



Eligible Assets

Sustainability Bond #10

State of North Rhine-Westphalia





Contents

Foreword by the Minister of Finance	3
Introduction	4
Eligible Projects	8
A. SBP: Affordable basic infrastructure	8
B. SBP: Access to essential services	9
C. SBP: Affordable housing	17
D. SBP: Employment generation, and programmes designed to prevent and/or alleviate unemployment stemming from socioeconomic crises, including through the potential effect of SME financing and microfinance	18
E. SBP: Food security and sustainable food systems	19
F. SBP: Socioeconomic advancement and empowerment	20
G. GBP: Renewable energy	25
H. GBP: Energy efficiency	25
I. GBP: Pollution prevention and control	26
J. GBP: Environmentally sustainable management of living natural resources and land use	27
K. GBP: Clean transportation	28
L. GBP: Sustainable water and wastewater management	28
M. GBP: Climate change adaptation	29
N. GBP: Green buildings	30
Alignment with EU Taxonomy	31
A. Alignment of Environmental Projects with the EU Taxonomy.....	31
B. Alignment of Social Projects with the proposed EU Social Taxonomy.....	34
Imprint.....	39



Foreword by the Minister of Finance

Dr. Marcus Optendrenk

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In September 2020 the State of North Rhine-Westphalia has adopted its updated Sustainability Strategy. With this strategy, our State wants to add its contribution to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This Sustainability Strategy – which is a joint strategy from all departments in the State and therefore covering a wide range of topics – is the baseline of our Sustainability Bonds which aim to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.



North Rhine-Westphalia was the first German State to issue ESG Bonds and is therefore one of the pioneers in this market. Since 2015, the State has already issued nine Sustainability Bonds with a total volume of more than EUR 20 billion. With these Sustainability Bonds, the State is targeting investors who value investing in sustainable projects. The Bond's projects help us to cope with the structural change. They support the State in the energy transition, make it more sustainable, ensure education, innovation and a good infrastructure and have helped to cope with the corona pandemic in recent years. Projects include the promotion of photovoltaics and e-mobility, digital infrastructure, bicycle infrastructure as well as vaccination centres during the pandemic.

Since issuance of our first Sustainability Bond, the State's Sustainability Bonds have evolved and improved. The number of projects has considerably increased and we provide investors with more and more detailed information. This was only possible, because all departments have been working together. These efforts have paid off. We could not only recognize the great interest of the investors from the heavily oversubscribed order books. The State has also received several awards for its Sustainability Bonds, which were voted by market participants.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to our Sustainability Bonds in recent years. Foremost, I would like to thank the investors who supported our Sustainability Bonds from the very beginning.

Dr. Marcus Optendrenk

Minister of Finance of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



Introduction

In addition to the Sustainability Bond Framework of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), this document lists and describes all eligible projects for the Sustainability Bond #10 structured by the Green Bond Principles 2018 (GBP)¹ and Social Bond Principles 2018 (SBP)² Use of Proceeds categories. The selection of projects is based on the State of North Rhine-Westphalia's Sustainability Strategy 2020³. The goal of the Sustainability Strategy is the implementation of the global consensus on sustainable development in NRW. All of the projects are based in North Rhine-Westphalia. Eligible projects for the Sustainability Bond have been determined by taking into account only the State of NRW's own discretionary spending (net of EU grants, federal grants or other revenues earmarked for specific purposes) to avoid double counting. The State of NRW's personnel costs as well as projects prescribed by federal law are excluded. Thus, only projects that the State provides voluntarily in addition to what it has to provide for are included in the Sustainability Bond. All eligible projects are part of the State of NRW's discretionary spending of the current fiscal year and can thus be traced to the publicly available NRW Budget Plan 2023⁴. Only the expenditures of the ongoing fiscal year are taken into account. In case a project runs for more than one year, it might thus be part of a number of subsequent Sustainability Bonds. An allocation report with the budget result will be part of the impact reporting and published post-issuance.⁵

Each of the 53 projects is mapped to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In case a project addresses more than one SDG, the first icon indicates the predominant SDG. *Figure 1* shows the frequency of projects per SDG and per GBP/SBP Use of Proceeds category. SDGs 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 are targeted most frequently. All SDGs are addressed except for SDGs 2, 14 and 17.

The total volume of all eligible projects amounts to EUR 2,997.2m. *Figure 2* shows the volume assigned to each SDG. If a project relates to more than one SDG, the volume of the project is split up among the respective SDGs according to their relevance. Taking a look at *Figure 2* one can see that the highest volumes are dedicated to SDG 4 (35%), SDG 9 (20%), SDG 7 (10%) and SDG 11 (10%).⁶

As an important issuer of Sustainability Bonds in the market, NRW has continued to consider regulatory developments in its approach. In 2022, in line with the ICMA principles, which encourage issuers to provide information on the degree of alignment of projects with official or market-based taxonomies and taking into account the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation, for the first time, NRW included information on the alignment of its environmental projects with the EU Climate Delegated Act.

¹ Green Bond Principles: www.icmagroup.org/sustainable-finance/the-principles-guidelines-and-handbooks/green-bond-principles-gbp/

² Social Bond Principles: www.icmagroup.org/sustainable-finance/the-principles-guidelines-and-handbooks/social-bond-principles-sbp/

³ Sustainability Strategy NRW: nachhaltigkeit.nrw.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/NRW_Sustainability_Strategy_2020.pdf

⁴ State of NRW Budget Plan 2023: www.haushalt.fm.nrw.de//daten/hh2023.ges/daten/html/hp.html

⁵ Note that the final expenditures for the projects (budget result) might be lower than the budget plan indicated pre-issuance. The State will seek to allocate an amount at least equal to the net proceeds of the Sustainability Bond by applying a haircut to the budget plan figures when issuing. In case net issue proceeds exceed the State's expenditures for eligible projects in the year of issuance, the remaining proceeds will be used to cover expenditures for similar projects of the following years until the expenditures exceed the net issue proceeds.

⁶ Note that the final split among SDGs might be different as the budget results will differ from the budget plan figures.



In 2023, NRW has taken further steps to increase transparency and provide more information to investors with regards to alignment of NRW's eligible projects for the 10th Sustainability Bond with the EU Climate Delegated Act (covering mitigation and adaptation criteria) as well as with the Environmental Delegated Act's proposed criteria for the remaining four environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy.

This includes showing the alignment of NRW's biodiversity strategy – which forms part of the Protection of Nature project – with the proposed criteria of the Environmental Delegated Act⁷, given the importance of biodiversity in the international agenda, the State of NRW as well as for investors.

As part of the Second Party Opinion of ISS ESG for Eligible Assets, NRW also commissioned ISS ESG to assess the alignment of the Green Eligible Assets that would be in scope of the EU Taxonomy. ISS ESG concluded that all EU Economic activities that are listed in chapter *Alignment with EU Taxonomy* are considered to be aligned with the respective criteria for Substantial Contribution to Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, the draft criteria of the Environmental Delegated Act and with the Minimum Social Safeguards. With one exception, all EU Economic activities are aligned with the Do No Significant Harm Criteria.⁸ Out of the total volume of all environmental and social eligible expenditures that amount to EUR 2,997.2m, an overall 17.1% of expenditures are aligned with the EU Taxonomy. Almost all of NRW's green projects can be mapped to relevant EU Taxonomy economic activities (98.6%). The result of the ISS ESG alignment assessment showed that more than half of all green expenditures (54.1%) that are part of Sustainability Bond #10 are aligned with the EU Taxonomy (see *Figure 3*).

In addition, given the importance and impact of NRW's eligible social projects, this document also includes a high-level alignment assessment of the social projects of NRW's Sustainability Bond #10 with the proposed EU Social Taxonomy⁹. The high-level assessment shows 34 social projects out of 41 social projects within Sustainability Bond #10 are aligned with the proposed EU Social Taxonomy (see *Table 2*).

⁷ Based on the proposed criteria released in March 2022 by the Platform on Sustainable Finance (PSF). In April 2023, the PSF released criteria for the proposed Environmental Delegated Act with a four-weeks consultation period, which was ongoing at the time of the taxonomy alignment assessment and the SPO drafting.

⁸ Except for the DNSH criteria for Water and Marine Resources for 7.2 (Renovation of existing buildings). Although it is not a requirement, the State of NRW is encouraging the highest level of sustainability standards in its procurement, including for university clinics. These policies include recommendations that products with the “Blauer Engel” eco-label, which is known as a label for environmentally friendly products, and is similar to the EU Ecolabel, are used in publicly financed projects. The “Blauer Engel” label for the relevant water products uses the same thresholds as the EU Ecolabel, from which the criteria requirements derive. Some university clinics do meet the taxonomy criteria in terms of water efficiency for majority of their fittings in newly renovated buildings, although not all fittings can meet the criteria because of specific uses e.g. medical taps for hygiene purposes (where no criteria exist within the EU Taxonomy).

⁹ Based on the [Final Report on Social Taxonomy](#) (February 2022) by the Platform on Sustainable Finance.



