



COHESIFY

The impact of EU Cohesion Policy
on European Identification

Cohesion policy implementation, performance and communication

Baden-Württemberg case study

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Context and background	2
2.1	EU attitudes and identity	2
2.2	Political context	6
2.3	Regional and local governance	10
2.4	Socio-economic context and history	11
3.	Cohesion policy implementation and performance	13
3.1	EU Cohesion policy strategic and implementation framework	13
3.1.1	Operational Programmes for Baden-Württemberg 2007-2013	14
3.1.2	Operational Programmes for Baden-Württemberg 2014-2020	18
3.1.3	Implementation framework and partnership structures	19
3.2	Assessment of Performance	21
3.2.1	Programme performance	21
3.2.2	Partnership	32
3.3	Assessment of added value	34
3.4	Implications for citizens CP perceptions and attitudes	36
4.	Cohesion policy communication	36
4.1	Approach to communication	36
4.2	Assessment of effectiveness of communication strategies	41
4.2.1	2007-13 period	41
4.2.2	2014-20 period	44
4.3	Good practice examples	46
4.4	Media framing of Cohesion policy	48
4.5	Implications for citizens CP perceptions and attitudes to the EU	51
5.	Citizens views of Cohesion policy and the EU	53
5.1	Citizen survey results	53
5.2	Focus group results	56
6.	Conclusions	59
6.1	Key findings	59

6.2 Scientific conclusions	62
6.3 Policy implications and recommendations	63
7. References	64
8. Annexes.....	68
Annex 1: Stakeholder online survey response rates	68
Annex 2: List of interviewees	69
Annex 3: Focus group characteristics	69
Annex 4: Communication plan measures and indicators.....	69
Annex 5: Online Survey Questionnaire	75
Annex II: Interview Questionnaire	81

1. Introduction

Objectives and rationale

This case study deals with Baden-Württemberg, a region which is located in the south-west of Germany. We chose Baden-Württemberg as a case study for several reasons. First, Baden-Württemberg is one of the most prosperous regions and even the most innovative in Germany and Europe in economic terms. Secondly, due to its economic strength, Baden-Württemberg does not heavily rely on European Union (EU) regional transfer money. Thirdly, Baden-Württemberg is an interesting case to study because its absorption rate for the 2007-13 CP funds is considerably lower than the national average. Fourthly, inhabitants of Baden-Württemberg mostly have a positive image of the European Union. They perceive the EU as a modern and democratic governing entity. As a development in especially recent years, people living in the region feel “fairly” or even “very” attached to the Union. Corresponding to this, a vast majority of inhabitants of the state see themselves as an EU citizen, at least “to some extent” (Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017), 86.2 (2016), 84.3 (2015), 82.3 (2014)).

Baden-Württemberg is a state (*Land*) in the Germany federal system, i.e., it has state character with typical features, like a parliament, a government headed by a prime minister, a multi-layered administrative system as well as a differentiated court system. The state’s government (ministries) is the Management Authority for the ERDF and the ESF. As all German states, Baden-Württemberg knows a two-tiered system of democratically organised local governance. As a result, although the German federal government performs a monitoring role to ensure that state implement EU policy, the state government of Baden-Württemberg enjoys vast discretion in policy implementation.

Hence, the selection criteria for the case study included Cohesion policy eligibility and financial intensity, governance system and European identity. The case study results are derived from a mixed-method approach of quantitative and qualitative data. Empirical findings stem from desktop analyses of region’s implementation and communication of EU Cohesion Policy (CP), surveys among citizens and stakeholders asking for their views on CP, semi-structured interviews with members of Monitoring Committees (MC), focus groups with citizens, media analysis on CP, and socio-economic and political context analyses.

Methodology

In addition to secondary and primary resources for the desk-based analysis, the case study is based on the following original data:

A stakeholders’ online survey was carried out in the spring – summer of 2017. The survey was sent to 38 stakeholders, involved in ESI Funds during the 2007-13 and 2014-20 programming periods, including (i) Monitoring Committee members: stakeholders involved in the management and monitoring of operational Programmes, including Managing Authorities, implementing bodies, associations of local authorities or businesses, economic and social partners, education institutions, civil society organisations and NGOs; (ii) local state authorities: stakeholders involved in the delivery of EU projects as project promoters at the local level, (iii) and other economic development stakeholders. The response rate was 50.0 percent (or 19 respondents, out of which 9 incomplete and 10 complete responses) and the completion rate was 26.3 percent (or 10 complete responses), as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Interviews were conducted with 13 stakeholders representing the Managing Authority, economic and social partners, civil society organisations, local governments and local authority associations, and implementing partners at regional level. Most of the interviews were carried out between November 2017 and January 2018. (see Annex for more details).

In the focus group for the case study of Baden-Württemberg, 10 participants (2 female and 8 male) took part in 3 focus groups in the city of Mannheim. The groups included between 3-4 participants, and were homogenous per age cohort, except for the last focus group that had to be organized quickly (21-27, 57-67, and 30-63 respectively). The first and the third group had a relatively even

gender balance. The second group had only male participants due to the recruitment basis that included no women which was only revealed while organising the group (4 males). The majority of participants were residents of Mannheim. The participants of the second focus group, however, all came of the South and South Western parts of the state covering a large geography. All were German citizens.

Participants of one focus group were recruited through the COHESIFY citizen survey, which asked a random sample of respondents' living in Baden-Württemberg to provide a contact telephone number if they were willing to participate in a focus group discussion on the topic of EU funding and attitudes to the EU. This method allowed the recruitment of 4 – unfortunately male only – participants. The remaining 6 participants of the first and third focus group were recruited through snowball sampling using professional and personal networks. A payment of £50 was made to participants of the second and third focus group as an incentive to participate (see 35 in **Error! Reference source not found.** for more details).

A citizen survey with a representative sample of Baden-Württemberg's inhabitants (n=500) was conducted in the spring of 2017 by a professional survey institute. Citizens were asked questions about their knowledge of Cohesion policy, their assessment of Cohesion policy's role in the region as a whole as well as in their place of residence, and if they have personally benefitted from a co-funded project. Besides, respondents were requested to express their opinion about German EU membership, i.e., whether they believe this is positive or negative. Finally, citizens were asked several question that had the goal to inquire into their identities. This means that questions intended to find out how closely people of Baden-Württemberg identify with Europe, the European Union in general and the idea of European integration. Within that scope, question also addressed aspects of national and regional identities of citizens and how the latter would contrast or correspond with identities beyond national borders.

Structure of the case study

The case study is structured as follows. The next section describes the socio-economic and political context of Baden-Württemberg, with a special focus on citizens' EU attitudes and identity, as well as regional parties' political orientations towards European integration and CP. In section three, we present the results on the implementation and performance of the Operational Programmes (OPs) for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Baden-Württemberg for the programming periods 2007-13 and 2014-20. Section four deals with the communication aspects of CP in these two programming periods. How citizens evaluate the EU and CP is the focus of section five. The final section summarizes the key findings, draws scientific conclusions and elaborates on policy implications and recommendations.

2. Context and background

2.1 EU attitudes and identity

Systematic and rigorous inquiries into regional attitudes and identities in Germany – which would, for example, imply to (regularly) conduct and analyse representative surveys done at the states' level – lack a research tradition. This especially holds true for comparative research, but the assessment is also accurate for research that focuses on single regions, at least with respect to most German states (*Länder*). Thus, there is not really a state of the art that could be reported while this is even more so for research that would deal with regional attitudes and identities, and here especially in terms of observable differences, towards Europe and the European Union. The only major exception to this are analyses of differences between East and West Germans since unification in 1990.

In fact, it is only recently that systematic, comparative, cross-regional research focusing on regional populations' attitudes and values gained some momentum (see Bertelsmann-Stiftung 2017;

Mannewitz 2015). However, this research has not yet touched upon EU themes. The only exception for the state of Baden-Württemberg is the *Demokratie Monitoring Baden-Württemberg* [democracy monitoring Baden-Württemberg), a larger and ongoing research endeavour under the auspices of a state foundation that was started a couple of years ago, after a “Green-Red” coalition government, consisting of the left-libertarian, ecological Green Party and the Social Democrats (SPD), had come to power in 2011.¹ In its first major survey in 2013/14, inhabitants of the region were among other questions asked if they feel attached to the EU. On a scale reaching from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very strong), respondents located themselves slightly below 7 on average (Perry *et al.* 2015: 44). While this would only constitute a single item from a bunch of similar questions, it is nonetheless a good (first) indication that people from Baden-Württemberg are relatively EU “friendly”.

