



Putting the Territorial Agenda 2030 into practice

Pilot Action Results, Stocktaking and Outlook on further Implementation

Documentation of the final conference
06 June 2023



Summary // On 6 June 2023, the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) jointly organised the conference “Putting the Territorial Agenda 2030 into practice”. 200 people from various European countries attended the conference, including representatives of the pilot actions and government institutions as well as experts from science, administration and politics. Two and a half years after the adoption of the TA2030, the pilot actions with German participation presented their results. The conference focused on the pilot action “A future for lagging regions”, the participating regions presented their results with testing innovative measures to secure services of general interest in rural peripheral areas. It became evident that even low-threshold measures to activate local actors and networking initiatives can pay an important contribution to securing services of general interest. Together with representatives of municipalities, regions, Member States and EU institutions, an interim assessment was made and an outlook on the further implementation and evaluation of pilot actions was given. Overall, the pilot actions were seen as a successful first step towards the practical implementation of the TA2030 on the ground and the partners and stakeholders involved were in favour of a continuation. In this context, Germany announced preparations for the launch of a new pilot action on regional circular economy in rural areas.

The TA2030 is a key policy framework agreement of the European states on the guiding objectives for spatial planning in Europe. In this context, the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) together with the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) implemented the pilot project "A Future for Lagging Regions", which was dedicated to securing services of general interest in rural peripheral areas. In parallel, further pilot actions were implemented under the leadership of Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Norway and Switzerland. The pilot actions had different thematic focuses. These ranged from the development of common spatial models and the optimisation of methods for territorial impact assessment of sectoral policies to the importance of small and medium-sized towns for spatial development and climate adaptation of Alpine towns.

The potentials of rural areas

The conference was initiated by Rolf Bösing, state secretary of the German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB), who underlined the importance of the TA2030 for guiding European territorial development and strengthening the territorial dimension in all sectoral policies. Working with regions and across sectors is complex but eventually leads to better results. For Germany, the pilot project was fruitful in terms of stimulating cooperation with regional and local partners and learning from other regions in the transnational context regarding rural development and public services. Sverker Lindblad from the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure, Sweden, added to this by pointing out how the cross-cutting approach of the pilot projects across territorial borders, sectors and levels of governance helped to finally implement the TA2030. By providing impulses for governance and practice, the pilot actions achieved to make the goals of the TA2030 more tangible, as Sina Redlich from the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) described. Furthermore, she stressed that it's necessary to move away from a narrative of rural areas as lagging regions. Rather, we should recognise the diversity and attractiveness of rural regions, where residents often are very pro-active in initiating change.

Peter Jakubowski from the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) put the results of the pilot action in the context of the resilience discussion. This applies not only to cities, but also to rural areas. Making rural areas resilient to crises means making them resistant to shocks and chronic

stress. Rural areas must be adaptable and capable of change, which also places new demands on spatial development. Holistic resilience strategies must therefore identify and combine fundamental goals, fields of action and concrete measures to strengthen municipal resilience. MEP Niklas Nienäß (Greens/EFA) stressed that ensuring cohesion between regions is an ongoing mission of the EU. Cohesion policy must therefore continue to focus on the differences in development between urban and rural areas. The potential of rural areas must be activated through participatory processes in order to make use of local knowledge. Moreover, supporting rural areas to become resilient is crucial for the success of cohesion policy.

Pilot Actions: Lessons learned & recommendations

The first part of the conference focused on the presentations of the pilot action "A future for lagging regions". The six partner regions of the pilot action gave brief inputs on how the results achieved so far could support development policies on the ground. In addition to concrete projects in the field of strategic application of digital tools and the improvement of local supply and health services, the initiatives and measures of the partner regions also included new structural adaptations on the administrative level, alternative allocation of responsibilities as well as interconnecting and activating measures of the local actors.

Stephan Meyer, district administrator of Görlitz, Germany, talked about the establishment of a new 'competence centre' in the district office of Görlitz. This interdisciplinary and inter-agency contact point in the district office intends to offer local initiatives in the municipalities rapid support in securing services of general interest, but also to have a mediating and networking effect. Thanks to this the introduction of a dial-a-bus system was successfully supported.