GBP/SBP Use of Proceed categories:															# projects
Affordable basic infrastructure	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	3
Access to essential services	1	9	12	-	-	-	4	3	5	-	2	-	-	-	22
Affordable housing	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
Employment generation	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Food security and sustainable food systems	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Socioeconomic advancement	1	-	3	4	-	-	4	-	4	1	-	-	-	3	10
Renewable energy	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Energy efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Pollution prevention and control	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Natural resources and land use	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Clean transportation	--	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Sustainable water and wastewater management	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
Climate change adaptation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	2
Green buildings	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	3	11	17	4	1	5	11	13	10	7	3	4	4	3	53

Figure 1: Allocation of eligible assets to GBP/SBP category, alignment to SDGs, frequencies

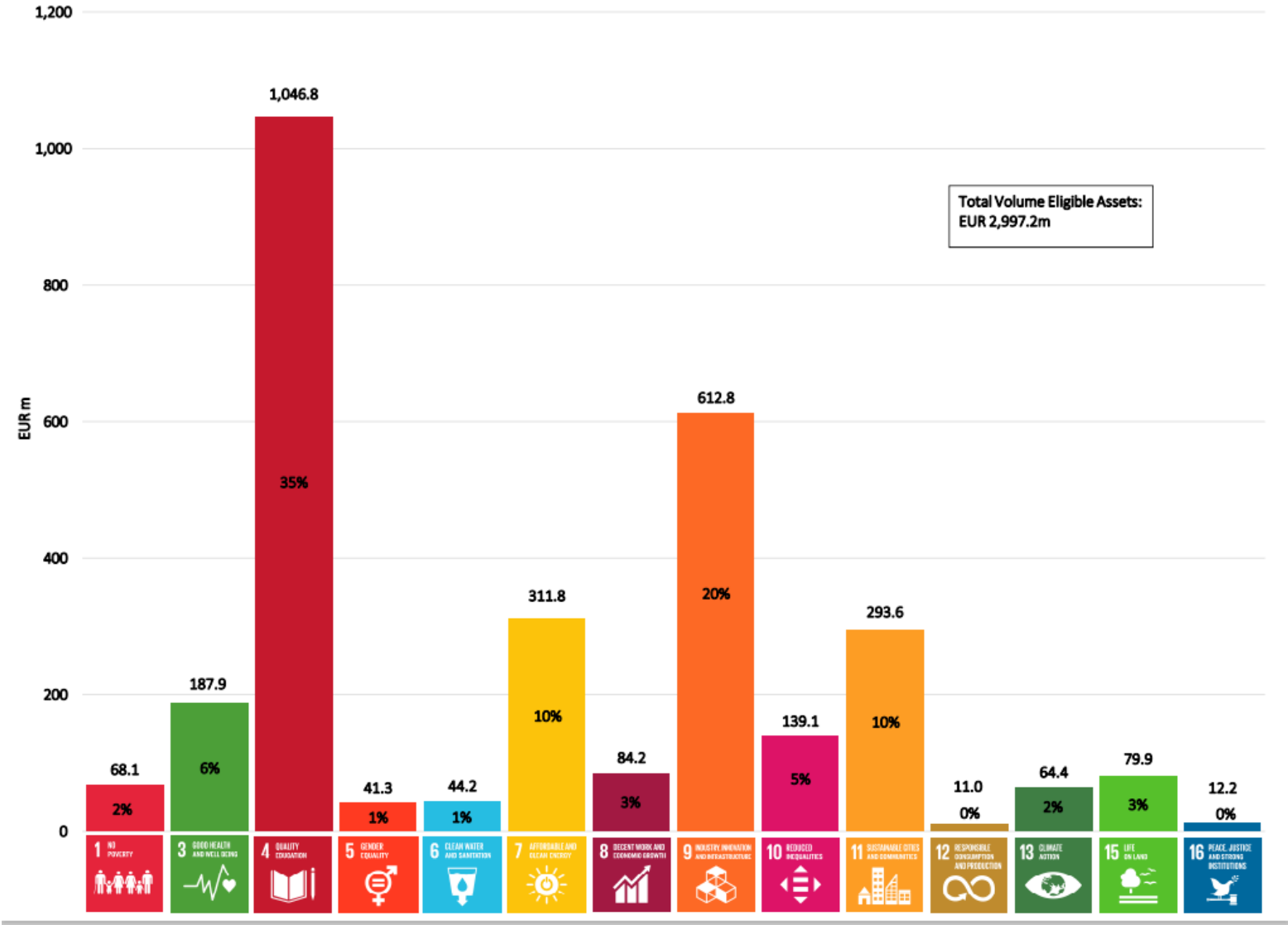


Figure 2: Volume of eligible assets per SDG

Eligible Projects

A. SBP: Affordable basic infrastructure 351.6m

- *Digitalization*



Budget items # 14 500 title groups 64, 65, and 74 and # 06 100 title group 77

172.2m

Target groups: underserved, owing to a lack of quality access to essential goods and services; students/trainees; children/pupils

Digitization is a measure to deal with the major climate and structural policy challenges of our time. Digitalization is based on high-performance fibre optic networks. The State government pursues the ambitious goal of achieving statewide fibre optic networks over the course of the decade. The funds serve to co-finance the gigabit funding of the Federal government.

Fibre optic network coverage is measured based on household coverage. A household is considered to be supplied if fibre optics is available at least "homes passed". In North Rhine-Westphalia, 24% of households can access fibre optic networks (source: [GigabitAtlas.NRW](#), as of December 2022, the coverage by bandwidth can also be viewed here). The creation of fibre optic networks is basically the task of the market. In areas where network operators are unable to develop it economically, the Federal and State governments jointly promote expansion. The eligible areas are determined by the local authorities, who also apply for funding from the relevant district government.

One of the goals is to equip every school with a fibre optic connection. 61% of the main locations of schools in North Rhine-Westphalia are connected to fibre optics, another 28% are connected via current projects, and funding is planned for six % (source: action plan for schools, as of September 2022). The school authorities can use Federal and State funds to connect schools with fibre optics if the network operators do not expand independently.

The [Gigabit.NRW](#) competence centre informs and networks the municipalities for the self-sufficient expansion of fibre optic networks and acts as a contact for the network operators on the framework conditions of the fibre optic expansion. The Gigabit offices in the district governments of Arnsberg, Detmold, Düsseldorf, Cologne and Münster advise the municipalities on the State's funding offers and approve the necessary funds. The [municipal gigabit coordinators](#) plan and accompany the self-financing and subsidized expansion on site.

Furthermore, the State finances measures at universities regarding digitalization in the areas of academic studies and teaching, administration and infrastructure. One focus is on cross-university measures to achieve significant and long-term progress in digitalization in higher education.

- *Public transportation for low-income citizens*



Budget item # 10 110 title group 60

40.0m

Target group: people with low socio-economic background

The State supports transport associations and municipalities who offer season tickets at reduced fares for low-income citizens. Most regions of North Rhine-Westphalia now offer such tickets, covering approximately 85% of all potential beneficiaries.



Social tickets enhance the participation of all citizens in a life that is increasingly determined by mobility. At the same time, the public transport system is strengthened. According to a survey carried out in 2015, approximately 2m people are eligible for social tickets and more than 300,000 people effectively use it. More than 50% of respondents report increased usage of public transport.

[Evaluation of social tickets](#)

- *Public transportation for pupils and students*



Budget item # 10 110 title group 74

139.4m

Target groups: children/pupils; students/trainees

According to section 11a of the State's law relating to public transport in North Rhine-Westphalia (ÖPNVG NRW), municipalities and regions get reimbursed for lost income due to reduced fares for pupils, students and trainees. The State also covers additional costs for the improvement of supply and quality in traffic related to pupils and students (Ausbildungsverkehr).

B. SBP: Access to essential services 1,421.5

- *Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2*



Budget item # 11 023 686 60

62.0m

Target group: general public

The funds are used to set up the infrastructure required for vaccinations against SARS-CoV-2, such as vaccination centres, transport and storage facilities, to procure vaccination accessories such as syringes and needles and to organise the vaccination procedures.

- *Combating the dangers of addiction*



Budget item # 11 080 title group 71

9.4m

Target group: general public

While there are more than four million addicts in North Rhine-Westphalia, most diagnosed addictions are on alcohol, tobacco or medication, while less than 1% are related to illegal drugs. The motto "Addiction always has a story!" stands for the cause-oriented addiction and drug policy of the State, the aim of which is to prevent substance abuse and the emergence of addiction. The developed preventive measures intend to help strengthen personal and social skills and to develop and expand health-promoting structures.

The support offered for addicts and their relatives must be at least as diverse as the causes of an addiction. The help for those at risk of addiction and those suffering from addiction includes measures



for advice, support and treatment as well as professional and social integration. The primary goal of the aid is abstinence.

- *Health economy, telematics, further development of the health campus*



Budget item #11 080 title group 75

8.3m

Target group: general public

Digitalization is a strong driver of innovative care structures and at the same time one of the greatest challenges for the healthcare system in the coming years. For the healthcare sector, this means the consistent alignment of electronically supported products and services to the needs of patients and all those involved in the treatment process. The State funds projects to set up the telematics infrastructure in the healthcare sector in North Rhine-Westphalia and telemedicine. Furthermore, the State co-finances projects from the Operational Programme European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) NRW as well as projects in the health economy. With more than a million employees, the health industry is the branch with the most jobs and the greatest growth dynamic in North Rhine-Westphalia. Above all, it must also meet the future requirements for high-quality medical care in the interests of the patients.

In addition, the funds serve to strengthen networking within the healthcare system. The budgeted funds are intended to check current projects (e.g. laws, pilot projects, etc.) for effectiveness and efficiency to be able to carry out a structural improvement of the health system on the basis of valid, evidence-based results. In addition, the State finances the development of innovative concepts and measures for health care and measures for the enhancement of the health campus.

