Landkreistag") ⊖
- Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald ("German Forest Protection Association")

### The county is part of the following mandatory associations, for example:

- Bezirksverband Oldenburg ("Oldenburg County Association")  $\supseteq$
- ▶ Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband ("Water Board for the Oldenburg and East Frisia Region")

The county is involved in various organisations, such as the business development agency.

Further memberships include:

- Netzwerk Nationale Naturlandschaften ("National Natural Landscape Network")
- Stiftung Museumsdorf Cloppenburg ("Cloppenburg Museum Village Foundation")
- Regionales Umweltbildungszentrum ("Regional Environmental Education Centre")

The County of Oldenburg's voluntary memberships in associations and organisations (2024)







Logo of Metropolregion Nordwest. Sourc:e Metropolregion Nordwest.



Logo of Oldenburger Land. Source: Oldenburger Land.

Legally prescribed memberships of the County of Oldenburg (2024)





# **Metropolitan Region Northwest** Germany

The County of Oldenburg is part of the Metropolitan Region Northwest Germany  $\odot$  that stands, among other aspects, for regional cooperation and cooperation across state borders, and that actively promotes regional initiatives for improving visibility, competitiveness and quality of life.

The metropolitan region focusses on the following aspects:

- Role as enabler and interface
- ► Lobbying work
- Acquisition of funding
- Representation and profiling of the region at the regional, national and international level

### **Oldenburger Land**

that was established in 1993, which the County of Oldenburg belongs to. A central priority of this cooperation is to address municipal development issues in the areas of business, transport, education, science, the environment and culture. Oldenburger Land also fulfils a pooling function and represents shared positions externally, especially towards authorities at the state and national level. There is a range of work groups, such as the business work group, that offer active support for regional businesses, as well as promoting the business location.

### Kommunalverbund Niedersachsen/ Bremen e. V.

The goal of the association of municipalities Kommunalverbund Niedersachsen/Bremen e. V. ⊝ Is to strengthen the region and enable structural improvements. It strives to

- counteract undesirable regional planning developments,
- promote cultural matters, and
- maintain or improve the environmental situation.

In order to achieve this, the association of municipalities makes the planning-related interests of its members visible, drafts shared goals, acts as a mediator in case of any clashes of interest, and it also contributes solutions in political deliberations. The County of Oldenburg is also actively involved in the association of municipalities.



Logo of Kommunalverbund Niedersachsen Bremen e. V.



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# Municipal partnership with Poland

A partnership between the County of Oldenburg and the goal of the partnership is to promote friendship and cooperation between the two counties and peaceful development in Europe. Regular meetings and exchanges have been taking place for over 50 years, especially in the areas of youth work, fire fighting and education.

The youth exchange with joint camping trips and internships for pupils is particularly noteworthy. The partnership is also deepened through annual delegation visits and various projects, such as history workshops and cultural events.



Logo of the Powiat Nowomiejski county Source: Powiat Nowomiejski.

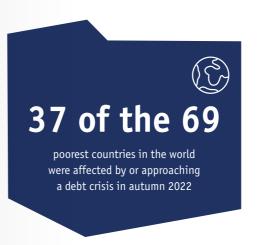
# **International youth exchange**

The County of Oldenburg cooperates with the Blockhaus Ahlhorn youth hostel ⊕ that organises and realises reqular exchanges with Ukrainian and Polish national and nature parks. These promote intercultural exchange and are an opportunity for teenagers to get to know the culture and traditions of the respective other countries.

Shareholdings in stock corporations (2024)







Source: © Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

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### SDG 17 Outlook

Reinforcing regional and international partnerships is becoming increasingly important for reaching the targets related to SDG 17. This is why the County of Oldenburg plans to expand existing **cooperations** and to attach greater importance to them. Cooperation with neighbouring counties, towns and municipalities in particular is to be intensified to be able to realise projects more effectively. To this end, existing **networks** in the areas of education, business and civil society are to be enhanced further. The promotion of regional economic cycles is going to play a central role in this context. In addition, international cooperation, such as with the Polish county Nowomiejski, will be playing a key role in the context of promoting international exchange and joint projects. The county aims to more intensively integrate issues of the 2030 Agenda into existing partnerships and networks.