Besides, the ESF Management Authority commissioned in 2015 a state-wide survey in which people were surveyed in terms of their knowledge and attitude with respect to Cohesion policy in the region, especially the ESF (n=1000; ISG 2015). Within that scope, region’s inhabitants were also asked two general questions of high relevance. First, when requested to express their opinion on Germany’s EU-membership, 63 percent thought this to be “a good thing” (*eine gute Sache*) while a further 26 percent considered it neither good nor bad (*weder gut noch schlecht*). Only 9 percent thought of Germany’s EU-membership as something bad (*eine schlechte Sache*). The remaining 3 percent had no opinion. Related to this, people were also requested to express their view if EU-membership would bring more advantages or more disadvantages for Germany. Here, 42 percent saw overall more advantages, with 34 percent responded that advantages and disadvantages even each other out. A considerably smaller share of 23 percent rated Germany’s EU-membership as having more disadvantages for the nation (*ibid.*, pp. 10-11). Overall, however, these results would again support the notion that people living in Baden-Württemberg are rather EU supportive.

Considering the lack or scarcity of previous research as well as the clear lack of available data from representative surveys that could be analysed, we present some relevant results for residents of Baden-Württemberg from the German polling of the most recent annual Eurobarometer survey rounds accompanied by results from the first year of the previous Cohesion policy funding period that is 2007.² For some highly relevant results of only recently included questions, data are presented for the year 2017 only. In doing so, it has to be stressed that these are non-representative samples of region’s inhabitants as representativeness of Eurobarometer data is only assured for the Germany as whole. Besides, sample sizes are generally too small for representativeness, but also for further, especially more sophisticated analyses. However, in terms of (simple) descriptive presentation, the data would give some clear hints with respect to EU attitudes and values of inhabitants of the region. This would allow for reasonable, albeit cautions and preliminary conclusions.

In terms of general trust in the EU, Eurobarometer data for the last four years and 2007 give a rather mixed empirical picture. While in 2007 (the year before the financial and economic crisis that later turned into an EMU crises) a clear plurality of persons tended to trust the EU, this had considerably changed – as reversed – until 2014. However, since the beginning of the current Cohesion policy’s funding period, the number of persons who tend to distrust the EU (an interim majority) has clearly decreased. In 2017, a now even clear majority of region’s people tend to trust the EU (see table 1).

Table 1: Trust of in the European Union of region’s inhabitants, percentages

Trust in European Union	2017	2016	2015	2014	2007
Tend to trust	55.8	38.8	30.9	30.0	47.7
Tend not to trust	27.3	45.7	63.4	56.1	38.9
Don’t know	17.0	15.4	5.8	13.9	13.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	165	188	191	223	149

¹Please consult <https://www.bwstiftung.de> for more information.

²Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017) 86.2 (2016), 84.3 (2015), 82.3 (2014), 68.1 (2007). Data for 2007 are omitted in tables when respective question had not yet been included in survey.

Source: Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017), 86.2 (2016), 84.3 (2015), 82.3 (2014), 68.1 (2007); question QA8a.

With respect to the image Baden-Württemberg's people have from the European Union, a vast majority of respondents indicated having a positive or at least a neutral image. Although there seems to be a certain dynamic between 2007 and 2017 with an increase of persons with a negative image, this dynamic has been reversed in the meantime. In 2017, a clear majority of state inhabitants indicate a positive image with another 30 percent that see the EU in at least neutral terms. Only a minority (less than 15 percent) now indicate a negative image (see table 2).

Table 2: Image of the European Union for region's inhabitants, percentages.

Image of the EU	2017	2016	2015	2014	2007
Very positive	4.7	1.6	3.7	3.1	6.7
Fairly positive	52.7	35.1	35.6	41.3	36.2
Neutral	30.3	45.2	34.6	33.6	44.3
Fairly negative	10.3	14.9	21.5	15.2	10.1
Very negative	1.8	2.1	3.1	4.9	0.7
Don't know	0.6	1.1	1.6	1.8	2.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	165	188	191	223	149

Source: Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017), 86.2 (2016), 84.3 (2015), 82.3 (2014), 68.1 (2007); question QA9.

Similarly, over the last years, people of Baden-Württemberg overwhelmingly associate several, mostly positive meanings with the EU, like peace, economic prosperity, democracy, or a stronger say in the world. Even more than that, cultural diversity and travelling as well as the opportunity for studying abroad are emphasised. However, a negative meaning of the European Union that has been stressed relatively often, is more crime, possibly because of open borders in the Schengen area. Besides, people of the state tend to attribute a waste of money to the EU. For both latter negative meanings, however, one can observe a clear decrease for the year 2017 (see table 3).

Table 3: Meaning of European Union for region's inhabitants, absolute figures

What does the EU mean to you?	2017	2016	2015	2014
Peace	73	91	77	97
Economic Prosperity	41	34	39	51
Democracy	57	57	62	80
Social protection	11	17	14	20
Travel/Study/Work abroad	108	134	120	142
Cultural diversity	80	71	88	88
Stronger say in the world	54	67	43	57
Euro	77	112	113	127
Unemployment	9	26	20	55
Bureaucracy	42	71	82	91
Waste of money	32	48	67	87
Loss of cultural identity	8	14	32	20
More crime	34	66	48	73
Not enough frontier control	30	62	53	59
Other	3	2	2	3
Don't know	1	0	0	4
Total N	165	188	191	223

Source: Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017), 86.2 (2016), 84.3 (2015), 0.3 (2014); question QA11.

Closely related to these results, people of Baden-Württemberg currently largely agree with positive descriptions of the European Union, especially "modern" or "democratic", but also – albeit to a lesser extent – "forward looking". Vast majorities consider these descriptions to be appropriate. This is less

so with “efficient”, where people are largely undecided if this would describe the EU rather well or rather badly (see table 4).

Table 4: Terms region’s inhabitants associate with the European Union in 2017, percentages

How well do these terms describe the EU?	Modern	Democratic	Protective	Efficient	Remote	Forward-looking
Very well	13.9	13.9	9.7	8.5	6.1	10.3
Fairly well	67.9	67.9	61.8	38.2	37.6	66.1
Fairly badly	13.9	13.9	19.4	33.9	37.6	16.4
Very badly	0.6	0.6	2.4	6.7	7.9	0.6
Don’t know	3.6	3.6	6.7	12.7	10.9	6.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	165	165	165	165	165	165

Source: Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017); question QA12.

With respect to the issue if people from Baden-Württemberg feel attached to the European Union, there are some indications that this feeling of attachment had been negatively targeted by the economic and financial crises after 2007. However, impressively stable shares of state citizens indicate that they feel a least fairly attached with the EU, surpassing 80 percent in 2017 (see table 5). What is, hence, also remarkable is that the share of persons who feel hardly or not attached with the EU has dropped to less than one quarter now.

Table 5: Attachment of region’s inhabitants to the European Union, percentages

How attached to you feel to the EU?	2017	2016	2015	2014	2007
Very attached	23.0	13.8	14.1	11.2	16.1
Fairly attached	52.1	50.0	38.7	41.3	41.6
Not very attached	20.6	27.1	36.1	38.6	30.2
Not at all attached	0.6	4.8	9.4	7.2	8.7
Don’t know	3.6	4.3	1.6	1.8	3.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	165	188	191	223	149

Source: Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017), 86.2 (2016), 84.3 (2015), 82.3 (2014), 68.1 (2007); question QD1a.

Finally, a vast majority of inhabitants of the state see themselves as an EU citizen, at least “to some extent”, while this majority has even increased in recent years as there is a clear trend in that regard since 2014 when this question had been asked for the first time. Most remarkably, the number of persons who do definitely not feel as an EU citizen has dropped to less than 10 percent (see table 6).

Table 6: If region’s inhabitants feel as a European Union citizen, percentages.