An example of activating processes on the ground was presented by Clémentine Laurent from the French region of Grand Est. The region promotes the formation of a network of "third places", i.e. spaces where people can come together to develop and initiate economic, cultural or social projects that strengthen the sense of community among citizens in rural areas. In the Grand Est region, these are mainly new workspaces that have now been established in many small towns in the region.

The Walgau region in Austria focused on the potentials of inter-municipal cooperation. Eva-Maria Hochhauser-Gams, Managing Director of "Regio Im Walgau" presented a cooperation plan developed by 14 "Regio municipalities". The cooperation plan is more than just a strategy. It is substantiated by concrete projects and describes which municipalities cooperate on which topics and needs. This is very relevant, for example, in regard to the implementation of digital solutions for public services. Now, every municipality is involved in at least 30 different cooperations. Ms Hochhauser-Gams emphasised that building a foundation of trust with local actors, residents and municipalities is crucial for successful cooperation strategies.

Robert Mandtke from the Rostock planning region, Germany, talked in his presentation about the experience of employing digital tools for the model municipality of Krakow am See. By making use of special communication apps and digital information media the goal was to strengthen the relationships between residents, administrations, associations, businesses, and service providers and to promote exchange across municipalities. Although the pilot project was well received, Robert Mandtke emphasised that it could be beneficial to work more closely with the regional district administration in the future. In this context, regional planning on the state and municipal level forms an important interface to promote the coming together of people and the exchange of experiences, especially through instruments of informal planning.

Carmen Carvalho and Joaquim Fialho from the Commission for Regional Coordination and Development (CCDR) in Alentejo, Portugal, shared how they have made it their strategic mission to advance the digital agenda in rural areas. Maintaining a territorially comprehensive educational system by ensuring high mobility and digital knowledge of pupils and teachers is important for giving the region a future perspective. However, the respective areas of responsibility are located at different administrative levels. To ensure that individual measures and initiatives can nevertheless be implemented effectively, interaction between the different administrative levels is of

great importance. The recently established Commission for Regional Coordination and Development is an important milestone on the way to a multi-level governance system that can steer the future strategic development of Alentejo.

The topic of digitalisation is also the focus of the Schleswig-Flensburg district in northern Germany. Torsten Düwel from the Schleswig-Flensburg district office pointed out that digitalisation is still underestimated in spatial planning and that current planning systems do not keep up with the pace of digitalisation. Furthermore, he emphasised that rural areas should be understood as laboratories for innovative infrastructures, which offer potential for experimenting with new approaches. The district of Schleswig Flensburg is currently testing a digital dial-a-bus system and has successfully implemented a digital Smart Cities strategy.

The shortcomings of current spatial planning systems were also discussed in other contributions during the conference. For example, Sina Redlich (BBSR) pointed out that there is a need for more flexibility as sometimes planning and legal frameworks are outdated and funding processes are often too complex and rigid. Jonas Scholze, moderator and representative of the German Association for Housing, Urban and Spatial Development (DV), added that not only bricks need to be financed, but also processes so that reshuffle can be initiated on the ground. Thus, integrated action concepts that operate on several levels and stimulate sustainable transformation processes are necessary to cope with the multifaceted challenges.

Further TA2030 pilot actions with German participation

The second part of the conference focused on four further pilot actions carried out by Norway, Poland, Luxembourg and Switzerland. The pilot action which was coordinated by Norway dealt with the importance of small towns in their function as anchors for surrounding areas for regional development. As the leader of the pilot action, Jan Edøy from the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, said, the action demonstrated the relevance of small places for regional economic development, social well-being and for bridging the gap between core and periphery. Judith Neuenschwander from the Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE, Switzerland, highlighted the importance of inter-municipal cooperation. In the pilot project “Climate Action in Alpine Towns”, climate adaptation measures were implemented in several small towns with a focus on bottom-up initiatives. Strengthening the inter-municipal network proved to be key for the sustainable development of the region. During her presentation of the pilot action “Territorial Impact Assessment of Sectoral Policies” Patrycja Artymowska from the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, explained that a manual of Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) methods was developed. It serves practitioners to evaluate territorial dimensions of sectoral policies. One key learning of the pilot was that TIA is needed at every step of policy development. In the cross-border context however, a more qualitative and flexible approach might be more useful, which is why recommendations for cross-border TIA should be formulated separately. Additionally, the availability of data and statistical indicators at different administrative levels is crucial for the success of TIA. Finally, Frederik Richters from the Luxembourg Ministry for Energy and Spatial Planning presented the results of the pilot action “Cross-border Spatial Planning”, which was carried out within the framework of the Luxembourg regional development agenda “Luxembourg in Transition” for a carbon-free future. The result is a guidance note which is intended to support other administrative bodies in cross-border regions to initiate similar transformation processes in their region.