Implementation of SDG 17 is a cross-sectional task, and this is why all stakeholders - from civil society via the private sector through to the staff of county and municipal administrative bodies – are required to work on reaching the goals together, to be able to achieve visible success. The funding instrument "Coordinating municipal development policy" allows municipalities to apply for funding for a personnel position for tasks in the area of municipal development policy. The County of Oldenburg is going to look into the option to submit such an application.

# 4 Summary and outlook

Cooperation structures both within the administration and externally. The county will address the issue of practical implementation in the context of administration, also in the shape of an organisational analysis, and it will devise adequate solution approaches that are suitable for addressing future challenges. The internal steering committee will continue its activities, and the issues of sustainability and climate protection will be embedded in the existing mission statement of the County of Oldenburg that will be updated accordingly.

The county strives to implement a holistic **sustainability strategy**.

Our focus in the County of Oldenburg is on sustainable, future-oriented development. Cooperation with the county's municipalities and promotion of environmentally, economically and socially sustainable activities and projects are central to these efforts.

A key component of our endeavours is to further develop digital infrastructure that plays a vital role with regard to our county's readiness for the future. By providing fibre-optic connections across the county we are creating the basis for modern public services. At the same time, we are actively supporting small and medium-sized en**terprises** in the county in mastering the challenges of an increasingly digitised business world.

The County of Oldenburg will be focussing on **inclusion** and integration also in the future. We understand diversity as an asset that we use to ensure that all human beings can participate in societal life on equal footing. To this end, we fight all forms of discrimination. We are creating structures that include all humans, regardless of their personal background or origin.

We have set ourselves clear targets in the areas of **hous**ing and mobility, too: we rely on eco-friendly construction methods and promote the development of affordable, barrier-free housing. At the same time, we encourage inter-modal mobility concepts aiming to reduce the traffic impact and to allow for a flexible use of various means of transportation. This does not only help to improve the quality of life of residents, but it also contributes to climate protection.

**Climate protection** is and will continue to be a central task that is a clear thread running through all areas of our work. We are consistently implementing our integrated climate protection concept in our endeavour to reach greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045. A climate protection concept for our administration and a comprehensive concept for climate adaptation are currently being drawn up.

We plan to further increase our commitment to local agriculture, striving to promote organic farming and support farmers in marketing their produce regionally.

In addition, we attach great importance to an environmentally sound use of land and forward-thinking solid waste management. Our efforts aim to minimise pollution levels in bodies of water and to conserve the natural environment. The protection of bodies of water and preservation of our natural landscapes play a central role here.

Our ultimate goal is to safeguard the natural basis of life for future generations. Conservation of a species-rich cultivated landscape in the county is the central objective of our sustainable landscape development. We are dedicated to **nature conservation** and an expansion of **gentle** tourism, and we closely coordinate all our efforts with the municipalities, nature conservation organisations and local stakeholders.

We make a point of staying in close touch with citizens across all of these areas. We rely on transparent people-oriented administration processes and think of ourselves as a learning organisation that continuously strives to improve its efficiency and sustainability. At the same time, we also promote a responsible budget policy that ensures financial stability, and we create scope for action for mastering future challenges.

The County of Oldenburg is dedicated to sustainable action - today, tomorrow and for future generations.