Do you feel to be an EU citizen?	2017	2016	2015	2014
Yes, definitely	45.5	35.1	31.4	30.9
Yes, to some extent	43.6	45.2	46.6	43.5
No, not really	7.9	16.5	16.8	17.0
No, definitely not	1.2	2.7	4.7	5.8
Don’t know	1.8	0.5	0.5	2.7
Total	100	100	100	100
Total N	165	188	191	223

Source: Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017), 86.2 (2016), 84.3 (2015), 82.3 (2014); question QD2.

Overall, despite the clear limitations inherent to the data presented here (see above), it seems fair arguing that people of Baden-Württemberg mostly have a positive image of the European Union. For some issues involved, European attitudes of state citizens are even overwhelmingly positive. Most remarkably, a growing numbers of people in the region feel attached to the EU as well as an EU citizen

while it seems unlikely that this trend will be reversed in the near future if major crises within or at the level of the EU could be avoided.

2.2 Political context

The political context is not only shaped by the institutional structure of the state of Baden-Württemberg and of Germany, but also by the policy profile political parties adopt. Parties are the main linkage between the preferences and interests of the citizens with the institutions on the political system level, and therefore we analyse the issue area salencies and the policy positions of Baden-Württemberg state parties in more detail.

Methodology for estimating party positions

Party positions on policy issues, in general, as well as on European integration and EU Cohesion policy, in particular, are measured most of the time by either using expert surveys or content analyses of parties' election manifestos.³ Several expert surveys on party positions on the issue of European integration have been conducted in the last decades (Ray, 1999; Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2012). Additionally, expert judgements on national parties' policy stances towards European integration are part of broader projects on assessing party positions on a variety of policy issues (Bakker *et al.*, 2015; Benoit & Laver, 2006; Laver & Hunt, 1992). With the exception of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES, see Bakker *et al.*, 2015), however, there is also on the national level a lack of data on party policy positions on EU Cohesion policy. This is, for instance, also the case for data sets on party positions based on the analysis of party documents. Both the Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR; see Budge *et al.*, 2001; Klingemann *et al.*, 2006; Merz *et al.*, 2016) and the Euromanifesto Project (EMP; see Braun *et al.*, 2015) manually code 'quasi-sentences' referring to European integration issues in parties' manifestos for national elections and European Parliament (EP) elections. EMP additionally provides data on Europarties' policy positions on European integration by analysing election manifestos of the transnational party federations of national parties in the EP (see, e.g. Klüver & Rodon, 2013; also see Gabel & Hix, 2002). Furthermore, EMP comprises data on national parties' and Europarties' stances towards EU Structural Funds: Coders have to decide if a 'quasi-sentence' belongs to the sub-category "Positive: Need to maintain or to extend EC/EU funds for structurally underdeveloped areas" or to the sub-category "Negative: Support for cutback or suspension of funds for structurally underdeveloped areas".

This variety of measurements on party orientations towards European integration led to a vibrant debate on the quality of the different measures (Marks *et al.*, 2007; Netjes & Binnema, 2007; Ray, 2007; Whitefield *et al.*, 2007). To put it in a nutshell, both expert surveys and manifesto data are valid measures of party positions on European integration (Marks *et al.*, 2007; Ray, 2007). Government parties in particular take a positive stance for a further deepening of European integration while opposition parties, radical left parties, and parties leaning towards a more nationalist and authoritarian state are more Eurosceptic (Hooghe *et al.*, 2004). Yet, researchers have to bear in mind that especially "[s]mall, extreme, parties appear more difficult to pin down than larger, centrist ones" (Marks *et al.*, 2007, p. 24). Experts sometimes do not have enough information on small and extreme parties and thus differ in their judgements. To sum up, expert surveys and manifesto data are two sources with valuable information on party positions towards European integration and CP. These

³ Using mass public opinion surveys as a third method for determining the issue positions of political parties will not be discussed here.

sources, however, have one severe weakness: party positions on European integration and CP are *only* available for national parties or Europarties. If and how *sub-national* parties have different policy orientations on these two issues is a question that has not been addressed yet.

The measurement of sub-national party policy positions gained momentum in the last years. Scholars focused on sub-national parties' left-right orientation in a unidimensional policy space or on parties' orientations towards economic and societal policy issues in a two-dimensional setting (see, e.g., Bäck *et al.*, 2013; Benoit *et al.*, 2009; Debus & Gross, 2016; Stefuriuc, 2013). For example, adapting the MARPOR coding scheme to the regional level in Spain and Great Britain, the Regional Manifestos Project (RMP; see Alonso *et al.*, 2013, 2015) additionally allows scholars to empirically address research questions on how sub-national parties position themselves on territorial issues, among others. There is, however, no data set based on regional election manifestos dealing with party positions on European integration and EU Cohesion policy. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, expert surveys on sub-national party policy positions do not exist. Jolly (2007), for instance, evaluates how parties on the regional level perceive the EU using CHES data on party positions on European integration issues, but his study is limited to *regionalist* parties—like the Scottish National Party (SNP)—that are covered in the CHES survey (which asks experts to position parties competing on the *national* level on several policy dimensions). All in all, there is still a lack of data for policy positions of national parties' regional branches on European integration and CP. This is surprising, given the empirical evidence that party branches' policy positions both differ from branches of the same party and from the national party's positions (Debus *et al.*, 2011; Müller, 2009, 2013, Stefuriuc, 2009a, 2009b).

For the cases with regions under study, and where parties draft regional election manifestos, we are able to estimate these *regional* policy positions more precisely than by just presenting party positions on the *national* level. We are using sub-national parties' election manifestos as a valid source for deriving sub-national party positions on European integration and EU regional policy (Marks *et al.*, 2007; Ray, 2007). We apply fully-computerised automated text analysis and here the 'Wordscores' method to derive sub-national party positions on European integration and European regional policy from election manifestos (for a detailed description see Bräuninger *et al.*, 2013; Laver *et al.*, 2003; Lowe, 2008). This leaves us with the degree of support of regional parties for European integration, in general, and EU Cohesion policy, in particular. The higher the scores a party receives on the respective dimensions, the more in favour the party is on European integration and CP.

Methodology for estimating issue emphasis

Regarding national and sub-national parties' emphasis of European issues and EU Cohesion policy, we focus on the percentage of a party's manifesto devoted to these issues. Manifestos have been manually coded by, first, extracting every paragraph in which EU-related issues are mentioned, and, secondly, assigning these paragraphs to seven EU-related categories:

1. EU/Europe in general;
2. EU funding in general
3. European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF)
4. European Social Fund (ESF)
5. Cohesion Fund (CF)

6. Agricultural funds (combined category)⁴
7. Fisheries funds (combined category)⁵

The two combined categories comprise EU funds that are only partly part of CP. Yet, pre-tests on German and Dutch election manifestos showed, for instance, that national and sub-national parties do not distinguish in their election manifestos between CP funds and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Furthermore, parties sometimes mention their intention to finance specific measures by using money of more than one EU fund. In order to not miss such valuable information, a broader category had to be included.

In the following section, we first present the percentage of a party's manifesto devoted to European issues and CP (*EUPER*), i.e. we compare the number of words related to EU-relevant paragraphs with the total number of words of the manifesto. Subsequently, we take a closer look at parties' emphasis of European issues by distinguishing between the percentage of words a party devotes to EU/Europe in general (*EUGEN*) and to EU and CP funding in particular (*SUMFUND*), i.e. we compare the word share of category 1 with the cumulated word share of categories 2-6. Note that we do *not* make any statements about whether or not a party speaks positively, negatively, or neutral about European issues—we answer the question *if* national and sub-national parties talk about European issues and if they do so, how much space they devote in their election manifestos to these issues. In other words, we are interested in answering the question "how salient is Europe for national and sub-national parties" (cf. Spoon, 2012)?

Results

The patterns of sub-national parties' policy positions on European integration and CP in Baden-Württemberg closely resemble national parties' policy positions. Particularly Christian Democrats (CDU), the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), Greens, and SPD are strongly in favour of European integration, whereas The Left, the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) and Alfa, another, but electorally unsuccessful right-wing populist party, oppose it (see Table 7). As it is the case on the national level, the Liberals (FDP) are more sceptical about EU Cohesion policy than about European integration.