Reflections of German partner regions

Following the presentations of the pilot actions, the German partner regions shared the results they had achieved on a local level in the TA2030 pilot projects. Kerstin Schöniger, mayor of the municipality of Rodewisch, which took part in the pilot action “Small Places Matter”, endorsed the project as it allowed her municipality to successfully experiment with participative methods. For example, the town worked with residents to develop a vision for the future of the region, addressing various issues, including intergenerational needs and the revitalisation of the town centre. Jürgen Neumüller from the Joint Regional Planning Department Berlin-Brandenburg, which participated in the pilot action “Territorial Impact Assessment of Sectoral Policies”, highlighted the practical benefits of the project,

which in this case provided an incentive for greater involvement of local actors in cross-border territorial impact assessment. As part of a TIA that was conducted in the German Polish border region, the planning department was able to identify deficits in the transport network. The partner of the pilot action “Cross-border Spatial Planning”, Daniela Briegel from the Ministry of the Interior and Sport of Rhineland-Palatinate, commented that the knowledge gained on the territorial development of cross-border functional areas can now be incorporated by the Ministry into the new regional development plan. Finally, Johannes Hauptstock-Buhl from the town of Sonthofen, partner of the pilot action “Climate Action in Alpine Towns”, spoke about the implementation of a climate action concept with a special focus on cycling in his municipality. In the context of this project, one of the most important findings was that communication and public outreach are of central importance and must be continued on an ongoing basis.

Panel: Review and outlook on implementing the Territorial Agenda 2030

The concluding panel discussion reflected on the results achieved so far in the pilot actions and discussed initial proposals for the further development of pilot actions and the implementation of the TA2030. To begin with, Marek Teplansky, Head of Unit Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development at the European Commission, congratulated the achievements of the pilot actions. According to him they have made a first significant contribution to putting the TA2030 guiding objectives into practice. The pilot actions demonstrate the relevance and pertinence of the issues addressed in the cohesion policy, especially for the policy objective five, particularly for policy objective five (“Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories”). Patrycja Artymowska from the Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy added to this by saying that the added value of the pilot actions is to exchange different ideas and collaborate to further develop the TA2030, as well as to further drive the discussion on the importance of spatial planning on the EU level. Another positive aspect of the pilot actions was that they bring the TA2030 to life, as Vera Moosmayer from the German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) commented. For Germany the project incentivised many takeaways that are useful for initiatives on a national level.

Despite the overall success of the pilot actions, there are some recommendations to be considered for their implementation in the future. For once, Marek Teplansky highlighted that there should be a synergy between the results received from the implementation of the pilot actions and the ongoing strategy processes on a larger scale. Furthermore, Vera Moosmayer (BMWSB) stressed that the TA2030 needs more visibility in terms of communicating the added values of the pilot actions. This issue was also raised by Wiktor Szydarowski, Director of ESPON, who referred to a survey among spatial development actors of the European states in which a first cautious stocktaking was carried out on the implementation of the pilot actions and the further development of TA2030. While the survey results underlined the importance of the pilot actions for the implementation of the TA2030 goals, it was also noted that the TA2030 was still largely unknown outside of the field of spatial planning and difficult to interpret. He also commented that the TA2030 should be perceived as a way to orchestrate cooperation on territorial development, rather than as a policy instrument.