# 5 Appendix

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# **Summary of the 169 SDG targets**

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(Source of the indicators: Bertelsmann Foundation, www.sdg-portal.de)

### SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- 1.1 Eradicate extreme poverty
- 1.2 Reduce poverty rate
- 1.3 Implement social protection systems and measures, achieve substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable
- 1.4 Equal rights to economic and other resources (access to basic services)
- 1.5 Build the resilience of the poor (concerning economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters)
- 1.a Ensure mobilisation of resources for developing countries to implement programmes and policies to end poverty
- 1.b Create policy frameworks for eradicating poverty at the national, regional and international levels

### SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

- 2.1 End hunger, ensure access to food
- 2.2 End all forms of malnutrition
- 2.3 Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers
- 2.4 Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices
- 2.5 Maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals (and their related wild species)
- 2.a Increase investment in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries
- 2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets
- 2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and facilitate access to market information



**Appendix** 

### SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

- Reduce the maternal mortality ratio 3.1
- 3.2 Reduce deaths of newborns and children
- Combat communicable diseases 3.3
- Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health and 3.4 well-being
- Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse 3.5
- Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health-care services (family planning, information and 3.7
- Achieve universal health coverage / access to health-care services and access to necessary 3.8 medicines / vaccines for all
- Reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and pollution of 3.9
- Strengthen the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control 3.a
- Support the research and development of and the access to vaccines and medicines (developing 3.b
- Increase health financing / development and training of the health workforce in developing countries
- Strengthen the capacity for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

### SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- Ensure that all girls and boys complete free quality education 4.1
- Ensure access to quality early childhood education and care
- Ensure access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education 4.3
- Ensure sufficient qualifications for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship 4.4
- Ensure equal opportunities and equal access to all levels of education and vocational training 4.5
- 4.6 Optimise the literacy rate
- Improve the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development (ESD) 4.7
- Build and upgrade safe, inclusive and effective (child, disability and gender sensitive) education facilities
- Expand the number of scholarships available to developing countries 4.b
- Increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries

### SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- End discrimination against women and girls 5.1
- 5.2 Eliminate violence against women and girls
- Eliminate child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation 5.3
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work (promotion of shared responsibility within 5.4 the household and the family)
- Ensure women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-5.5
- Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights 5.6
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic and other resources 5.a
- 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology to promote the empowerment of women
- Strengthen sound policies / legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women

### SDG 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- 6.1 Achieve access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- 6.2 Achieve access to adequate sanitation and hygiene for all
- Improve water quality 6.3
- Increase water-use efficiency, reduce water scarcity 6.4
- Implement integrated water resources management 6.5
- 6.6 Protect and restore water-related ecosystems (mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and
- Expand international cooperation and support to developing countries in water and sanitation-6.a related activities
- Strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation 6.b management

### SDG 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

- Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services 7.1
- Increase the share of renewable energy 7.2
- Improve energy efficiency 7.3
- Enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology 7.a
- Expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying sustainable energy services for all 7.b in developing countries

# SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth (GDP)
- 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation
- 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support decent job creation, entrepreneurship and innovation (small enterprises)
- 8.4 Improve resource efficiency in consumption and production, endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation
- 8.5 Achieve full employment and decent work for all (women, men, persons with disabilities), and equal pay for work of equal value
- 8.6 Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- 8.7 Take measures to eradicate forced labour, child labour, slavery and human trafficking
- 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments
- 8.9 Devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism
- 8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to promote access to banking, insurance and financial services
- 8.a Increase trade support for developing countries
- 8.b Develop and operationalise a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact

# SDG 9 - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

- 9.1 Develop sustainable and resilient infrastructure to support economic development and human well-being
- 9.2 Promote sustainable industrialisation and significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product
- 9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises to financial services
- 9.4 Upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable
- 9.5 Enhance scientific research and upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors
- 9.a Facilitate sustainable infrastructure development in developing countries
- 9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries
- 9.c Increase access to information and communications technology and provide access to the Internet

### **SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries**

- 10.1 Achieve income growth for the poorest part of the population
- 10.2 Empower all human beings and promote inclusion
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities
- 10.4 Adopt policies that promote equality (wage policy, social protection)
- 10.5 Improved regulation of global financial markets and institutions
- 10.6 Ensure enhanced representation for developing countries in decision-making in global economic and financial institutions
- 10.7 Facilitate orderly and safe migration and mobility of people, implement well-managed migration policies
- 10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries (in accordance with the WHO)
- 10.b Encourage development assistance and financial flows to developing countries
- 10.c Reduce transaction costs of migrant remittances