Table 7: Regional party positions on European integration and EU Cohesion policy in Baden-Württemberg

Party	Election year	Policy positions	
		(a) European integration	(b) Cohesion policy
CDU	2011	6.53	5.48
	2016	5.96	5.18
SPD	2011	5.07	5.29
	2016	6.39	5.89
FDP	2011	6.30	4.87
	2016	6.03	4.83
Greens	2011	5.68	5.40
	2016	6.42	5.87

⁴ This category comprises the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF).

⁵ This category includes the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG), the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

PDS/The Left	2011	2.45	4.09
	2016	2.46	4.11
AfD	2011	—	—
	2016	3.21	2.92
Pirate Party	2011	4.43	4.19
	2016	—	—
Alfa	2001	—	—
	2016	2.43	2.30

Note: Party policy positions are based on 'Wordscores' estimations of regional parties' election manifestos. Low scores indicate opposed positions towards European integration and EU Cohesion policy, respectively, while high scores indicate positions in favour of European integration and EU Cohesion policy.

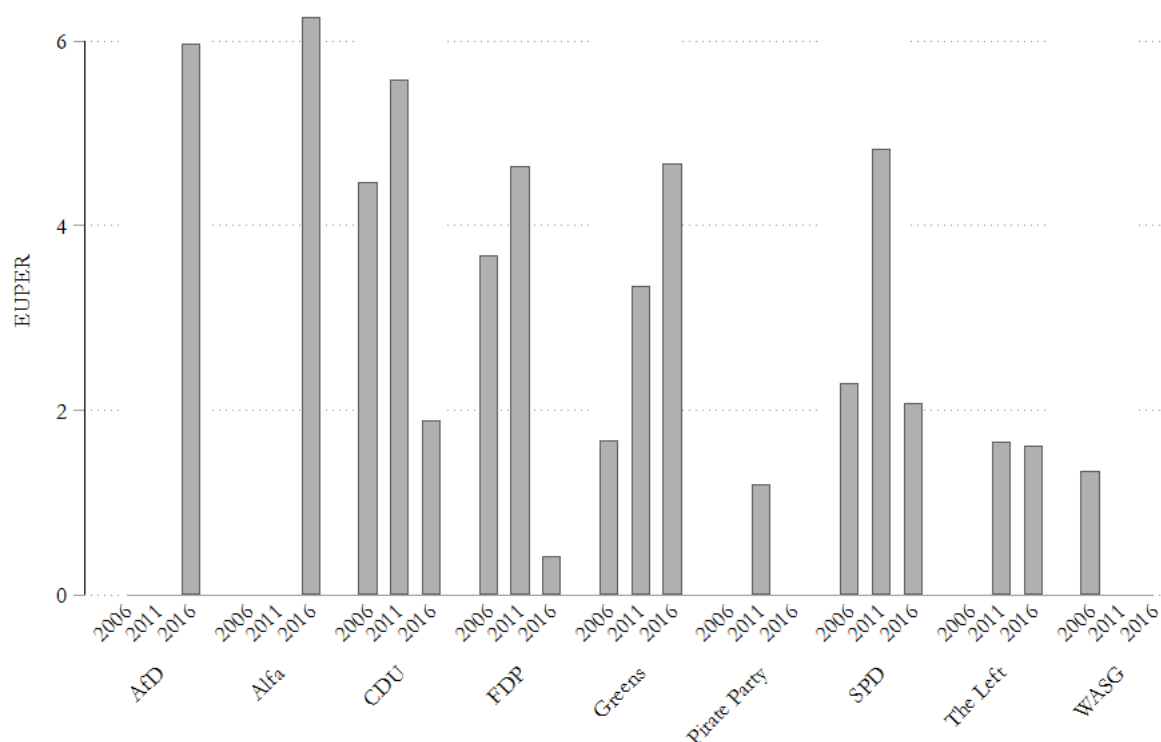


Figure 1: EUPER by parties by election year in Baden-Württemberg

Note: Bars show the percentage of the regional manifestos (grouped by party and election year) that focuses on European issues (EUPER). A blank space indicates that a party did not run for election in the respective year.

The data on percentages of the regional manifestos devoted to European issues by parties in Baden-Württemberg shows that European issues only play a marginal role in the election campaigns under study (see Figure 1). Parties only devote 0.4 (FDP in 2016) to 6.2 percent (Alfa in 2016) of their manifestos to European issues, and if they talk about European issues, they most of the time talk about Europe and the EU in general (see Figure 2).

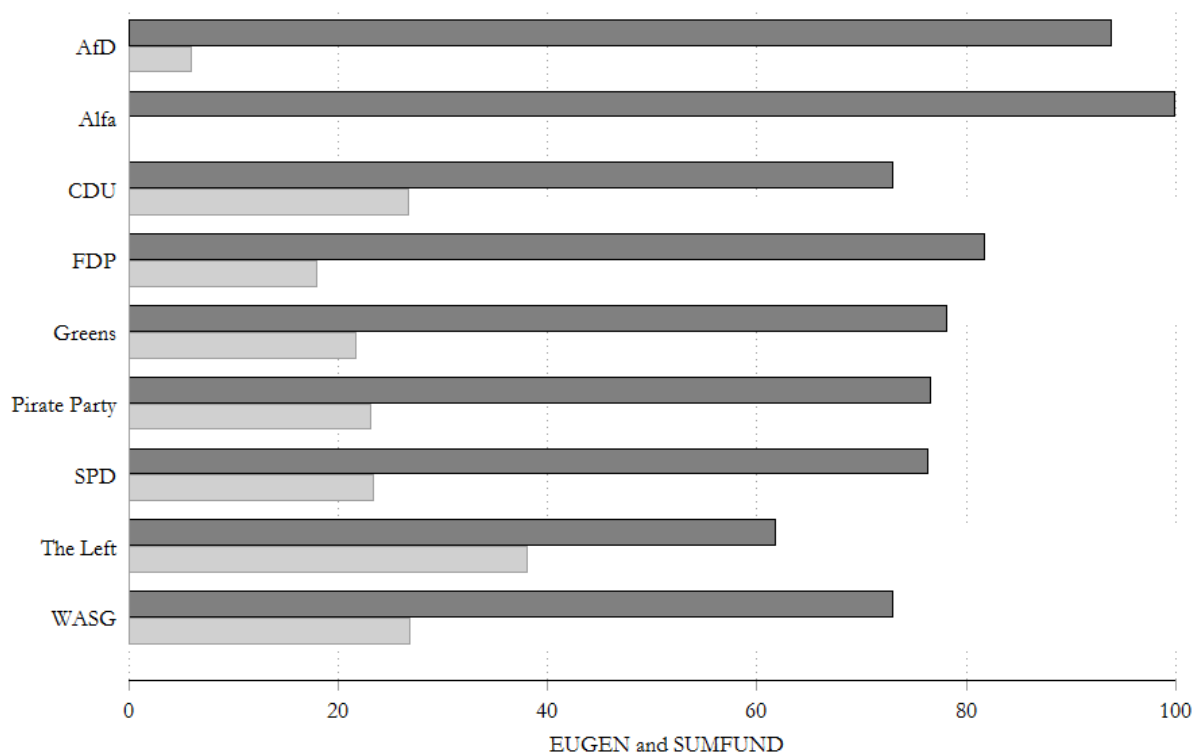


Figure 2: EUGEN and SUMFUND by parties in Baden-Württemberg

Note: Bars in dark grey show the average percentage of the regional manifestos (grouped by party) that focuses on Europe in general (EUGEN). Bars in light grey show the average sum of all categories related to EU funding (SUMFUND) in parties' regional manifestos.

2.3 Regional and local governance

Baden-Württemberg is one of 16 *Länder* (states) in Germany. In the German federal system, all *Länder* have the same competences and have state character. That is, they all have the typical features, like a (single chamber) legislature, a government headed by a prime minister, a bureaucracy and ordinary courts as well as courts for certain subjects (e.g. administration) only. Besides, the German system is one of "cooperative federalism". Furthermore, Germany resembles a "marble cake" type of federalism rather than a "layer cake" type. Hence, competence allocation between the states and the federal layer is not clear-cut with segmented or exclusive spheres of responsibility, but competence spheres are mostly interwoven (Lehmbruch 2000; Sturm 2001).