Finally, the question of the future of the TA2030 was discussed. The participants of the panel debate agreed that the pilot actions should be continued by taking into consideration the lessons learned. Furthermore, they advocated for enforcing more collaboration and exchange between pilot actions and stakeholders on all levels. For example, Vera Moosmayer (BMWSB) proposed a regular TA2030 conference. Wiktor Szydarowski (ESPON) confirmed that ESPON will continue to support the TA2030 and the pilot actions in the future. Yet, he also pointed out that there are many open questions for the future of the TA2030: Is the pilot action project the right instrument to implement the TA? And what is the durability of the pilot actions? He concluded by saying there are many new developments that future pilot actions should also face.

Looking towards the next phase of the TA2030

Beatriz Postigo Hidalgo from the Spanish Ministry of Finances and Civil Services assured that under the Spanish Presidency the new pilot actions will be supported. The focus will be on fostering the communication of the pilot

actions within civil society and boosting knowledge exchange between stakeholders. Daniel Meltzian from the German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) closed the conference by highlighting that the Territorial Agenda is alive, effective and that it successfully achieves results. Nevertheless, the potential of the pilot actions has not been fully exhausted yet. For this reason, the German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) will initiate a new pilot action project with a focus on Circular Economy in rural areas.

Annex

I – Agenda

II – Pictures from the conference

Annex I – Agenda

10h00 Welcome & Introduction

Klara Geywitz, Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB), Germany

Welcome note by the Swedish EU Presidency

Sverker Lindblad, Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure, Sweden

10h15 Results and lessons learned of the Territorial Agenda 2030 Pilot Action: “A future for lagging regions”

Sina Redlich, Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR), Germany

Results achieved on local and regional level – presentations by the partner regions

- **A new administrative role definition: the “competence centre” in the district of Görlitz**
Stephan Meyer, Head of Görlitz district council, Germany
- **Local activation strategies: The “third places” concept in Grand Est**
Clémentine Laurent, Grand Est Region, France
- **Local implementation and application of digital tools in Rostock Region**
Robert Mandtke, Rostock Planning Region, Germany
- **Strengthening intermunicipal cooperation: The strategy “REGIO” in Walgau**
Florian Kasseroler, Mayor of Nenzing, Head and founder of REGIO-Walgau, Austria
Eva-Maria Hochhauser-Gams, Managing Director, REGIO-Walgau, Austria
- **Supporting rural development from a regional perspective Alentejo Region**
Carmen Carvalheira, Vice-President of CCDR Alentejo, Portugal
Joaquim Fialho, Director of Regional Development Services, CCDR Alentejo, Portugal
- **A digital strategy and its long-term effects for Schleswig-Flensburg District**
Torsten Düwel, District of Schleswig-Flensburg, Germany

11h30 How to achieve a future for all places?

Niklas Nienaaß, Member of the European Parliament, Greens/EFA

11h40 Shaping resilient regions – Supporting perspectives from Germany

Peter Jakubowski, Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR), Germany

12h00 Lunch Break

13h00 Results of further Territorial Agenda 2030 Pilot Actions

- **Pilot Action: “Small Places Matter”**
Jan Edøy, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Norway
 - **Pilot Action: “Region-focused Territorial Impact Assessment”**
Patrycja Artymowska, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland
-

-
- **Pilot Action: “Cross-border spatial planning”**
Frederik Richters, Ministry for Energy and Spatial Planning, Luxembourg
 - **Pilot Action: “Climate Action in Alpine Towns”**
Judith Neuenschwander, Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE, Switzerland

Results achieved on local and regional level – Comments from German partners:

- Kerstin Schöniger, Municipality of Rodewisch (“Small Places Matter”)
- Jürgen Neumüller, Joint Planning Department Berlin Brandenburg (“Region-focused Territorial Impact Assessment”)
- Robert Freisberg, Ministry for the Interior and for Sport of Rhineland Palatinate (“Crossborder spatial planning”)
- Johannes Hauptstock-Buhl, Municipality of Sonthofen, Germany (“Climate Action in Alpine Towns”)

14h00 Panel discussion: Review and outlook on implementing the Territorial Agenda 2030

- Marek Teplansky, Head of Unit Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission
- Patrycja Artymowska, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland
- Vera Moosmayer, Head of Spatial Planning Subdivision, Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB), Germany
- Wiktor Szydarowski, Director, ESPON