- *Improvement of health care*



Budget item # 11 080 title group 81

6.8m

Target groups: general public; children/pupils; migrants and/or displaced persons

The State is responsible for policy-making in self-governing health care. It is committed to a wide range of different measures to reduce life and work-related risks and to promote general health resources and skills of people. These include among other measures health help for mothers, special measures for self-help, organizations for the disabled, special measures for health care (e.g. terminal care, hospice movement, disadvantaged children and young people), support for independent cancer advice centres, diabetes prevention in schools, measures to support health care of migrants, preventive measures and combating transmittable diseases, action plan hygiene, child protection, vaccinations including campaign for increasing vaccination quotas, citizen information from the cancer society as well as gender-related health and care policies.



- *Measures to ensure medical care*

Budget item # 11 080 title group 82



2.5m

Target group: general public

The State needs to take measures to prevent a deterioration in medical care. To this end, the State introduces incentives for doctors to settle in areas threatened by undersupply.

- *Psychiatric care*

Budget item # 11 080 title group 83



3.0m

Target groups: general public; children/pupils

The challenges of our modern society have an impact on mental health and emotional well-being. Mental health is an essential component to ensure a healthy life for all people of all ages and to promote their well-being. The main goal of the organisation of psychiatric care at State level is to enhance the care structure that is oriented towards the needs of those affected, integrated into the community and coordinated, and to promote the participation of mentally ill people in all areas while implementing the UN Disability Rights Convention. The State promotes model projects for better patient-oriented cross-sector and cross-aid system networking of prevention and help offers as well as for person-centred flexibilisation of in-patient, day-patient and out-patient psychiatric treatment solutions.

- *Development plan on geriatric care*

Budget items # 11 090 title group 90 and # 11 010 547



14.5m

Target group: aging populations and vulnerable youth

The State's Development plan geriatric care is based on the consensus that demographic development places considerable demands on the social infrastructure of the State and, in particular, on the quantity and quality of care and support services for elderly and people in need of care.

As part of the State's Development plan on geriatric care ([Landesförderplan Alter und Pflege](#)), the State supports projects that contribute to the following five superordinate goals:

- Supporting systemic structures
- Promoting/spreading knowledge
- Promoting quality and transparency of advice
- Providing support with (digital) technology/Enable access to (digital) technology
- Enhance broader participation



- *Professional education of geriatric nurses*



Budget items # 11 090 title group 60

9.6m

Target group: aging populations and vulnerable youth

According to section 5 of the State Law concerning Geriatric Care (Landesaltenpflegegesetz NRW), the State provides financial grants for the training of geriatric nurses.

- *Bund-Länder-Covenant for the expansion of universities (State's share)*



Budget items # 06 100 title group 70 (without # 06 100 231 50),

113.9m

Target group: students/trainees

North Rhine-Westphalia comprises a diverse university landscape with 14 public universities, 16 public universities of applied sciences, seven public colleges of art and music, 26 recognized private and church universities headquartered in the State as well as five administrative colleges.

North Rhine-Westphalia has established itself as an appealing location for studies, attracting many people with university entrance qualifications or a professional qualification seeking to pursue their studies in the State. The total number of students in the winter semester 2020/2021 was around 770,000, including around 98,000 first-semester students. In recent years, demand for university education has grown significantly. From 2006 to 2016 the number of newly enrolled students at universities in the State has increased by 67%. To facilitate access to higher education regardless of social background, public universities in North Rhine-Westphalia do not charge tuition fees.

The State responds to the growing demand for university education by creating additional study capacities in the context of the Bund-Länder-Agreement on the expansion of universities ([Hochschulpakt 2020](#)), thereby securing a larger number of students the opportunity to receive a high quality university education.

- *Training facilities for the education of special education teachers*



Budget items # 06 131 685 10, # 06 181 685 10, # 06 230 685 10, # 06 240 685 10, # 06 250 685 10 (partially)

#

21.2m

Target groups: people with disabilities; children/pupils; students/trainees

In order to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities in the area of education, more teachers with a background in special needs education are necessary to meet the deficits in existing facilities. Therefore, the State Government has significantly increased the number of study places for teaching special needs education. Around 250 new bachelor's study places were created for the 2020/21 winter semester. Further 250 places are planned for the next few years. The State and universities have thus created or secured a total of 750 new places in special education since the beginning of the previous legislative period. This is an essential step on the way to an inclusive school system in North Rhine-Westphalia.



- *Measures to improve the quality of teaching and studying at universities*



Budget item # 06 100 title group 72

300.0m

Target group: students/trainees

From winter semester 2006/07 until summer semester 2011, universities and colleges in North Rhine-Westphalia were allowed to charge tuition fees of up to 500 euros per semester and student to cover expenses for improvements in the quality of teaching and studying. With the objective to provide unfettered access to quality education, the State has abolished tuition fees starting winter semester 2011/12. To improve further the quality of higher education, the State provides funds of the same amount as the previous tuition fee revenues.

- *Return programme for highly qualified young researchers from abroad*



Budget item # 06 040 title group 65

7.7m

Target group: general public

The State of North Rhine-Westphalia evens the way for researchers to return to Germany after a career station abroad ([Rückkehrprogramm](#)). In this context, they can set up their own research group at a university in North Rhine-Westphalia of their choice and qualify for a permanent professorship only two years after completing their doctorate. Since 2007, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia has made it particularly easy for 50 promising young researchers to return. For each junior research group, the State provides up to 1.25 million euros over a period of five years. The funds are intended for operating expenditures and the purchase of larger equipment. Every year, the tenders for the new junior research groups have a different thematic focus. In principle, there is the possibility of agreeing on future prospects beyond the funding period between the university and the researcher. This opportunity has proven successful in the past: the majority of those who have been funded to date now have a professorship.

- *Support for family centres/promotion of cooperation of family formation and counseling centres with family centres*



Budget items # 07 040 633 16 and # 07 030 684 10

75.7m

Target groups: people with low socio-economic background; children/pupils

The purpose of the family centres ([Familienzentren](#)) is to provide information and counselling services to help parents support their children, as well as to combine those services for parents and families. Especially in areas characterized by poverty or inadequate infrastructure, family centres can help promote the social participation of disadvantaged families and by doing so, contribute to the creation of more equal opportunities. Day care centres which have been appointed as family centres receive special support from the State. One funding priority is family centres in social hotspots.



- *PlusKita and language courses at childcare facilities*



Budget item # 07 040 633 15

103.1m

Target groups: people with low socio-economic background; children/pupils; migrants and/or displaced persons

Children from low-income families, with a migration background or from a relatively uneducated social environment have worse educational opportunities compared to other children. The reason is not a lack of abilities, but worse starting conditions and a lack of support. To equalize educational opportunities and provide fair chances for all children from the beginning, day care facilities with a high proportion of families in difficult conditions receive additional support. Since the kindergarten year 2014/2015, these plusKITAs receive a minimum of 25,000 euros additionally per calendar year. North Rhine-Westphalia is currently counting 1,700 plusKITAs, having as main objective the improvement of educational opportunities for children right from the start by targeting educational disadvantages. This is implemented by an individual strengthening of the children's potential. Support focuses on the everyday life of the families: educational concepts and forms of action adapted to the prevailing conditions, cooperation with and empowerment of parents, a reliable contact person in local network structures and special training measures are among plusKITAS' tasks, which go beyond the functions of regular day care facilities.

Language skills belong to the most important skills for successful education and integration into the labour market. To provide a solid foundation for all children, language education should begin as early as possible. Against that background, the State finances language courses at childcare facilities, in particular for children from low-income families or from disadvantaged local communities as well as for children whose first language is not German (www.kita.nrw.de/fachkraefte-fachberatung/sprachliche-bildung).

- *Childcare in special cases*



Budget item # 07 040 633 13

21.0m

Target groups: migrants and/or displaced persons; children/pupils

Among the refugees in North Rhine-Westphalia are numerous children who can benefit from early childhood education in day care centres. Since not all affected children immediately attend a regular childcare centre, there is a need for particular services at an early point in time. The State provides funds for low-threshold day care services beyond the benefits of the Child Education Act, in order to facilitate the transition to institutional day care for children and their parents. In addition, the State supports counselling services for staff.

- *Exemption to contribution for parents for the last two years of day care*



Budget item # 07 040 633 20

446.6m

Target groups: children/pupils; general public

Day care centres are educational institutions preparing children for school and must therefore be accessible to all children. Since August 2020, the last two years of day care before school entrance are



free of charge in North Rhine-Westphalia, ensuring that pre-school education, which is not compulsory in Germany, does not depend on the parents' income.

- *Measures at day care centres in response to the coronavirus pandemic*



Budget items # 07 023 547 00 and # 07 010 title group 88 (partially)

30.0m

Target group: children/pupils

The fight against the corona pandemic by the State of North Rhine-Westphalia is based on several approaches. One of them is the broad testing of children within child day care and in curative education groups/facilities. To ensure continuous operation of these facilities, the State financed and supplied the required corona rapid tests for self-application to detect an infection with SARS-CoV-2 and limit the risk of spreading within the facilities.

The increased requirements due to the corona pandemic lead to considerable additional workload in day care centres. The State provides funds for additional personnel expenses for assistants to relieve the pedagogical staff of the day care centres from the excess work so that they can carry out their pedagogical tasks. Furthermore, a part of this sum can be used for material expenses in the area of work-related safety and hygiene equipment.

- *Social work at schools*



Budget item # 05 300 title group 79

57.7m

Target groups: children/pupils; aging populations and vulnerable youth

The initiative for social work at schools (Soziale Arbeit an Schulen) promotes education and inclusion for disadvantaged children and teenagers. Supported projects aim at regular school attendance, improved school performance, a reduction of the number of school drop-outs and a broader participation of pupils in sports and cultural activities. The goal is to strengthen the pupils' personal development and living environment as well as their employability.