Within that scope, a particular feature of German federalism with a centuries long tradition is that legislation is overwhelmingly a federal task while administration of laws and rules (implementation respectively) overwhelmingly resides with the states (the Constitution assigns the local level within the realm of state competences). As a result, state action – policy making – is almost always a result of complex and intermingling processes in which federal and state actors (closely) interact (see Lehmbruch 2000; Leunig 2012).

Nonetheless, some general remarks on state responsibilities in terms of Cohesion policy are possible. As a *Land*, Baden-Württemberg has a range of responsibilities, although these are largely non-legislative with the important exceptions of school education, cultural affairs, police, public employment and local government issues. Most important competences are economic development, health and social affairs, rural affairs, housing, education (in general), environmental protection, advocacy and advice, and traffic. As indicated, due to the particular characteristics of German

federalism, states' competences can extend to almost all policy areas, albeit, as stressed, these competences are almost never exclusive (Hildebrandt & Wolf, 2016; Wehling 2004).

However, for some policy fields, the cooperation between states and the federal level is particularly pronounced and in that of special character. For example, economic development and improvement of living conditions as well as agriculture are constitutionally defined as a *Gemeinschaftsaufgabe* (shared responsibility) in Article 91a. For many other areas, states either use their own budgets or receive federal funding for tasks and goal achievement. The latter gained momentum in recent years. Currently, there is a federal reform dynamic towards increasing federal influence in state affairs, especially in terms of allowing direct linkages between the federal and the local levels, which is normally prohibited by the constitution (disregarding constitutionally defined exceptions). The basic intention behind this is enabling the federal government to finance policies, especially public service provision, at the local level.

Sub-regional government in Baden-Württemberg consist – on the first level – of four larger governmental districts (*Regierungsbezirke*). Beneath are 35 rural districts and nine urban districts (*Landkreise/Stadtkreise*). The latter have a dual character in all German states. On the one hand, they constitute the lowest level of the states' administrative system. On the other hand, *Kreise* form the upper level within the scope of democratically organized local self-government that enjoys constitutional protection (Article 29.1). The lower local authority level consist of municipalities while these are distinguished into municipality associations and municipalities in a narrower sense.

Local authorities reflect geographical diversity within Baden-Württemberg and vary widely in size and population. The current structure was the result of a reorganization process between 1968 and 1975 that had the general intention to establish larger and in that more capable territorial units. Policy implementation and, hence, the provision of the majority of public services is allocated with the districts or the municipalities. Following the principle of self-government, local authorities operate independently of state government and are accountable to their electorates, also for policies.

In terms of relationships with the EU, all German *Länder* enjoy vast formal rights with respect to influence and information set up at the national level. These prerogatives are overwhelmingly anchored in the *Bundesrat* – the "quasi" second legislative chamber that is composed of state governments' members – and its competences in EU affairs. Hence, these rights are embedded in a complex constitutional (Article 23) and legislative structure that establishes a fine-graded system of federal government's obligations vi-a-vis states and states' legal options to act (at least in theory) (Borkenhagen 1998; Morawitz & Kaiser 1994; Sturm & Pehle 2001).

Despite this, Baden-Württemberg supplements its formal rights with respect to the EU with informal channels of contact. The state's representation in Brussels is in terms of budget, staffing and range of activities one of the largest among German states' *Landesvertretungen bei der Europäischen Union* (currently 23 full-time employees). The state government's general intention is to use all available means to receive information about EU policies that target states' interest as early and as comprehensive as possible. Based on that, the government attempts to informally influence the EU policy processes according to its interests and, if possible, when proposals are still at an early stage (Große Hüttmann and Knodt 2003). Overall, Baden-Württemberg enjoys considerable discretion in the implementation of (EU) policy.

2.4 Socio-economic context and history

Like most German *Länder* (states), Baden-Württemberg is an "artificial" creation, which means that in its current form (e.g. regarding its name and the territorial extension) it actually lacks a historical tradition. Unlike all other German *Länder*, however, it is product of a successful merger of former

independent states – Baden, Württemberg-Baden and Württemberg-Hohenzollern – that was realised *after* the founding of the Federal Republic in 1949 (which occurred in accordance with the Constitutional mandate in Article 29 to restructure the German territory not least with the goal to create larger, stronger and in that “viable” states).

Following referenda in four set-up voting districts covering the three previous states that had resulted in a three to one majority in favour of the new state, the *Land* was founded in 1952 and soon turned out to be a “success story” despite enormous and still existing “mental animosities” between inhabitants of Baden and Württemberg (*Swabians*). The creation of the *Südweststaat* (South West state) established one of the largest German *Länder* with one of the highest number of inhabitants (about 4,26 million in 1952 that grew to almost 11 million in 2017) (see Wehling 2004 for the state’s history; *Statistisches Landesamt* 2017).

In economic and social terms, Baden-Württemberg has a long history as one of the German industrial birth places and strongholds, especially with respect to automobile construction, machinery, fine mechanics, optics, chemistry or (until its globalization caused almost fading in the 1970) textiles. Cities like Mannheim or Stuttgart (*Daimler, Mercedes, Porsche*) even became known worldwide as a result.

On the other hand, the state was and still is characterized by large and often remote rural areas, especially in its low mountain ranges *Black Forest* and *Schwäbische Alb*. The latter were not only characterized by a dominating agriculture and forestry, but remained economically backward, even poor areas way until the 20th century, not least due to the topography. However, even most of these mountainous rural areas also knew since the late 19th century industrial producers in different kind of sectors, i.e., located in small cities and towns – an economic feature that even prevails today and which is nowadays often described with the saw “one world market leader in every valley”.

Following WWII, the territories of the later *Land* Baden-Württemberg experienced an enormous inflow of refugees from Germany’s former Eastern provinces, a process that clearly benefited the region in economic terms. The state also developed into one of main targets for migration from Southern Europe and Turkey that began in the late 1950s, due to its industrial strengths that over a long time offered many job opportunities even for low-skilled migrants (Wehling 2004). As a result, the state’s urban centres like Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Heilbronn, Pforzheim and especially Mannheim have large population segments with a “migration background” (e.g., almost reaching 45 percent in Mannheim in 2017; Stadt Mannheim Kommunale Statistikstelle 2018).

Over time, Baden-Württemberg developed into one of the economically strongest and in that most prospering as well as most competitive regions not only in Germany, but also in (Western) Europe. Even if also hit by structural change in many sub-regions and with respect to many “old” industries that began in the 1970s, these basic characteristics did not dramatically change over time. Baden-Württemberg has one of the highest GDP per capita and overall GDP in Germany that is even higher than that of several smaller EU members. The latter was 493.3 billion EUR in 2017 while the regional GDP per capital grew by 2.3 percent in that year. The state’s inhabitants have – on average – one of the highest purchasing powers nationwide. The regional unemployment rate always remained one of the lowest in Germany and currently is at about 3 percent according to ILO standards (3.1 percent in 2016) and 3.9 according to national measurement standard (2017). Remarkably, unemployment is mostly considerably lower in rural areas. Within Germany, the state constantly had one of the highest tax revenues per capita, but also in absolute terms. As a result, together with Bavaria and Hesse, Baden-Württemberg is one of the constant and long-term contributors within the German horizontal fiscal equalization scheme and together with Hesse the state with the longest, in fact a decade-long history as a contributor (ERDF Final Report 2007-2013; *Statistisches Landesamt* 2017).

Besides its traditional economic strengths, the state is nowadays strong in industrial high tech and R&D in general. The regional spending for R&D is one of the highest among European regions lifting

the region on top of Europe's Innovation Index in 2004. It remained on the position since then. More recent economic areas of importance are, for example, IT and medical technology. However, a particular strength of the state's economy is that it not only knows large companies, but its "real" economic power base are the manifold S&M enterprises. As mentioned, the latter are often not located in the urban centres, but rather in smaller cities and even towns, often in rural areas (ERDF Final Report 2007-2013; *Statistisches Landesamt 2017*).

Baden-Württemberg has nine universities – most of them have a reputation as top research institutions – and 23 other (public) higher education institutions (for example universities of applied science). Although these universities offer studies in the full spectrum of the sciences and humanities, several universities are especially strong in natural sciences and engineering. This is even more so for the other higher education institutions. The *Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)*, founded in 2009 as cooperation between the state and the federal level, is one of if not the leading national *Großforschungszentrum* (large scale research conglomerate).