### SDG 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- 11.1 Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services
- 11.2 Provide access to sustainable transport systems for all, improve road safety
- 11.3 Enhance sustainable urbanisation, implement participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management
- 11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
- 11.5 Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters
- 11.6 Reduce the environmental impact of cities (air quality, waste)
- 11.7 Provide access to green and public spaces for all
- 11.a Support economic, social and environmental links between urban and rural areas by strengthening higher-level development planning
- 11.b Develop integrated policies and plans for sustainable urban development (inclusion, resource efficiency, climate protection, climate adaptation) and holistic disaster risk management
- 11.c Support developing countries in building sustainable and resilient buildings

### **SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

- 12.1 Initiate measures to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns
- 12.2 Achieve sustainable management and use of natural resources
- Halve food waste and reduce food losses 12.3
- Ensure environmentally sound disposal of waste and chemicals
- Reduce waste generation
- Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and sustainability reporting 12.6
- Promote sustainable public procurement practices 12.7
- Ensure that all people are informed about and aware of sustainable development issues 12.8
- Support developing countries to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and
- Develop and implement tools to monitor the impact of sustainable tourism
- Reduce fossil-fuel subsidies in consideration of specific needs of developing countries

### SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change
- 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies
- 13.3 Improve education and institutional capacity for the area of climate protection and adaptation to climate impacts
- Provide financial support for climate action in developing countries 13a.
- Raise planning and management capacity in the area of climate protection for developing countries

### SDG 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

- 14.1 Reduce marine pollution
- Sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems
- Minimise and address the impacts of ocean acidification 14.3
- Implement sustainable fishing practices
- Contribute to the conservation of coastal and marine areas 14.5
- End subsidies contributing to overfishing and illegal fishing
- 14.7 Increase the economic benefits from sustainable use of marine resources for developing countries
- 14.a Increase scientific knowledge to improve the health of oceans and enhance biodiversity
- Ensure access to marine resources and markets for small-scale fishers
- Improve conservation and a sustainable use of oceans and their resources

### SDG 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

- 15.1 Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems
- Promote sustainable management of all types of forests
- Combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil 15.3
- Ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems
- Reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity 15.5
- Promote fair sharing and adequate access to genetic resources
- 15.7 End poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna
- Prevent the introduction of invasive alien species 15.8
- Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into local planning and policies 15.9
- Increase financial resources to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems
- Increase financial resources for sustainable forest management and provide corresponding 15.b incentives to developing countries
- 15.c Combat poaching and trafficking of protected species

### SDG 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

- 16.1 Reduce violence and related death rates
- End violence against children 16.2
- 16.3 Ensure equal access to justice
- Combat organised crime and illicit financial and arms flows 16.4
- Reduce corruption 16.5
- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions 16.6
- Ensure participatory decision-making at all levels 16.7
- Strengthen the participation of developing countries in institutions of global governance 16.8
- Provide legal identity for all 16.9
- Ensure access to information and protect fundamental freedoms
- International cooperation: prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime 16.a
- Enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies 16.b

### SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for **Sustainable Development**

### Financing

- 17.1 Mobilise domestic resources to improve revenue collection in developing countries
- 17.2 Implement development assistance commitments
- Mobilise additional financial resources for development assistance
- Assist developing countries in attaining debt sustainability
- Implement investment promotion regimes for developing countries

- Enhance knowledge-transfer cooperation (North-South) in the areas of science, technology and 17.6
- Promote development, transfer and dissemination of sustainable technologies in developing 17.7
- 17.8 Systematise science/technology/innovation cooperation, introduce a global technology promotion mechanism

### **Capacity development**

Enhance international support for capacity-building in developing countries

### Trade

- 17.10 Promote an open, equitable and rules-based global trading system
- 17.11 Increase the exports of developing countries
- 17.12 Implement duty-free and quota-free market access for developing countries

### Systemic issues

- 17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability
- 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.15 Respect national leadership to implement policies to promote sustainability
- 17.16 Enhance the global (multi-stakeholder) partnership for sustainable development
- 17.17 Encourage public, public-private and civil society partnerships
- 17.18 Enhance capacity-building to increase the availability of data in developing countries
- 17.19 Develop measurements of progress on sustainable development, support statistical capacitybuilding in developing countries

# **SDG** indicators for the County of Oldenburg

The indicators from the Bertelsmann Foundation presented here can be found on the SDG portal. \*) The development trend is based on the time span of 2014 to 2022.