[Evaluation of the programme „Soziale Arbeit an Schulen“](#)

- *Excellence Strategy*



Budget items # 06 100 686 55 and 893 00

32.0m

Target group: general public

In 2016, the Federal Government and the States agreed to provide long-term and strategic funding for cutting-edge research at German universities with a new programme. The goal is to strengthen Germany as an internationally competitive location for science. The funds are provided to enable top scientific achievements, to sharpen the profiles of universities and to stimulate networking and cooperation in the science system. The strategy of excellence ([Exzellenzstrategie](#)) thus combines the promotion of research with long-term and strategic investment in the higher education system.



The new Excellence Strategy builds on its predecessor programme, the Excellence Initiative from 2007 to 2017, which contributed to outstanding research achievements. It also strengthened the cooperation of universities with non-university partners and led to an increased networking of German universities with universities around the world. This development is attracting worldwide attention, with more and more researchers turning to Germany from abroad and the entire German university landscape benefitting from the increased international visibility. Other countries have launched their own programmes modelled on the Excellence Initiative. The strategy is designed to maintain and expand this positive momentum and consists of two parts, so-called funding lines: the "Clusters of Excellence" and the "Universities of Excellence".

The "Clusters of Excellence" promote internationally competitive research fields at universities or university associations on a project-related basis. In the clusters, scientists from various disciplines and institutions work together on a specific research project. The support provided allows them to focus intensively on their research goals, to train junior scientists and to recruit top international staff. Universities with clusters of excellence can also apply for additional lump sum funding as a policy supplement to strengthen their organisation and strategic direction.

The selection of the Clusters of Excellence and Universities of Excellence is based solely on academic competition. These procedures are carried out on behalf of the Federal Government and the States by the "Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft" (DFG) and "Wissenschaftsrat". With two universities of excellence (University of Bonn and RWTH Aachen University) and 14 clusters of excellence, North Rhine-Westphalia occupies a leading position nationwide and has expanded its portfolio by four additional clusters compared to the previous awards of 2012.

The Federal Government and the States will provide around 533 million euros annually for the Excellence Strategy from 2018 onwards, with a co-financing share of 75% by the Federal government and the remaining 25% by the State where the cluster of excellence or the university of excellence is located. All clusters of excellence together account for around 385 million euros per year. The universities of excellence are funded with the remaining 148 million euros annually. Figures shown are the share of expenditures borne by the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

- **Promotion of innovation**

Budget item # 14 400 title group 61



89.4m

Target group: general public

Innovations are the key to overcoming the challenges of globalization, digitization, demographic change and climate protection. They enable the generation of sustainable competitive advantages and market success. The measures are aimed not only at technical innovations, but also at innovations in the non-technical area (e.g. new processes and business models) and at social innovations.

Numerous fields of innovation are funded. The innovation field "Key Technologies of the Future, ICT" forms a new element of the priority strategy. Contents are, for example: Quantum computing, AI development, robotics, cyber security and industrial transformation. The project also funds the Mittelstand Innovativ & Digital (MID; small firms innovative & digital) funding initiative. Small and medium-sized companies can receive cross-industry support through this funding in order to identify innovation potential and future topics in their companies and to implement them in digitization and innovation projects.



- *Foundation for Nature and Sustainable Development*



Budget item # 10 060 686 72

4.0m

Target group: general public

The Foundation for Nature and Sustainable Development North Rhine-Westphalia ([Stiftung Umwelt und Entwicklung Nordrhein-Westfalen](#)) strives to create a forum for environmental and sustainable development policy activities in North Rhine-Westphalia and to connect these projects with practical engagement of civil society. The goal is to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Agenda 2030. The Foundation for Nature and Sustainable Development supports projects of various organisations relating to dialogue between citizens of the northern and southern hemisphere, protection of environment and nature, intercultural exchange and sustainable development within the State. Since its inception in 2001, the Foundation has sponsored more than 1,800 projects with total grants of more than 80 million euros. Detailed information on these projects is accessible through a dedicated data base.

[Annual report 2021 of Foundation for Nature and Sustainable Development](#)

- *Facilities for environmental education*



Budget item # 10 060 title group 77

3.3m

Target group: general public

The State's support for environmental education facilities helps to establish a statewide network of such institutions in the context of the concept of Education for sustainable development ([Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung NRW](#)).

C. SBP: Affordable housing 117.4m

- *Urban development programmes "Urban Reconstruction in the West" and "Growth and Sustainable Renewal"*



Budget item # 08 500 883 11 (partially)

51.6m

Target group: excluded and/or marginalised populations and/or communities

The programmes "Stadtumbau West" ("Urban Reconstruction in the West") and "Wachstum und nachhaltige Erneuerung" ("Growth and Sustainable Renewal") both focus on the problems of a shrinking population and a stagnating economic development. Urban districts with a severe loss of functions or a high degree of abandoned or vacant property (residential, commercial, military or railway) are eligible for support under these programmes. The goal is to stipulate new initiatives for sustainable urban development. Relevant issues range from urban planning and housing to economic development and social and environmental policies and include the improvement of public space and living environments, upgrading the building stock, dismantling of buildings that are no longer required and measures of water-sensitive urban and open space planning to reduce the "heat island effect".



- *Urban development programmes “Social City” and “Social Centres”*



Budget item # 08 500 883 11 (partially)

37.8m

Target group: excluded and/or marginalised populations and/or communities

The programmes "Soziale Stadt" ("Social City") and "Soziale Zentren" ("Social Centres") both address various challenges for local communities concerning urban renewal, labour market development, economic structure and growth, infrastructure for children, families and elderly, housing, social and cultural infrastructure, integration and inclusion, schools, promotion of health and sports, prevention of crime and public relations. Both programmes aim at urban areas and districts that are significantly disadvantaged due to the social composition and economic situation of the residents. The State intends to increase the quality of living and the variety of uses, to integrate all population groups and to strengthen cohesion in the neighbourhood. Most projects implement concrete measures to improve conditions of living and the social environment, such as renewal of playgrounds, schoolyards and parks.

- *State programme for village renewal*



Budget item # 15 030 title group 74

28.0m

Target group: excluded and/or marginalised populations and/or communities

The rural regions in North Rhine-Westphalia are facing particular challenges in terms of demographic development and the entailed effects on the provision of services of general interest, their accessibility and the overall infrastructure. Conceptual and building measures in the villages are funded to improve the quality of life, housing and work, as well as measures that serve to secure the basic needs of the rural population and improve the infrastructure. This enables the localities to adapt to the current economic, demographic and socio-cultural changes.

D. SBP: Employment generation, and programmes designed to prevent and/or alleviate unemployment stemming from socioeconomic crises, including through the potential effect of SME financing and microfinance 10.7m

- *Occupational integration of people with disabilities*



Budget item # 11 050 title group 86

7.7m

Target groups: people with disabilities; unemployed

The State government continues to expand workplaces in workshops for disabled people as needed. The funding of the workshop projects is provided jointly by the State, the inclusion offices of the two regional associations, the Regional Directorate of North Rhine-Westphalia of the Federal Employment Agency as well as by the owners. Currently, more than 100 workshops for disabled people in North Rhine-Westphalia employ around 80,000 people.

In addition, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia provides funds for investment in newly created jobs in [integration companies](#)/inclusion companies for severely disabled people. The two regional



associations participate in the programme with their own funding and implement it in coordination with the State. Approximately 300 inclusion companies in North Rhine-Westphalia currently provide more than 4,000 jobs for people with disabilities with full access to social security.

- *Environmental economy, sustainable economy*



Budget item # 10 060 title group 63

3.1m

Target group: general public

These funds are intended, among other things, for the development, coordination and implementation of the State's strategy for an environmental economy and measures and activities in the field of environmental economy or sustainable economy.

The Strategy for an environmental economy aims to develop the environmental economy in North Rhine-Westphalia into an impetus for the global green economy. North Rhine-Westphalia should make a significant contribution to achieving the Paris climate goals and to the transformation to a sustainable economy and society. The Strategy for an environmental economy is a cross-departmental policy strategy of the State government of North Rhine-Westphalia and dates back to 2010. The goals of the Strategy for an environmental economy are pursued in five strategic fields of action: Innovations are promoted at the product, process, technology and service level in order to ensure growth and employment in the North Rhine-Westphalian economy. Start-ups as well as small and medium-sized enterprises are supported with market introduction, market development and internationalisation in order to facilitate entry into and growth in the dynamic markets of the environmental economy. Networking, communication and location development serves to ensure mutual visibility and perception of the diverse players in the environmental economy. The synergy effects lead to the development, expansion and strengthening of regional value chains. In order to secure and expand the competitive position of the North Rhine-Westphalian environmental industry in the long term, the training of skilled workers is specifically promoted as the key to the innovation and performance of companies. Finally, the setting of an environmental policy framework and standardization is also an essential field of action, on the one hand to give the necessary legal certainty for the actors involved and on the other hand to provide impetus for the growth market of the environmental economy.

[Umweltwirtschaftsbericht NRW 2022](#)

E. SBP: Food security and sustainable food systems 3.7m

- *EU school programme*



Budget items # 15 040 547 11, 685 11 and 686 11

3.7m

Target group: children/pupils

Promoting balanced and healthy school meals is an important task for the State. The aim of this EU school programme is to bring as many children as possible close to fruits, vegetables and milk and to make their food habits healthier in the long term. To this end, the State provides complementary financing for the implementation of the programme.