14h50 Final remarks and closing words

Outlook to the Spanish EU-Presidency

Beatriz Postigo Hidalgo, Deputy Director of Urban Development, Ministry of Finances and Civil Services, Spain

Closing words

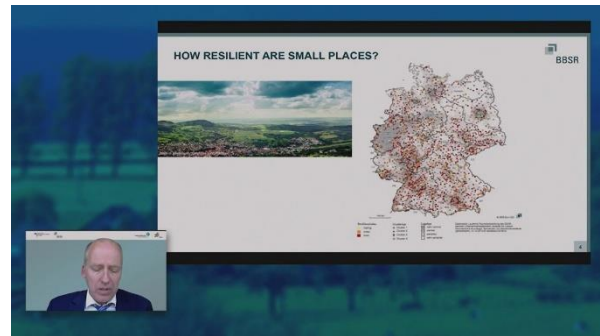
Daniel Meltzian, Head of Division for European Spatial Development Policy Planning and Territorial Cohesion, Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB), Germany

15h00 End of the conference

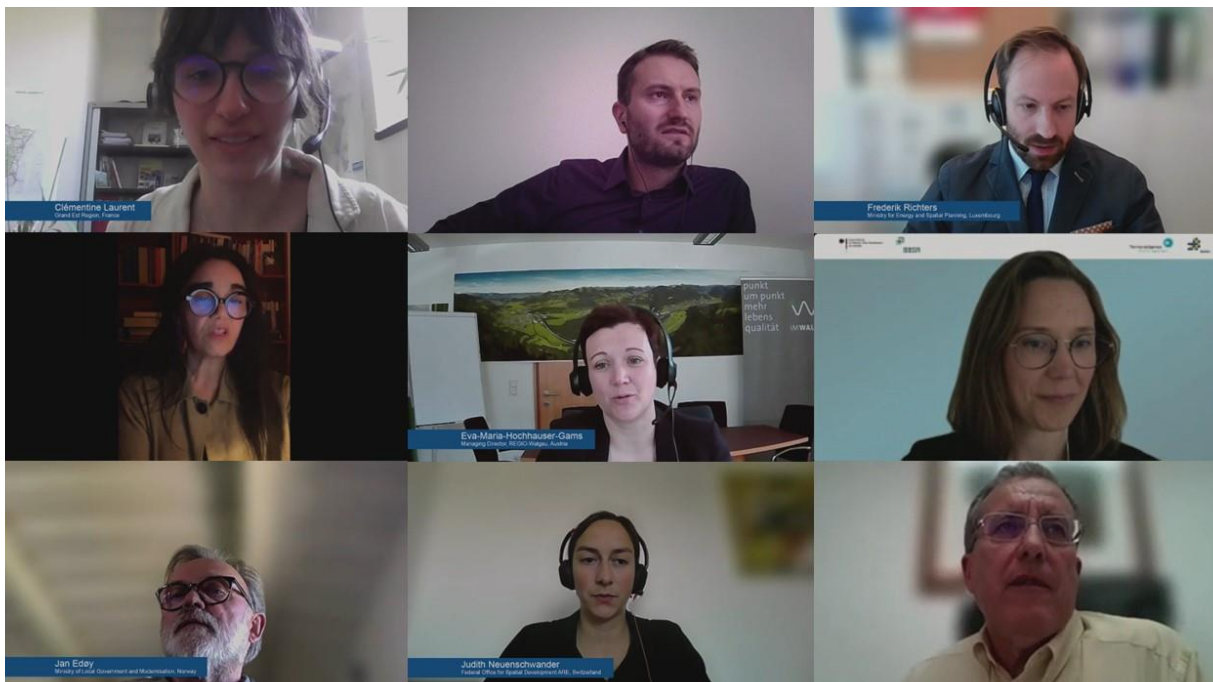