Indicator	Definition	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Develop- ment trend*
SDG 1 – No poverty		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
SGB II / SGB XII rate (%)	Proportion of people eligible for benefits according to Book II or Book XII of the German Social Code in the total population (under 65 years)	7.21	6.57	6.03	5.89	5.50	6.06	<b>↑</b>
Poverty – child poverty (%)	Proportion of the population under 15 years of age that receives social benefits according to Book II of the German Social Code – either themselves or indirectly through their household.	11.39	10.72	9.62	8.85	7.99	9.34	<b>↑</b>
Poverty – youth poverty (%)	Proportion of young people between 15 and 17 that receive benefits according to Book II of the German Social Code – either themselves or indirectly through their household.	8.92	8.06	7.71	7.40	7.17	8.73	<b>\</b>
Poverty – elderly poverty (%)	Proportion of the population above 65 years of age that receives basic income support according to Book XII of the German Social Code.	2.53	2.53	2.41	2.58	2.70	2.84	<b>\</b>
Homelessness	Proportion of the population that is considered homeless.						0.079	
SDG 2 – Zero hunger		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Nitrogen surplus in agriculture (kg / ha in utilised agricultural area)	The nitrogen surplus is x kg per hectare of utilised agricultural land.	123.97	138.84	112.85	110.01	87.43		<b>↑</b>
SDG 3 – Good health and we	ll-being	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Premature mortality – women (number of deaths per 1,000 inhabitants)	x women out of 1,000 died prematurely under the age of 70.	0.83	0.81	0.76	0.89	0.99	0.92	<b>\</b>
Premature mortality – men (number of deaths per 1,000 inhabitants)	x men out of 1,000 died prematurely under the age of 70.	1.47	1.60	1.56	1.64	1.67	1.52	<b>\</b>
Basic supply close to home – general practitioner (metres)	The average linear distance per inhabitant to the nearest general practitioner is x metres.					1,595.00		
Basic supply close to home – pharmacy (metres)	The average linear distance per inhabitant to the nearest pharmacy is x metres.					1,956.00		
Staff in nursing homes (full-time equivalent in nursing homes per 1,000 people requiring full or partial inpatient care)	x persons (full-time positions) are working in nursing homes per 1,000 people requiring full or partial inpatient care.	809.70	898.43	893.37	893.37	889.12	889.12	<b></b>
Staff in nursing services (staffing ratio as full-time equivalent)	x persons (full-time positions) are working for outpatient nurs- ing service providers per person requiring care.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	<b>\</b>
Nursing home places (number of available inpatient places in nursing homes per 1,000 inhabitants aged 65 and over)	x inpatient places are available in nursing homes per 1,000 inhabitants over the aged 65 and over.	68.47	68.47	68.41	68.41	67.81	67.81	<u></u>