However, Baden-Württemberg at the same time has economic and social weakness – albeit on a much lower level. As indicated, structural changes had turned several previously strong industrial urban centres into "problem areas" with double-digit unemployment levels, especially in the 1990s. Besides, compared with production, the regional economy's service sector remained underdeveloped and can still not yet outpace industrial production in terms of gross value added, despite higher annual rates of employment increase. Finally, general socio-economic developments do not spare the region, most importantly demographic change and the problems it entails especially for securing a qualified workforce base for a vital economy and with respect to keeping rural areas attractive or even liveable. In social terms, albeit state-wide unemployment levels are and have been low, a particular challenge is "cemented" unemployment, i.e. jobless persons with multiple employment barriers, especially as concentrated in urban centres. Besides, several problems exist in the environmental field, especially in terms of energy consumption and (related) absolute and per capita carbon dioxide emissions, water quality, land utilization, and flooding endangered zones, albeit remarkable progress has been recorded for several of these areas in after the year 2000 (ERDF Final Report 2007-2013).

Nonetheless, these overall socio-economic conditions and developments demonstrate that Cohesion policy can and always could only play a *special* role in the region while this would mostly refer to the ERDF, but also the ESF.

3. Cohesion policy implementation and performance

3.1 EU Cohesion policy strategic and implementation framework

To implement the ERDF Operational Programme (OP), Baden-Württemberg was entitled to use 143.400.068€ financial resources of the EFRE funds during the years 2007 to 2013. The programme was valid in the area of Baden-Württemberg (NUTS 1). Being one of Germany's most prosperous regions explains this comparatively low amount. The focus of the programme was based on the following sectors: innovation, knowledge-based economy and cluster, sustainable urban development, natural resources management and risk avoidance. Programme was considered to support the targets of the EU summits of Gothenburg and Lisbon by strengthening the *Land's* competitiveness. The OP 2007-2013 points out these problems and wanted to improve Baden-Württemberg's living conditions through the ERDF funding. The title of the funding period 2014-2020's OP is "Innovation and energy transition." Between 2014 and 2020 Baden-Württemberg can use 247.6 million EUR of the ERDF. National funds with at least the same sum complement the financial resources.

Key-sectors economic sectors of Baden-Württemberg are mechanical engineering, automotive industry, metal industries, steel and light metal industries and electrical engineering. **Baden-Württemberg's strengths** are an innovative business, the development potential of dynamic business clusters, the central geographic location within the European Union, a decentralised settlement system and economic structure and the environmental situation as a whole.

Baden-Württemberg's weakness are the population development, a supposed lack in service sector and several aspects like a particular declining innovation dynamic, a high share of less substantial start-ups, a growing pollution of the ground and increasing danger of flooding.

Baden-Württemberg's rural areas have several strengths like suitable location conditions for companies, stable middle-sized companies, a high standard of living and touristic development potential. **The weakness of rural areas** are below average income levels, below average numbers of workspaces, a particular low quality of workplaces, gaps in infrastructure and an ageing population. **Strengths of urban areas** are their basic function as working-and supply centres, the economic structure as well as the educational structure, a large service sector and good infrastructure. **Weaknesses of urban areas** are some places are old industrial regions with high unemployment and social as well as urban development problems, few free areas and environmental damages.

3.1.1 Operational Programmes for Baden-Württemberg 2007-2013

The desk research, which is based on the Baden-Württemberg ERDF OP 2007-2013 and the ERDF 2007-2013 Final Report, shows that the aim of the OP 2007-2013 was to support the targets of Lisbon and Gothenburg. In Lisbon the basic strategic aims of the European Union have been defined. The EU should become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" by 2010. In 2001, the meeting of the European Council in Gothenburg added the importance of sustainability. Poverty, global warming or the loss of species richness should be prevented. In March 2005, the restructuring of the Lisbon Strategy decided to mobilize all available resources, including the structural funds and funds to support the development of rural areas, to design a coherent strategy.

The European Commission passed the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion 2007-2013. Main targets were a renewal of the principles of competitiveness, the increase of economic growth and productivity as well as social cohesion. The structural funds should be invested for the following three priorities:

1. Improvement of the attractiveness of the European Union's regions and towns
2. Development of innovation, entrepreneurial spirit and growth of the knowledge-based economy
3. Development of more and better workspaces

The Operational Programme of Baden-Württemberg 2007-13 supported these priorities of the Community Strategic Guidelines and worked on the realisation of the Lisbon Strategy (at that time). After 2010, the OP's targets were also conceived to be clearly in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy formulated by the EU in that year as a successor of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies. Besides these priorities, the Community Strategic Guidelines pointed out the need to adapt the special problems of a region. Accordingly, the general core areas of ERDF in Baden-Württemberg 2007-2013 were:

- Innovation and knowledge-based economy
- Sustainable town and municipal development

- Natural resources management and risk avoidance

All measures had to support the cross-sectoral areas “sustainable development” and “equality of women and men and non-discrimination. The OP also supported the idea of a suitable complementarity with the EAFRD funds, to be able to use all available Community funds. At the same time, a clear separation between the supportive measures had to be guaranteed. The coherence of the ERDF and EAFRD was based on these guideline.

Germany’s national strategic supporting programme included three strategic aims and six thematic priorities. These priorities provided, appropriate with their orientation to ERDF, a frame of reference. These national strategic aims were:

- Innovation and extension of the knowledge society as well as a strengthening of the economic competitiveness
- Increase of the attractiveness of the regions for investors and inhabitants through sustainable regional development
- Reorganization of the job market – create new and better workspaces

Thematic priorities were:

- Promotion of a knowledge based and innovation orientated development
- Strengthening of an entrepreneurial base
- Removal of regional disparities and extension of specific regional potentials through sustainable regional development
- Strengthening the adaptability and competitiveness of companies and employees
- Improvement of human resources
- Improvement of integration of disadvantaged people and improvement of their job possibilities

The ERDF programme was specially oriented on the first two targets and their connected priorities. The programmes target according to the OP was to grant direct investment aid to some 385 new SMEs and to support around 120 projects, especially in the area of research and technological development. A cooperation of several business and/ or research institutions should be build up. As well, around 845 projects relating to environmentally friendly products and production processes would be supported. Resource protection, risk avoidance and environment protection are relevant supporting factors.

Around 20% of the budget had been reserved for four cities selected by Baden-Württemberg, namely Mannheim, Pforzheim, Heilbronn and Villingen-Schwenningen. The ERDF means were intended to contribute to strengthening the cities as business locations and increasing employment as part of an integrated urban development plan for sustainable development.

The OP defined four priorities:

1. Innovation, knowledge-based economy and clusters (approx. 45.6% of total ERDF funding)
2. Sustainable urban and municipal development (approx. 27.4% of total ERDF funds)
3. Resource protection and risk prevention (approx. 23.5% of total ERDF funding)
4. Technical assistance (approx. 3.5% of total ERDF funding)

For priority 1 (intersecting with priority 2), goals were further specified as key areas of action:

- Networks and clusters
- Research and knowledge transfer
- Innovation in enterprises
- Innovation oriented start-ups
- Business supportive infrastructure
- Technology transfer

For priority 2, goals were further specified as key areas of action in terms of:

- Sustainable city development with sustainable city development concepts (focus on higher-order centres)
- City development flagship projects

For priority 3, goals were further specified as key areas of action in terms of:

- Usage of renewable energies and increase of energy efficiency
- Investments into environmentally friendly products and production processes
- Modern (enhanced) wastewater treatment
- Natural resources protection (focus on land)
- Reducing flooding risks

Priority axes and allocations in 2007-2013

Table 8: ERDF OP 2007-2013 priority axes and allocations

<i>Priority Axis</i>	<i>EU Investment</i>	<i>National Public Contribution</i>	<i>Total Public Contribution</i>
Innovation, knowledge-based economy and clusters	65 385 068	56 135 068	121 520 136
Sustainable urban and municipal development	39 289 000	39 289 000	78 578 000
Resource protection and risk prevention	33 690 000	33 690 000	67 380 000
Technical assistance	5 036 000	5 036 000	10 072 000
Total	143 400 068	134 150 068	277 550 136

Urban “problem-areas” which got financial support from the European Fund for Regional Development are the high-order centres (*Oberzentren*) of Mannheim, Pforzheim, Heilbronn and Villingen-Schwenningen. The Ministry of Economic Affairs (since 2011 the Ministry of Economy and Finance) analysed the high-order centres of the state in the following sectors: development of population 1990-2005, employees with compulsory insurance 1990-2004, commuter balance 2004, workplace welfare 2004 (employees with compulsory insurance per 1000 inhabitants), part of

producing industries / service industries 2004, taxable capacity 2005, level of debt 2004. The high-order centres of Baden-Württemberg should guarantee high qualified and specialized working places (regional development plan of the government of Baden-Württemberg, *Landesentwicklungsplan der Landesregierung (Verordnung vom 23.7.2002)*). Mannheim, Pforzheim, Heilbronn and Villingen-Schwenningen are the cities with the most problems with the employment market in Baden-Württemberg. This was main point for choosing them as assisted areas.