Annex II – Pictures of the conference



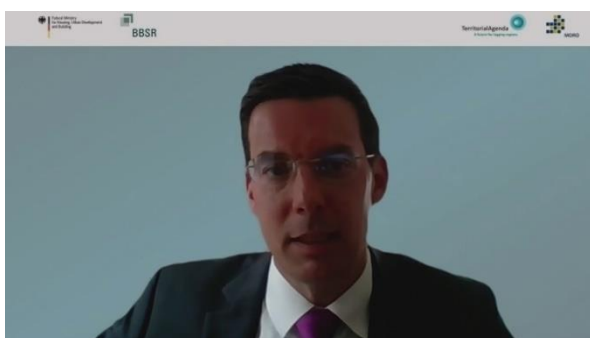
Rolf Bösing, BMWBS



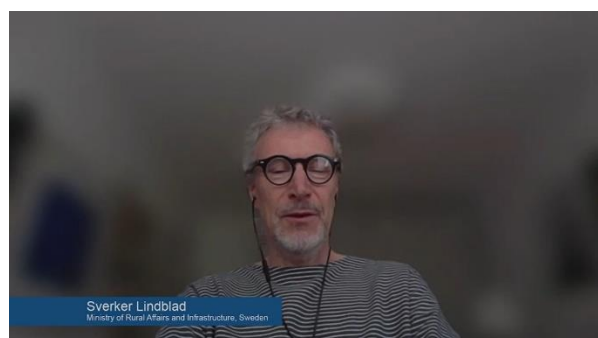
Peter Jakubowski, BBSR



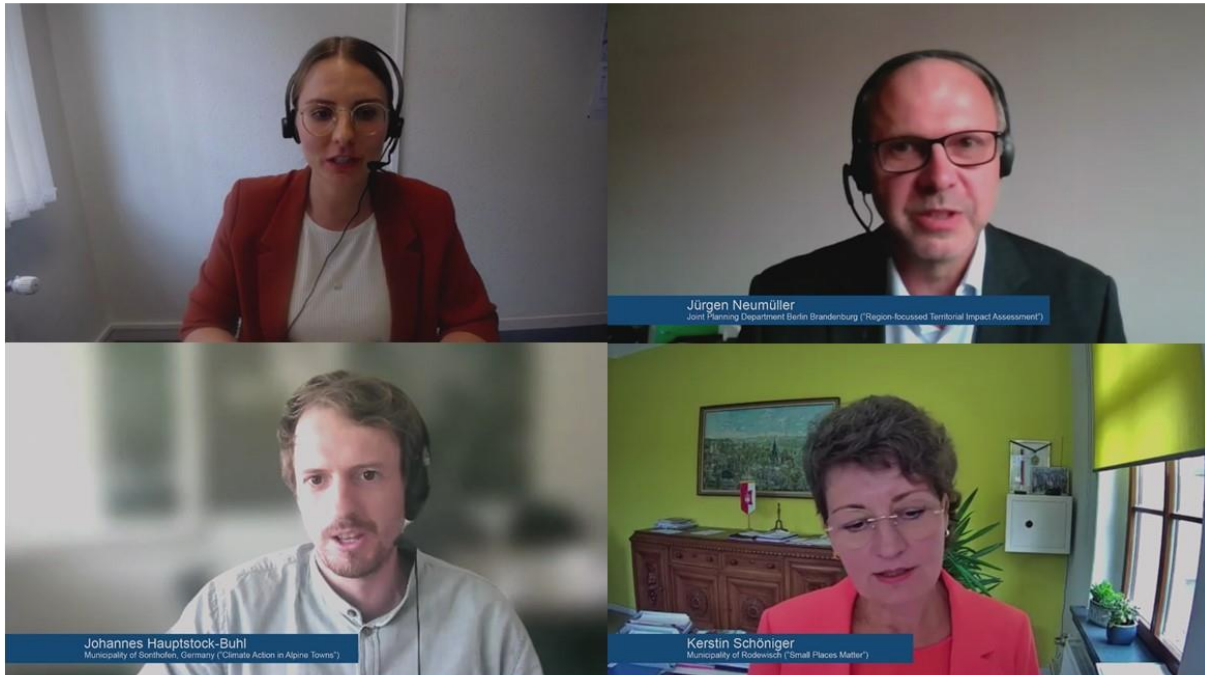
Presentations from Pilot Actions



Daniel Meltzian, BMWBS



Sverker Lindblad, Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure Sweden



Comments from German partners



Panel discussion with national and international stakeholders