Definition

Indicator

Development trend\*

SDG 3 – Good health and wel	l-being	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Air pollution (μg / m³)	The concentration of fine dust (PM10) in the air is $x \mu g / m^3$ .	15.82	15.82	13.91	12.68	13.12		<b>↑</b>
SDG 4 – Quality education		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Basic supply close to home – primary school (metres)	The average linear distance per inhabitant to the nearest primary school is x metres.		1,493.00			1,493.00		$\rightarrow$
School drop-out rate (%)	Proportion of school leavers without a lower secondary school leaving certificate.	4.63	3.26	3.00	4.93	3.08	3.22	<b>V</b>
Child care – under 3s (%)	The share of children under the age of 3 cared for in day-care facilities.	21.54	23.90	24.30	23.36	22.98	24.97	1
Inclusive child day-care facilities (%)	Proportion of inclusive child day- care facilities.	26.92	28.24	28.09	31.52	28.42	27.72	<b>\</b>
SDG 5 – Gender equality		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Ratio of employment rates of women and men (%)	The ratio of employment rate of women to employment rate of men is x%.	87.36	87.41	88.18	89.16	89.23	89.29	<b>↑</b>
Ratio of median income of women and men (%)	The median income of female employees is x% of the median income of male employees.	81.47	83.27	83.16	83.73	81.66		1
Proportion of women in the city council, municipal council or county council (%)	Proportion of seats in the city council, municipal council or county council held by women.	33.33		32.00				个
SDG 6 – Clean water and sani	itation	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Wastewater treatment (%)	Proportion of wastewater treated by denitrification and phosphorus elimination.	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	$\rightarrow$
SDG 7 – Affordable and clear	n energy	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Electricity from renewable sources (kW per inhabitant)	Renewable energy sources with a net nominal capacity of a total of x kilowatt hours were installed.			3.81	3.99	4.03		<b>↑</b>
Charging point infrastructure (charging points per 1,000 inhabitants)	There are x public normal and fast charging points with at least 3.7 kW per inhabitant.		0.37	0.40	0.47	0.51	0.63	1
SDG 8 – Decent work and eco	nomic growth	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Gross domestic product (€ per inhabitant)	The gross domestic product per inhabitant is x euros.	23,883.00	24,376.00	22,936.00	25,287.00	27,479.00		1
Long-term unemployment rate (%)	Proportion the labour force that has been unemployed for over 1 year.	1.37	1.26	1.08	1.12	1.36	1.15	1
Employment rate – 15 to 64-year olds (%)	The proportion of 15 to 64-year-olds in employment subject to social insurance in relation to all 15 to 64-year-olds is x%.	62.14	62.35	65.35	65.88	67.21	67.13	1
Employment rate – 55 to 64-year olds (%)	The proportion of 55 to 64-year-olds in employment subject to social insurance in relation to all 55 to 64-year-olds is x%.	51.28	49.16	55.47	57.00	58.46	59.78	1
Employed and receiving benefits (%)	Proportion of employed people receiving supplementary unemployment benefit II (Arbeitslosengeld II).	29.04	30.04	30.17	26.12	27.58	21.94	<b>↑</b>

2017

2019

2018

2021

2020

2022

Indicator	Definition	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Develop- ment trend*
SDG 9 – Industry, innovation	and infrastructure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Start-ups (Number of newly established businesses per 1,000 inhabitants)	x new commercial enterprises were established per 1,000 inhabitants.	6.80	6.01	8.06	6.32	6.82	6.47	<b>\</b>
Broadband supply – private households (%)	The proportion of households that have access to a bandwidth of at least 50 Mbit/s is x%.	58.10			89.20	89.55	88.95	<b>↑</b>
Highly qualified individuals in the workplace (%)	x% of employees subject to social security contributions have an academic vocational qualification.	7.38	7.53	7.75	7.94	7.84	8.22	<b>↑</b>
SDG 10 – Reduced inequaliti	es	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Employment rate – foreigners (%)	The ratio of the employment rate of foreigners to the total employment rate is x%.	96.29	93.23	104.36	102.11	107.03	97.84	<b>↑</b>
School drop-out rate – foreigners (%)	The ratio of the school drop-out rate of foreigners to the school drop-out rate in the total population is x%.	938.10	734.40	467.30		422.14	294.17	<b>↑</b>
Naturalisations (%)	Proportion of the foreign population that was granted German citizenship.	1.25	0.99	1.57	0.86	1.36	1.85	<b>\</b>
SDG 11 – Sustainable cities	and communities	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Living space (m² per inhabitant)	x m² of living space are available per person on average.	49.90	50.35	50.56	50.84	51.15	50.87	<b>\</b>
Basic supply close to home – supermarket (metres)	The average linear distance per inhabitant to the nearest supermarket or discount food store is x metres.					1,495.00		
Car density (cars per 1,000 inhabitants)	The car density is x passenger cars per 1,000 inhabitants.	611.96	620.64	627.32	634.77	642.45	640.95	<b>\</b>
Cars with electric motors (%)	The proportion of registered cars with electric motors among the total number of registered cars is x%.				0.33	0.89	2.01	<b>↑</b>
Traffic casualties (casualties per 1,000 residents)	x persons per 1,000 inhabitants were injured or killed in traffic accidents.	5.33	5.03	4.90	4.46	4.04	4.32	<b>↑</b>
Land use (%)	The proportion of settlement and transport area in relation to total area is x%.	14.64	14.67	14.71	14.74	14.82	14.85	<b>\</b>
New land use (%)	The change in settlement and transport area compared to the previous year is x%.	-0.052	0.034	0.039	0.033	0.075	0.033	$\rightarrow$
Land use intensity (m² per inhabitant)	x square metres of settlement and transport area are used per inhabitant in the municipality.	1,199.80	1,200.50	1,196.80	1,194.20	1,194.60	1,181.00	$\rightarrow$
Local recreation areas (m² per inhabitant)	There are x m² of recreation area per inhabitant.	94.98	101.04	101.23	101.93	101.90	102.45	<b>↑</b>
Completed residential buildings with renewable heating energy (%)	The proportion of completed residential buildings with renewable heating energy from the total of all completed residential buildings is x%.	20.22	37.46	21.41	13.81	28.61	46.47	<b></b>