F. SBP: Socioeconomic advancement and empowerment 145.5m

- *Fight against poverty and social exclusion*



Budget item # 11 042 title group 95

10.3m

Target groups: children/pupils excluded and/or marginalised populations and/or communities; people with low socio-economic background; underserved, owing to a lack of quality access to essential goods and services

North Rhine-Westphalia is a State where rich and poor often live very close together. There are poor and rich regions, affluent and neglected parts of the city. Families who live with their children in spacious houses and benefit from a good infrastructure live only a few kilometres away from those for whom social welfare are the norm and who receive little positive impetus in their neighbourhood. Many people are often unable to participate in a social life. Children and young people in particular suffer greatly from this form of exclusion, which in most cases also shapes the psychosocial development for later life. The State works at various levels of action and in cooperation with other political actors, trade unions and social associations, non-statutory welfare organisations, municipalities and municipal umbrella organizations to prevent poverty wherever possible and where it occurs already exists.

With the programme call "Together in the Quarter - Strengthen Children - Secure the Future", the State provides funds to combat poverty of children, youths and families in particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which also contribute to crisis management in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and its social consequences. More than 100 projects are currently funded that improve the opportunities for participation, realize opportunities for participation, provide help at certain interfaces in the biography (such as the transition between individual educational stages) and help people to help themselves. In addition, the focus is on the healthy growth of children and young people, to promote/strengthen skills and participation of poverty-affected and socially disadvantaged groups and the establishment of health-promoting structures. Most of the children in North Rhine-Westphalia live in socially and economically secure conditions. However, despite various efforts to improve the situation of families and children, some children still grow up in disadvantaged circumstances. The support programme "All children eat" enables children of parents who – despite a comparable financial situation – are not entitled to the education and participation package, to take part in lunch. Detailed information on the social situation in North Rhine-Westphalia including demographics, education, the labour market and income levels is set out in the latest social report for North Rhine-Westphalia ([Sozialbericht 2020](#)). The most recent figures are reported on a dedicated website ([Sozialindikatoren Nordrhein-Westfalen](#)).

Homelessness is the worst form of poverty after hunger and every homeless person is one too many. To combat homelessness, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia launched the initiative "Finally a home", which bundles all activities and measures to provide housing for homeless citizens through the support of the responsible municipalities. An essential component is the promotion of 22 so-called "carer projects". With this initiative, the State supports the responsible municipalities in the fight against homelessness.



- *European Social Fund 2014-2020 (State's share)/Programmes "No dead-end qualification"/"No dead-end qualification (compact)"*



Budget items # 11 032 title group 71, # 11 029 title group 75 and # 11 029 title group 80

44.8m

Target groups: migrants and/or displaced persons; aging populations and vulnerable youth; children/pupils

The European Social Fund (Europäischer Sozialfonds) promotes education and employment opportunities. Core issues are competitiveness of small and medium-sized companies and employees, the employability of young people and migrants, the transition from school to employment and human capital.

During the 2007–2013 phase of the programme, 1.1m people participated in ESF projects. The most important cluster was employability/human capital (so-called priority axis B) with almost 700,000 participants in various projects. More than 90% of participants were between 15 and 25 years of age.

The 2014–2020 phase of the programme for North-Rhine Westphalia also aims at social inclusion and reduction of poverty. Projects include expert advice on the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, the programme "TalentCompass NRW" for support in career orientation and development as well as the programme "No dead-end qualification".

"No dead-end qualification" – with this goal, North Rhine-Westphalia is shaping the transition from school to training and studies. The statewide transition system ensures that young people receive support early on in career orientation, in choosing a career and when starting training or studying. The aim is to give all young people after school the opportunity to continue their vocational training or studies as quickly as possible and to avoid unnecessary waiting loops through effective coordination. Young people and their parents receive lasting support on their way into the world of work. From class 8 onwards, all pupils receive a binding, systematic professional orientation. In addition to identifying and promoting capabilities and job-related skills, this includes targeted internships in companies in order to explore different professional fields and enable a competent career choice. Pupils who need special support in the process of professional orientation can take part in practical courses or receive additional support. By the end of school, an individual follow-up perspective is worked out with all pupils and documented in a concrete follow-up agreement.

- *Equality and potential development in work and society*



Budget item # 07 060 title group 62

4.9m

Target group: women and/or sexual and gender minorities

The State of North Rhine-Westphalia promotes the development and implementation of measures for equality and the development of potential in the workplace and society with a focus on opening up companies to attract and retain female specialists, development of female leadership potential, equal pay, equality of women and men in the public sector, cliché-free professional and study orientation, social and political participation and women in special life situations.



- *Promotion of equality at universities*



Budget item # 06 100 title group 73

4.5m

Target group: women and/or sexual and gender minorities

In order to promote the full innovative potential of women, participation of women at all levels of qualification in the field of science should be increased. Funds are used to improve equality at universities, in particular to increase the number of female scientists in leading positions in the academic system and for the coordinating office of the NRW Network on Women and Gender Research, including the implementation of projects of the Women's Research Network and the Coordinating Body of the National Conference of Equal Opportunity Officers of the Universities and University Hospitals of the State.

The Federal Government and the German States launched the professorship programme for women in 2008. The current programme phase (2023–2030) includes a funding volume of 320 million euros. The aim of the programme is to further increase the proportion of women in W2/W3 professorships in top scientific positions and at management levels at German universities, both at central and decentralized level, in the direction of parity. Germany is fourth-last in the European comparison with only 24.1% of professorships held by women (2017). North Rhine-Westphalia is above the national average with 25.7% of female professorships.

The programme works on two levels: It increases the number of female professors and strengthens gender equality structures at German universities through specific measures. Universities qualify for participation in the programme through gender equality concepts aiming a gender parity that are subject to external assessment. Among other things, these concepts include equality-promoting measures geared to the respective university. Universities that present a convincing gender equality concept aiming at gender parity can apply for start-up funding of up to three positions for female vacancies for women to permanent W2 or W3 professorships for a period of up to five years. Universities and universities of applied science whose concept has been awarded the title "university with strong gender equality" can also receive funding for an additional position for a young female scientist.

- *Girls in special situations*



Budget items # 07 040 title group 64, 07 022 684 00

1.2m

Target groups: women and/or sexual and gender minorities; aging populations and vulnerable youth

The State supports youth welfare organisations offering help for girls affected by forced marriage. The funds enable facilities to offer immediate help. Furthermore, additional capacities to accommodate girls threatened or affected by domestic and sexual violence are created in the Rhineland. In addition, preventive support offers are promoted.



- *Protection of children*

Budget item # 07 040 title 684 31



8.6m

Target group: children/pupils

The State provides funds for the implementation of measures for prevention, protection against and assistance in the event of sexual violence against children and youth in North Rhine-Westphalia. The funds serve in particular for the implementation of projects and events, for the creation and distribution of materials, for financing advanced training and qualification measures, for commissioning scientific expertise and surveys and for public relations.

- *Protection from violence*

Budget items # 07 060 title groups 61, 63, and # 07 022 684 00



35.3m

Target groups: women and/or sexual and gender minorities; underserved, owing to a lack of quality access to essential goods and services

The State promotes further development of places in women's shelters as well as general women's advice centres, specialist advice centres that offer women and girls help after sexualised violence, advice centres for female victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and the creation of sheltered living space for female victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation as well as specialist advice centres for protection against forced marriage. The State action plan to combat violence against women and girls foresees, among other things, anonymous securing of evidence in cases of sexual violence. Direct work with perpetrators with the aim to provide support and advice on changing behaviour in partnerships of violent men is an important component in the fight against domestic violence.

Women are not the only victims of domestic violence. Boys and men are also affected, but there is only a selective support infrastructure for male victims and hardly any reliable information about the extent of it. Therefore, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia develops an action plan to combat violence against boys, men and LGBTIQ*. The subject of the state action plan are various forms of violence. This includes domestic violence, forced marriage, sexual, psychological and physical violence as well as hate crime or group-related violence, as well as other forms of violence such as cyber violence and violence in care. Violence in public and in the leisure sector, for example in the football scene, will also be considered. Violence motivated by homophobia and transphobia must be taken into account in all areas. As a first component, the State government of North Rhine-Westphalia and the State of Bavaria have jointly established a telephone helpline ([see study](#)). In addition, 20 places at five locations are available as safe housing for men who have been victims of domestic violence or are in an acute threatening situation.



- *Social inclusion of persons with disabilities*



Budget item # 11 050 title group 80

4.3m

Target group: people with disabilities

More than 2,600 people with disabilities live in North Rhine-Westphalia. With a wide range of social assistance schemes, the State is committed to provide opportunities for equal participation in work, employment and society for them.

The programme "NRW inclusive – One society for all" ([Eine Gesellschaft für alle – NRW inklusiv](#)) is a comprehensive set of measures adopted by the State to implement the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. The projects and initiatives create enhanced participation opportunities in society. An overview of successful projects, measures and initiatives, clustered according to regions and action areas, is available through an interactive map of NRW ([Inklusionskataster NRW](#)).

- *Measures for children from refugee families and for young refugees*



Budget item # 07 040 title group 68

12.6m

Target groups: migrants and/or displaced persons; aging populations and vulnerable youth

The State finances the improvement of access for minor refugees to the standard offers of youth work and youth social work, measures especially targeted at young refugees to support and promote them as well as the improvement of youth work and youth social work for the integration of minor refugees. North Rhine-Westphalia promotes professional qualification through existing and newly developed offers of youth social work. In addition, the State strengthens the prevention of sexual violence and encourages teaching values in youth welfare services.

- *Promoting integration of migrants living together in diversity*



Budget items # 07 080 title group 68, # 07 090 539 00 and # 07 080 547 12

18.9m

Target group: migrants and/or displaced persons

The State supports a wide variety of efforts at the municipal level to help integrate migrants into society. There are 54 municipal integration centres ([Kommunale Integrationszentren](#)) in North Rhine-Westphalia. These centres primarily work with migrants who have been living in North Rhine-Westphalia for a longer time.