The OP also pointed out the added value of the ERDF funding in these cities. The aim was to support the central employment and care function of the high-order centres. A cooperation between the Ministry of Economic Affairs, regional councils and the cities was to be established.

Interviewees address the priorities of the ERDF and ESF as laid out in the OPs. In the previous funding period (2007-2013), there were more such priorities in the ERDF programme, but also with respect to ESF (see interviews BW-2, BW-5, BW-6, BW-12, BW-13). Accordingly, besides fostering innovation, clusters and the transition to a knowledge-based economy, sustainable urban development was viewed as an important socio-economic need and problem to be tackled by ERDF. First and foremost, this meant spurring and managing structural change in (former) "problem" areas from old industry to a service and R&D (cluster) based economy. For the latter challenge, the city of Mannheim with its shift to a start-up and innovation based economy, especially in music, but also in medical technology had already become the prime example (interviews BW-2, BW-5).

For the previous period, enhancing flood protection was also considered a priority within the general goal of risk prevention (interviews BW-2, BW-12). In the course of the shift to the current funding period, interviewees generally emphasise massive socioeconomic changes (e.g. interview BW-8). Consequently and reflecting the two foci of ERDF's current OP (see above), interviewees generally approve the general philosophy of Cohesion policy in Baden-Württemberg, that is the idea of "strengthening the strengths" and to pursue "intelligent specialization". This means to focus on climate change and energy transition, including (more) effective resources management, and R&D/innovation support, especially for S&M enterprises, but also science and research institutions. The latter would not only cover energy transition and climate, where, for example, intelligent traffic steering is seen as a challenge, but also innovation spurring in medical technology and in terms of IT-solutions in general (interviews BW-2, BW-7, BW-8, BW-10)

This implies that ERDF funding now ought to be solely used in a way to support that the regions remains one of the most innovative and prospering regions in Europe, a region that successfully manages the challenges of a knowledge-based economy (see for example interview BW-8 stressing this).

In terms of the ESF, interviewees do not refer to larger changes between funding periods in terms of major socio-economic needs and problems that the programme is meant to addresses except that for the period 2007-2013 the sudden rise of unemployment due to the fiscal and economic crisis posed an additional and unexpected challenge that needed to be tackled (interviews BW-6, BW-11).

The general goals of the ESF programme are seen in preventing or reducing unemployment as much as possible. In order to achieve that goal, intervening early in an individual's or family's life is viewed as the superior approach. Consequently, ESF funding (also) ought to be spent for career counselling and activation of youth and young adults who have no education degree and/or are jobless. This means getting as many young people as possible to begin and also finish a formal vocational training (i.e., receiving a formal degree (interviews BW-4, BW-6, BW-11). Hence, the general philosophy behind this is using ESF money for the goal to create a chance for every young person, i.e., to bring them all to regular vocation training or on track for a higher qualification.

A particular challenge in that regard is supporting the goal to secure a qualified workforce base in an economy characterized by an increasing shortage of qualified workforce (especially with respect to

the current funding period) (interviews BW-4, BW-6, BW-11). This has always meant, but increasingly means the need of qualification “on the job”, but also with external course offers.

Under the circumstance of a much lower general level of unemployment in Baden-Württemberg (for some regions even full employment is recorded), this implies to use ESF funding to reach to and activate the most “difficult” clientele, i.e. the population segments which are still far away from employment. These are mostly persons with no formal qualification at all or with addiction problems, who have often not worked for many years or even decades, that is, “hard core” unemployed people (ibid., interview BW-6 for quote).

For the field of academic science, ESF is also conceived to work towards gender inequality, i.e. by using funds to promote women to pursue a successful career in academics, first and foremost by reaching the position of full professorship (interviews BW-1, BW-10).

3.1.2 Operational Programmes for Baden-Württemberg 2014-2020

The title of the funding period 2014-2020 is “Innovation and energy transition.” Between 2014 and 2020 Baden-Württemberg can use 246.6 million EUR of the ERDF funds. National funds with at least the same sum complement the financial resources resulting in a total OP budget of 493.2 million EUR (see Baden-Württemberg ERDF OP 2014-2020, ERDP 2014-2020 ex-ante Evaluation). The ERDF programme focuses on maintaining the top position of Baden-Württemberg as one of the most innovative, most competitive and economically strong regions in the European Union. Energy transition and reducing CO₂ – emissions build the cornerstones of the programme.

Stakeholders in cities and communities are required to prepare sustainable development concepts for the larger regions they are located in (i.e., a sub-region of the *Land*). For that purpose, these regions (or sub-regions) have to be defined in a first step. Therefore, Baden-Württemberg launched the competition *RegioWIN* in March 2013 as a major element of the ERDF strategy. Stakeholders in cities and regions were encouraged to design these sustainable development concepts following Cohesion policy’s (new) guidelines of “intelligent specialisation”. The winner regions of the first selection round were awarded in January 2014. The stakeholders of the winners then proposed projects which have to focus on key projects, in particular so-called flagship projects (*Leuchtturmprojekte*) and will, if also awarded on the second stage, be co-financed by ERDF. 30 percent of the ERDF budget is reserved for *RegioWIN*. All regions (state sub-regions) participated in *RegioWIN*.

Priority axes and allocations in 2014-20

Table 9: ERDF OP 2014-2020 priority axes and allocations

Baden-Württemberg ROP 2014-2020			
Priority allocation	Source of financing	ERDF allocation (%)	ERDF allocation (EUR)
1. Research, technological development and innovation	ERDF	70,12	172 908 030
2. Reducing CO ₂ -emissions	ERDF	24,81	61 177 008
3. Technical Assistance	ERDF	5,07	12 500 000
Total	ERDF	100	246,585,038.00

Thematic priorities are:

TA – Technical Assistance

TO₁ – Research and innovation

TO₄ – Low-carbon economy

Key areas of the Operational Programme 2014-2020 are:

Key area innovation:

Applied science and development are the basis of innovation. Baden-Württemberg spends 5.1 percent of the state spending for science and development, which is the highest score the Germany and the European Union. Companies are responsible for 80 percent of these moneys. Consequently, the support of public science and the therefore needed institutions should be especially promoted by ERDF.

Key aspect technology and knowledge transfer:

Technology and knowledge transfer between science and companies should be promoted. Therefore, the strategic focus lies on new forms of technology transfer, medium-sized and small companies, as well as an economical consumption of resources.

Key aspect cluster and networks:

Companies in related lines of business should be in contact to have the possibilities to use knowledge and new methods.

Key aspect business start-up in high-tech industry:

It is necessary to support founders of business. Start-ups are important to compensate new requirements of the structural change.

Key aspect renewal of existing companies:

Small and medium-sized companies should be supported to reach technological optimums. Besides, small and medium-sized companies should be encouraged to corporate with universities and research facilities.

Key aspect concentration and specialization:

Four growth areas have been defined: sustainable mobility; environment technologies, renewable energies and resource efficiency; health care; information and communication technology, green IT and intelligent products

Key area energy transition

Raw materials are finite and Baden-Württemberg has not much own raw materials. Saving resources and efficient using of energies should promote the energy transition. ERDF should promote energy transition advisory packages for companies as well as energy efficiency measures.