Indicator	Definition	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Develop- ment trend*
SDG 12 – Sustainable consu	mption and production	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Fairtrade Schools (%)	The proportion of the municipality's schools designated as Fairtrade Schools is x%.			4.17	4.26	4.26	4.26	<b>↑</b>
Drinking water consumption – private households (litres per inhabitant per day)	x litres of water were consumed per inhabitant per day on average.	109.13	108.94	120.73	119.87	119.64		$\rightarrow$
Amount of waste (t per inhabitant)	x tonnes of household waste were disposed of per inhabitant.	0.51	0.49	0.51	0.51	0.53	0.47	$\rightarrow$
SDG 13 – Climate action		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Settlement density in floodplain area (%)	Proportion of built-up settlement and traffic areas in the officially designated floodplain in relation to the area of the designated floodplain in the territorial unit.	1.10	1.20	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	<b>\</b>
Greenhouse gas savings through climate protection projects (t per inhabitant)	x tonnes of (potential) green- house gas emissions could be avoided per inhabitant thanks to climate protection projects in the municipalities.	0.047	0.053	0.062				<b>↑</b>
SDG 15 – Life on land		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Nature conservation areas (%)	The proportion of Natura 2000 areas, nature conservation areas and national parks in relation to the total area of the municipality is x%.	3.50	3.50	3.60			3.60	$\rightarrow$
Landscape quality (hemeroby rate)	A hemeroby rate of x was deter- mined for the total of all human interventions in the natural balance in the municipality.		4.47					
Undissected open space areas (%)	Proportion of undissected open space areas which are not dissected by routes of the interurban transport network.				2.80			
SDG 16 – Peace, justice and	strong institutions	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Crimes (crimes per 1,000 inhabitants)	x crimes per 1,000 inhabitants were recorded by the police.	49.33	46.25	42.43	44.19	40.91	43.26	<b>↑</b>
Financial resources balance (€ per inhabitant)	The municipality completed its tasks with a budget surplus/deficit of x euros per inhabitant.	148.00	101.00	77.00	108.00	101.00	178.00	<b>↑</b>
Tax revenue (€ per inhabitant)	The average tax revenue of a municipality in the past 4 years is x euros per resident.	1,013.20	1,069.40	1,105.30	1,127.00	1,181.60	1,228.00	<b>↑</b>
Liquidity loans (€ per inhabitant)	The municipality's core budget includes x euros worth of liquidity loans per inhabitant.	6.00	2.00	0.00	23.00	15.00	0.00	<b></b>