Intercultural centres are places of encounter and communication for people of different backgrounds and cultures. The State provides funds for training opportunities, low-threshold projects to support integration and the self-organisation of migrants.

Further, school-related educational offers in the central accommodation facilities in NRW are supported.



G. GBP: Renewable energy 225.0m

- *Energy and heat transition*



Budget item # 14 022 title group 62

213.0m

The current economic situation threatens to hinder investments in renewable energies. Therefore, the State provides funds to support municipalities, companies and building owners in particular. Further, the heating of buildings and the generation of process heat in industry are responsible for more than half of the final energy consumption. Investments that are made now pay directly into supply and energy security as well as into independence from fossil fuels. The aim of the programme is market integration and the broad roll-out of technologies, e.g. to accelerate the heat transition in the building sector and in production. Examples include the promotion of ground-mounted photovoltaic systems, photovoltaic roof systems on municipal buildings with battery storage, facade photovoltaic systems, carports with photovoltaic roof, residential buildings in passive house standard including ventilation systems and residential buildings in three-litre house standard including ventilation systems.

- *Energy storage*



Budget item # 14 300 title group 67

12.0m

Energy storage can be used to decouple energy demand and energy conversion, thus contributing to making the supply and use of energy more flexible in the overall system. Storage systems are therefore one of the most important options for increasing flexibility in the energy supply system. In addition to direct storage options for electricity, other storage options must be used and promoted across sectors as far as possible. The connection of the electricity sector with the gas sector (power-to-gas) is particularly important. The storage of electrical power in the form of heat (power-to-heat) is another important element in the energy system of the future.

H. GBP: Energy efficiency 106.4m

- *Climate protection technologies and low-emission mobility*



Budget items # 14 300 title group 63 and # 14 022 title group 63

99.6m

With the module "Climate Protection Technology" – formerly "Market Introduction" – the State promotes the introduction and dissemination of climate protection technologies that use energy efficiently, produce electricity and heat from renewable energy sources and contribute to sector coupling. The subsidized systems make a significant contribution to reducing CO2 emissions and achieving the climate protection goals in North Rhine-Westphalia. Funding is available for marketable products that still require start-up assistance for a limited period of time for the desired economic application. Advisory services and the creation of heating concepts are also funded.

The "low-emission mobility" module is the central instrument for switching to climate-friendly forms of propulsion, such as electromobility and hydrogen mobility. The focus is on expanding the charging infrastructure and supporting local authorities. For example, charging facilities for tenants and



employees as well as charging infrastructure for company fleets are promoted. Bidirectional charging will be promoted from 2023. Municipalities are supported in setting up charging infrastructure concepts and converting their fleets to electric vehicles. Other funding items are electric commercial vehicles, cargo bikes and electrolyzers at hydrogen filling stations. In addition, individual projects, e.g. in the field of climate-friendly logistics, can be funded. Two calls for funding for the construction of public charging infrastructure are also planned for 2023. These should be built primarily where drivers are staying for a limited time anyway (e.g. retail, leisure facilities, etc.). The expansion of public charging infrastructure is a key building block for the broad acceptance of electromobility among the population.

- *Enhancement of resource efficiency*



Budget item # 10 060 title group 68

6.9m

The State provides funds for its efficiency agency ([Effizienz-Agentur NRW](#)), projects relating to environmental protection at the company level, resource efficient economy and circular economy.

I. GBP: Pollution prevention and control 31.3m

- *Innovation for the climate-neutral energy and economic system of the future*



Budget item # 14 300 title group 69

21.5m

The State funds innovations for a climate-neutral energy and economic system of the future. The extended concept of innovation is used as a basis for the implementation in projects. In addition to the implementation of scientific findings in market-ready products, this also includes innovative processes and solutions that contribute to the goal of climate neutrality. These include, for example, storage technologies, networks, PtX technologies, innovative climate-neutral processes in industry and the use of hydrogen. The programme promotes applied research for technological and social transformation. This means that innovative approaches to transforming the energy system can be implemented quickly.

- *Municipal and social climate protection*



Budget item # 14 300 title group 64

9.8m

Binding municipal heat planning is an essential prerequisite for the concrete, systematic and cost-efficient decarbonization of heat in North Rhine-Westphalia and corresponds to the goal of the NRW coalition agreement, which names municipal heat planning as an integral part of urban development and climate-neutral heat supply. Municipal heat planning is intended to ensure investment decisions in infrastructure are well-founded and investment security for climate protection measures in municipalities is ensured, as required by the coalition agreement. With the year 2023, the Federal Government will create the legal prerequisites to oblige the municipalities to draw up heat plans. The budget funds are intended to support the North Rhine-Westphalian municipalities in the creation of heat plans, in particular through the comprehensive provision of basic data on heat sources and heat sinks in North Rhine-Westphalia (heat register in the NRW energy atlas), potential analyses and heat studies. In addition, the North Rhine-Westphalian municipalities are supported in the implementation



of municipal heating plans, in particular through suitable funding programmes (progres.nrw - climate protection technology). Basic work in the form of CO₂ balancing and energy management in municipalities is also supported.

Climate protection education is a constant task in order to open up the connections and possibilities for action to every generation. Therefore, selected educational offers on climate protection and global warming are also financed. Climate protection is a global task. North Rhine-Westphalia supports offers for training and further education for an international target group by financing a project of the UN Climate Secretariat in Bonn, the "ACE-Hub - Action for Climate Empowerment Hub".

J. GBP: Environmentally sustainable management of living natural resources and land use 45.4m

- *Protection of nature*



Budget item # 10 030 title group 82

45.4m

An import pillar of the State's conservation policy is the Biodiversity Strategy of 2015 ([Biodiversitätsstrategie](#)). It reflects efforts at the national level, where the federal government has submitted the National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS) in 2007. The NBS contains around 330 goals and 430 measures for protection and sustainable use of nature in Germany with a time frame from 2010 to 2050. The Biodiversity Strategy of NRW supplements and specifies the NBS regarding the specific conditions of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The State also provides financial support for private environmental protection facilities ("[Biologische Stationen](#)") and for land acquisitions for conservation purposes. "Biologische Stationen" are rooted in private initiatives for the conservation of nature. Today, these facilities serve as an important link between private and State efforts. The network of "Biologische Stationen" in North Rhine-Westphalia is unique nationwide and plays an important role in the implementation of the conservation work on site. Cooperation with agriculture, forestry and official authorities provides comprehensive support for the existing network of protection areas. Eligible activities also include voluntary conservation projects on site, implementation and support of wildlife conservation projects and education regarding issues of environmental protection.

Through land acquisitions for conservation purposes, highly valuable areas are protected from intensive economic exploitation to allow for a more environment-friendly development (e.g. heath or moorland, grassland, arable, and forestland in protection areas). These parcels of land can serve as "stepping stone habitat areas", allowing for unimpaired wildlife and strengthening the network of areas with favourable conservation conditions.



K. GBP: Clean transportation 65.5m

- *Infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians*



Budget items # 10 140 title groups 61 and # 10 150 777 14

65.5m

The State provides financial support for projects which improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly on short-haul routes (local mobility, see [Aktionsplan Nahmobilität](#)). The goal is to increase the use of non-motorized transportation especially for short distances. Major projects relate to the construction of a bicycle road infrastructure and bicycle parking facilities as well as construction of [bicycle paths on abandoned railway lines](#). Supported projects also include

- [Radroutenplaner NRW](#) (Bicycle Route Planner),
- [Wanderroutenplaner NRW](#) (Hiking Route Planner),
- [Radverkehrsnetz NRW](#) (Bicycle Route Network).

L. GBP: Sustainable water and wastewater management 110.5m

- *Flood protection*



Budget item # 10 050 title group 66 and # 10 080 title group 78

110.5m

Early and environment-friendly flood control is essential in the densely populated and highly industrialized State of North Rhine-Westphalia, especially regarding the river Rhine, but also for many other waters. In times of advancing climate change, the requirements for flood prevention and flood protection continue to increase. The flood prevention concept of the State ([Hochwasserschutzkonzept](#)) offers solutions for a wide range of possible flood events on large or small waters. The State's approach features concepts of technical assistance and water retention as well as planning instruments for flood prevention purposes, e.g. designation of floodplains. Natural watercourses and their floodplains can cache sprawling water, thus reducing the wave crest. Ecological restoration of streams and rivers can restore this property and thus contribute to flood prevention.

The special framework plan "Preventive Flood Protection" serves to finance certain flood protection measures of the National Flood Protection Programme (Nationales Hochwasserschutzprogramm (NHWSP)). The NHWSP was adopted in October 2014 by the Conference of Ministers for Environment. To this end, the Federal Ministry for Environment, together with the State ministries responsible for flood protection, has drawn up a list of priority, nationally effective flood protection measures. The special framework plan "Preventive Flood Protection" funds the NHWSP's measures "relocation of dykes" and "projects for controlled flood retention" (e.g. flood polders). Further information is available at <https://www.bmu.de/download/nationales-hochwasserschutzprogramm>.

[Information about flood protection in NRW](#)



M. GBP: Climate change adaptation 27.8m

- *Climate Action/Regional Climate Adaptation Measures (LIFE)/Adaptation to climate change*



Budget items # 10 060 title groups 65, 67 and 75

3.6m

The State provides funds to finance instruments and measures to achieve the State's climate goals and for public relations in the field of climate protection and adaptation.

LIFE is an EU programme that financially supports environmental and conservation projects. The programme contributes to the implementation, revision and further development of environmental policy and environmental legislation and to sustainable development in the European Union. The funds finance advisory and support services, development measures and specific projects at regional level.

- *Forests restoration*



Budget items # 10 030 title group 78

24.2m

Healthy forests are indispensable for preserving clean air, water balance, soil fertility and biodiversity. At the same time, the forest produces the renewable raw material wood, which is essential for climate protection as a carbon storage and a value chain based on it, in which this storage function is to be maintained for as long as possible.

In the context of the climate adaptation strategy, the State government therefore developed a cross-proprietor silviculture concept for North Rhine-Westphalia as early as 2015, which aims to develop site-specific and structured mixed stocks and thus makes the forests more stable and adaptable to climate change in the long term.

The combination of storm events, extreme periods of drought and bark beetle infestation has dramatically deteriorated the state of the forest in North Rhine-Westphalia. For the period 2018 to 2020, a damaged wood quantity of 32.37 million cubic meters can be recorded. The tree species spruce, which previously made up a good 30% of the North Rhine-Westphalian forest and has now largely died off, was particularly affected. In total, about 70,000 ha need already to be reforested as a result of the current damage. The bark beetle calamity continued in 2021, so that an expansion of the damaged areas is expected. The reforestation of these calamity areas in accordance with the silviculture concept will be the focus of forestry in North Rhine-Westphalia for the years to come.



N. GBP: Green buildings 335.0m

- *Conservation, remediation and enlargement of university clinics as well as other investments*



Budget items # 06 102 title group 63, title 891 20 of chapters # 06 103–108, respectively, and title 891 30 of chapters # 06 103–108, respectively 335.0m

The State plans to modernize all existing university clinics in order to provide state-of-the-art possibilities for medical treatment, but also regarding research.

The State's grants for conservation and remediation comprise funds for comprehensive measures to save energy and reduce emissions of existing buildings. Projects include asbestos, CFC and PCB disposal, where necessary, as well as modernisation of sewage systems. Further, they include on a limited scale small new buildings as well as conversions and extensions for existing facilities.

The State's grants for enlargement and other investments comprise funds for reconstruction and restructuring of existing buildings and new developments as well as major extensions, including the initial set-up.



Alignment with EU Taxonomy

A. Alignment of Environmental Projects with the EU Taxonomy

Methodology:

NRW commissioned ISS ESG to assess the alignment of the green eligible projects of the Sustainability Bond that are part of the NRW budget plan for 2023 with the EU Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act as well as the proposed criteria of the draft Environmental Delegated Act¹⁰. Expenditures that are part of the budget plan are subject to national laws and regulations. EU regulations are binding and are applied by Member States, including Germany. NRW determined which of its eligible projects would be in scope of the Climate Delegated Act (June 2021) and the proposed Environmental Delegated Act⁹ and mapped individual projects to the relevant EU Economic Activities as described in the Climate Delegated Act (June 2021) as well as in the proposed Environmental Delegated Act⁹. The State then examined the compliance of each project with the Technical Screening Criteria and Do No Significant Harm criteria. Through compliance with national laws and regulations in Germany, ISS ESG confirmed that the State of NRW complies with the Minimum Social Safeguards as defined in the Climate Delegated Act.

Outcome:

ISS ESG assessed the alignment of NRW's following eligible green projects against the requirements of the EU Taxonomy (Climate Delegated Act of June 2021), on a best-efforts basis¹¹:

- Energy and heat transition
- Energy storage
- Climate protection technologies and low-emission mobility
- Enhancement of resource efficiency
- Innovation for the climate-neutral energy and economic system of the future
- Protection of nature
- Infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians
- Flood protection
- Forests restoration
- Conservation, remediation and enlargement of university clinics as well as other investments

Based on project information and compliance with relevant regulations and EU legislation, the nominated project categories correspond with the following EU Economic activities which have a substantial contribution to Climate Change Mitigation (see *Table 1*):

¹⁰ Based on proposed criteria released in March and October 2022 by the Platform on Sustainable Finance.

¹¹ Whilst the Final Delegated Act for Mitigation and Adaptation were published in June 2021, the Technical Screening Criteria allow for discretion on the methodologies in determining alignment in certain cases. Therefore, at this stage ISS ESG evaluates the alignment with the EU Taxonomy on a "best efforts basis".



- 1.2 Rehabilitation and restoration of forests, including reforestation and natural forest regeneration after an extreme event
- 4.1 Electricity generation using solar photovoltaic technology
- 4.10 Storage of electricity
- 6.4 Operation of personal mobility devices, cycle logistics
- 6.5 Transport by motorbikes, passenger cars and light commercial vehicles
- 6.13 Infrastructure for personal mobility, cycle logistics
- 7.2 Renovation of existing buildings
- 7.4 Installation, maintenance and repair of charging stations for electric vehicles in buildings (and parking spaces attached to buildings)
- 7.6 Installation, maintenance and repair of renewable energy technologies
- 7.7 Acquisition and ownership of buildings
- 9.1 Close to market research, development and innovation

As well as the following activities for substantial contribution to Climate Change Adaptation:

- 5.1 Construction, extension and operation of water collection, treatment and supply systems

As well as the following activities for substantial contribution to The Protection and Restoration of Biodiversity:

- 8.1 – Conservation of habitats and ecosystems¹²

The listed activities are considered to be:

- Aligned with the respective criteria for Substantial Contribution to Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- Aligned with the Do No Significant Harm Criteria, except for Activity 7.2 (DNSH to Water and Marine Resources)
- Aligned with the Minimum Social Safeguards

Out of all social and green expenditures (2,997.2m), overall alignment of eligible green expenditures with EU Taxonomy based on EU Taxonomy assessment by ISS ESG: **17.1%**

Out of all green expenditures, overall alignment of eligible green expenditures with EU Taxonomy: **54.1%**

Out of in-scope green expenditures, overall alignment of eligible green expenditures with EU Taxonomy: **54.9%**



Category: Project Name	Budget Item	Budget Plan* (EUR m)	EUT Aligned (EUR m)	EU Activity	TSC	DNSH	MSS
G. Energy and heat transition	# 14 300 tg 63 and # 14 022 tg 63	213.0	56.9	4.1, 7.6, 9.1	✓	✓	✓
G. Energy storage	# 14 300 tg 67	12.0	12.0	4.10	✓	✓	✓
H. Climate protection technologies and low-emission mobility	# 14 300 tg 63 and # 14 022 tg 63	99.6	99.6	4.1, 6.4, 6.5, 7.4, 7.6, 9.1	✓	✓	✓
H. Enhancement of resource efficiency	# 10 060 tg 68	6.9	6.9	9.1	✓	✓	✓
I. Innovation for the climate-neutral energy and economic system of the future	# 14 300 tg 69	21.5	21.5	9.1	✓	✓	✓
J. Protection of nature	# 10 030 tg 82	45.4	33.2	8.1 ¹²	✓	✓	✓
K. Infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians	# 10 140 tg 61 and # 10 150 777 14	65.5	65.5	6.4, 6.13	✓	✓	✓
L. Flood protection	# 10 050 tg 66 and # 10 080 tg 78	110.5	110.5	5.1	✓	✓	✓
M. Forests restoration	# 10 030 tg 78	24.2	24.2	1.2	✓	✓	✓
N. Conservation, remediation and enlargement of university clinics as well as other investments	# 06 102 tg 63, title 891 20 of chapters # 06 103–108, respectively, and title 891 30 of chapters # 06 103–108	335.0	82.3	7.7	✓	✓	✓
			31.0**	7.2	✓	○***	✓
TOTAL		933.5	512.5		✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Mapping of green eligible projects to EU Economic Activities

¹² Based on proposed criteria released in March 2022 by the Platform on Sustainable Finance. In April 2023, released proposed criteria for the proposed Environmental Delegated Act with a four-weeks consultation period, which was ongoing at the time of the taxonomy alignment and SPO drafting.

*Out-of-scope green projects are excluded from this analysis.

** Not included in the total amount of EUT Aligned Eligible Assets

*** Except for the DNSH criteria for Water and Marine Resources for 7.2 (Renovation of existing buildings). Although it is not a requirement, the State of NRW is encouraging the highest level of sustainability standards in its procurement, including for university clinics. These policies include recommendations that products with the “Blauer Engel” eco-label, which is known as a label for environmentally friendly products, and is similar to the EU Ecolabel, are used in publicly financed projects. The “Blauer Engel” label for the relevant water products uses the same thresholds as the EU Ecolabel, from which the criteria requirements derive. Some university clinics do meet the taxonomy criteria in terms of water efficiency for majority of their fittings in newly renovated buildings, although not all fittings can meet the criteria because of specific uses e.g. medical taps for hygiene purposes (where no criteria exist within the EU Taxonomy).

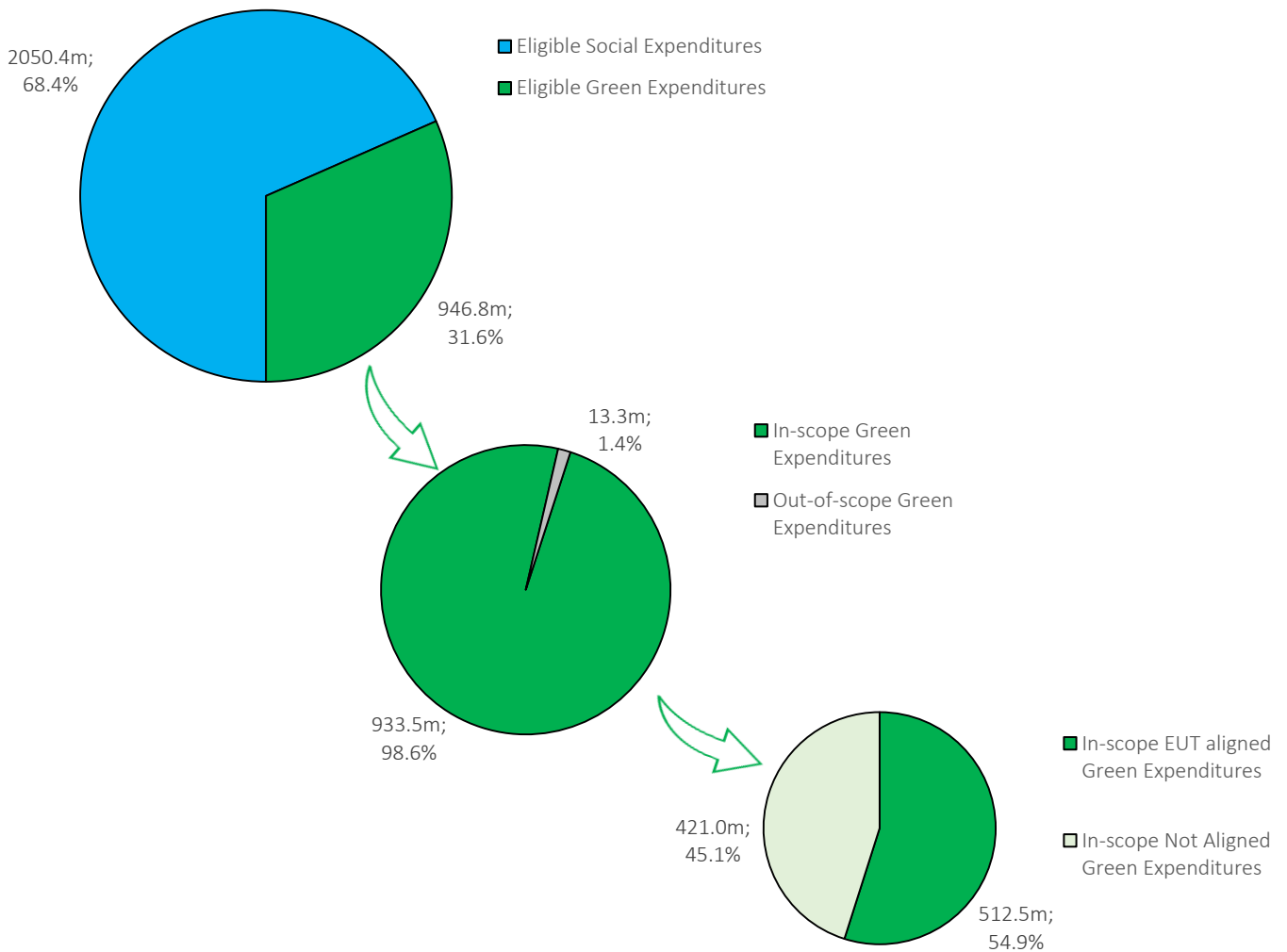


Figure 3: Overview of eligible projects 2023: in-scope versus out-of-scope green eligible projects and EU Taxonomy aligned vs. not-aligned green expenditures

B. Alignment of Social Projects with the proposed EU Social Taxonomy¹⁴

Methodology:

NRW's eligible social projects from Sustainability Bond #10 were mapped to relevant EU Social Taxonomy Core Objectives, Sub Objectives, types of Substantial Contribution and enhanced positive impact inherent in NRW's social projects using an AAAQ analysis. The objective of the high-level assessment is to show investors how NRW's eligible social projects of the Sustainability Bond would align with the proposed Social Taxonomy and how they substantially contribute to desired social objectives using the AAAQ analysis.

¹⁴ Based on the [Final Report on Social Taxonomy](#) (February 2022) by the Platform on Sustainable Finance.



Outcome:

Overall, 34 out of 41 eligible social projects were deemed to be aligned with the proposed Social Taxonomy (see *Table 2*) where it was possible to map the project to the relevant EUT Objective and Sub-Objective as well as where the project met the criteria based on the AAAQ concept. While 27 out of 34 projects contribute to one specific EUT Core Objective, 7 projects contribute to more than one EUT Core Objective.

The majority of projects target EUT core objective no. 3 (Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies) or EUT core objective no. 2 (Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end users):

- 14 projects solely target EUT core objective no. 3,
- 13 projects solely target EUT core objective no. 2,
- 5 projects target EUT core objectives no. 1 and 3 and the remaining
- 2 projects target both EUT core objectives no. 2 and 3.



Category	Project Name	EUT Core Objective	EUT Sub-Objective	AAAQ Analysis			
				Availability	Accessibility	Acceptability	Quality
A	Digitalization	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and inclusive growth by improving access for target populations and/or areas to basic economic infrastructure such as transport, telecommunications (including the internet), financial services, and electricity 	✓	✓	✓	✓
A	Public transportation for low-income citizens	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and inclusive growth by improving access for target populations and/or areas to basic economic infrastructure such as transport, telecommunications (including the internet), financial services, and electricity 	✓	✓	✓	✓
A	Public transportation for pupils and students	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and inclusive growth by improving access for target populations and/or areas to basic economic infrastructure such as transport, telecommunications (including the internet), financial services, and electricity 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Combating the dangers of addiction	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Health economy, telematics, further development of the health campus	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Improvement of health care	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Measures to ensure medical care	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Psychiatric care	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Development plan on geriatric care	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Professional education of geriatric nurses	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Bund-Länder-Covenant for the expansion of universities	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to education and lifelong learning 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Training facilities for the education of special education teachers	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to education and lifelong learning 	✓	✓	✓	✓



B	Measures to improve the quality of teaching and studying at universities	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to education and lifelong learning 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Support for family centres/promotion of cooperation of family formation and counseling centres with family centres	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and inclusive growth by child care and support to children 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	PlusKita and language courses at childcare facilities	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and inclusive growth by child care and support to children 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Childcare in special cases	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users 3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to quality healthcare products and services including care services Promoting equality and inclusive growth by inclusion of people with disabilities 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Exemption to contribution for parents for the last two years of day care	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and inclusive growth by child care and support to children 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Measures at day care centres in response to the coronavirus pandemic	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and inclusive growth by child care and support to children 	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Social work at schools	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to education and lifelong learning 	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	Urban development programmes "Social City" and "Social Centres"	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting sustainable livelihoods by avoiding and addressing negative impacts on communities affected by business operations (including but not limited to their: land and livelihoods; health, safety and security; culturally and spiritually sacred sites; and access to basic services, such as water, sanitation, housing and education) 	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	State programme for village renewal	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting sustainable livelihoods by avoiding and addressing negative impacts on communities affected by business operations (including but not limited to their: land and livelihoods; health, safety and security; culturally and spiritually sacred sites; and access to basic services, such as water, sanitation, housing and education) 	✓	✓	✓	✓
D	Occupational integration of people with disabilities	1. Decent work 3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting decent work by running extensive programmes for skills and life-long learning, job transition, and employment generation Promoting equality and inclusive growth by inclusion of people with disabilities 	✓	✓	✓	✓
E	EU school programme	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to healthy and highly nutritious food of good quality especially for children 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Fight against poverty and social exclusion	2. Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users 3. Inclusive and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to healthy and highly nutritious food of good quality especially for children 	✓	✓	✓	✓



		sustainable communities and societies					
F	European Social Fund 2014-2020 (State's share)/Programmes "No dead-end qualification"/"No dead-end qualification (compact)"	1. Decent work 3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting decent work by running extensive programmes for skills and life-long learning, job transition, and employment generation Promoting equality and inclusive growth by to the extent that is appropriate, preserving employment levels and hiring local workers and supporting local suppliers in targeted areas 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Equality and potential development in work and society	1. Decent work 3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and non-discrimination at work by equal employment opportunities for women Promoting equality and inclusive growth by promoting equality by: (i) addressing recognised gender gaps in communities and society; or (ii) having a transformative impact on gender equality and time savings for women (e.g. design features of mobility projects, access to finance for female entrepreneurs) 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Promotion of equality at universities	1. Decent work 3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and non-discrimination at work by equal employment opportunities for women Promoting equality and inclusive growth by promoting equality by: (i) addressing recognised gender gaps in communities and society; or (ii) having a transformative impact on gender equality and time savings for women (e.g. design features of mobility projects, access to finance for female entrepreneurs) 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Girls in special situations	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring respect for the human rights of affected communities by carrying out risk-based due diligence, including as it relates to the above-mentioned sub-objective areas 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Protection of children	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring respect for the human rights of affected communities by carrying out risk-based due diligence, including as it relates to the above-mentioned sub-objective areas 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Protection from violence	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring respect for the human rights of affected communities by carrying out risk-based due diligence, including as it relates to the above-mentioned sub-objective areas 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Social inclusion of persons with disabilities	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting decent work by running extensive programmes for skills and life-long learning, job transition, and employment generation Promoting equality and inclusive growth by inclusion of people with disabilities 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Measures for children from refugee families and for young refugees	1. Decent work 3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting equality and non-discrimination at work by decent job creation for target populations (unemployed young people, disadvantaged groups) Promoting equality and inclusive growth by to the extent that is appropriate, preserving employment levels and hiring local workers and supporting local suppliers in targeted areas 	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Promoting integration of migrants living together in diversity	3. Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting sustainable livelihoods by promoting community-driven development where decision-making processes are decentralised to the community level 	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: Alignment of Social Projects with the proposed EU Social Taxonomy

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