A special element of the funding period 2014-2020 is the contest *RegioWIN*. *RegioWIN* wants to improve the regions competitiveness through innovation and sustainability. In January 2015, eleven regional development concepts, consisting of 21 several projects, have been awarded. The majority of the projects is approved now and the implementation already started.

3.1.3 Implementation framework and partnership structures

The main managing and implementation actors involved in administering the ERDF programmes are:

- Ministry for Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection
- Ministry for Finance (since 2016, Ministry of Economy/Ministry of Finance and Economy in funding period 2007-2013)
- State bank (L-Bank)

Administration authority is the Ministry for Rural Areas and Consumer Protection (*Ministerium für Ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz, Referat 40 EFRE*). Certificate authority is the same ministry, unit staff position management and coordination for EU acts (*Ministerium für Ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz, Stabstelle Steuerung und Koordinierung von EU-Maßnahmen*). Audit authority is the Ministry for Finance, EU finance control, audit authority for structure unit (*Ministerium für Finanzen, Referat 55 Grundsatzreferat EU-Finanzkontrolle (EFK), Unabhängige Stelle / Prüfbehörde für den Strukturbereich*).

Further ministries involved in programme management are the Ministry for Environment, Climate and Energy Economy (*Ministerium für Umwelt, Klima und Energiewirtschaft*), the Ministry for Science, Research and Arts (*Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst*), the Ministry of Economy (until 2011)/Ministry for Finance and Economy (until 2016)/Ministry for Economy, Employment and Housing (*Ministerium für Finanzen und Wirtschaft/Ministerium für Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Wohnungsbau*, since 2016) as well as the *State Agency for Spatial Information and State Development (Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung)*. There is a close inter-ministerial cooperation between all ministries involved at all stages of programme management.

Responsible department for ERDF payees as well as regarding data collection is the *Landeskreditbank Baden-Württemberg – Förderbank*. Responsible department for commissions payments is the *Bundesamt für Wirtschaft und Ausfuhrkontrolle (BAFA), Referat 145, Bundeskasse Trier, BBk Saarbrücken* for the period 2014-2020. For the period 2007-2013 it was the Ministry for Rural Areas and Consumer Protection, Staff Position Management and Coordination for EU Acts (*Ministerium für Ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz, Stabstelle Steuerung und Koordinierung von EU-Maßnahmen (SEU)*).

Preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of OP is accomplished according to the principle of partnership with representative partners on the national, regional (sub-regional) and local level as well with partnering actors in economy, society, the environmental field and further areas. Here, the Monitoring Committee is the most important body in charge. In terms of OP's priority 2 that is sustainable town and municipal development "living" the partnership principle is mostly accomplished at the local level.

On the one hand, there are partnership structures between all state ministries' units in charge of programme management with the respective units in cities, communes and communal associations assigned with this task and that have been selected for receiving ERDF grants. On the other hand, this partnership principle is also guiding actors within cities, communes and communal associations.

The most important task in activating strengths and potentials for growths on the side of the so-called higher order centres (*Oberzentren*) that are the cities of Mannheim, Heilbronn, Pforzheim and Villingen-Schwenningen, is to improve local conditions for doing business in order to attract or advance companies, especially in terms of infrastructure. This is seen as a precondition for sustainable job creation or job securing. In order to achieve this, proof of a participative, integrative, comprehensive and sustainable city development concept is considered indispensable. Sustainable would refer here to all of its dimensions that are economy, social sphere and the environment. In 2008, selected cities agreed on establishing an information exchange for that purpose. Since the city of Mannheim was the only one in Baden-Württemberg that had already received ERDF funding during the period 2000-2006 (Target 2), it resumed a mentoring function in this network of higher order centres. Until 2013, these higher order centres were also represented in the Monitoring Committee having one vote with the city of Mannheim effectively executing the right to vote on behalf of all.

Within that scope, model projects were developed and tested, such as *EULE (EU-Leuchtturmprojekt, EU flagship project)*, which was intended to develop and test a two-tiered competition based ERDF funding approach in rural areas. Here communes or communal associations were encouraged to submit first-stage development strategy proposals of which the most promising were given the

chance to advance their ideas to more thorough and comprehensive strategies. This model project also explored new ground in terms of partnership. This is because the model project also established a close cooperation of all communes involved, an advisory project body established for that task (that was comprised of representatives of state ministries, state umbrella organisations of districts and municipalities and further economic and environmental project partners), accompanying research bodies as well as further partners. Besides, existing model communes (with their experienced consultancy and planning offices), higher education institutions and regional associations participated.

Main changes in partnership structures for 2014-2020 are a focus on the cooperation with cities that shall be expanded to the Austrian-German URBAN-Network. Experienced cities in implementation of EU investment and high technology and innovation competences, such as Mannheim and Pforzheim, shall take a mentoring role for other cities. Besides, *RegioWIN* establishes further and expanded partnership structures (e.g. with juries with the inclusion of jurists as stakeholders).

Main institution in terms of the partnership principle is again the Monitoring Committee. Beyond that, further platforms for participation of a wide variety of stakeholders are established, for example with respect to preparing administrative regulations as guiding the funding procedures. See also partnership within *RegioWIN*.

Referring to Q5 and Q8, the interviewees emphasised that key features of the management structures for the programmes are close inter-ministerial cooperation between all units involved. This refers to both, preparing and implementing programmes. Within that scope, several coordination platforms operate.

At the same time, interviewees stressed the importance of the partnership principle for programme implementation, but also preparation. In that, the inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders at different levels (region, sub-regions, municipalities) is seen as guiding principle for program management (interviews BW-1, BW-2, BW-3, BW-6, BW-8, BW-10, BW-11, BW-12, BW-13).

The major element of the partnership structures are the monitoring committees for ERDF and ESF. However, there are various other platforms and forums that are relevant here. As already mentioned, ESF is exemplary as it is overwhelmingly managed at the sub-regional that is the district (*Landkreis*) level with so-called regional workshops ESF (*regionale Arbeitskreise ESF*) in which all relevant labour market actors at the sub-regional level jointly work and decide on what issues ESF funding in that particular sub-region should focus on (interviews BW-6, BW-11). Calls for project proposals are then issued accordingly.

But this partnership principle does also extend to the selection and shaping of concrete projects before and during project implementation (ibid.). As indicated, the *RegioWIN* process is seen as an even further step forward in terms or really "living" this partnership principle. This is because it established the sub-region (that is, however, not identical with the official territorial unit *Landkreis*, but rather formed within the *RegioWin* which was intended) with different types of actors at that level as (now) also central for ERDF programme implementation. At the same time, each project has a clear management structure with one party acting as the leading partner (*Konsortialführer*) (interview BW-8).

3.2 Assessment of Performance

3.2.1 Programme performance

Evaluation of the 2007-2013 period

The desk research reveals that the main outputs and results reported for the ERDF funding period 2007-2013 concentrated around three main goals (priority axes) formulated in the OP:

Goal 1: Promote an innovative, science driven economy that creates sustainable jobs

Goal 2: Sustainable developments of projects for cities and communities.

Goal 3: Improve resource efficiency and risk prevention.

Indicators for measuring progress in these areas have been defined in the OP and are reported below for the funding period overall. In that, they allow for juxtaposing output and performance indicators in terms of initial target and if they were indeed met (see tables 10 to 12) ERDF 2007-2013 Final Report, pp. 36-38).

First, as can be seen in table 10, all available ERFD co-financing means were indeed disbursed in Baden-Württemberg in Cohesion policy's funding period 2007-2013 – even more than that as the amount of money spent is slightly higher. The 1.2 percent "surplus" was taken from region's fiscal means. When looking at disbursement rates for the single priority axes, an interesting empirical picture emerges. Whereas for priority axes 2 and 3, the maximum amount was not exhausted, more money was instead used for priority axis 1 and technical assistance (that is the fourth priority axis). As explained in the ERDF 2007-2012 Final Report, these deviations and shifts in disbursement rates for the single priority axes could be realised in accordance with the (new) Council Regulation No. 1297/2013 after it entered into force and after Commission's approval. This allowed for much more flexibility – more precisely deviations from priority axes maximum amounts of 10 percent while these 10 percent can be allocated to other priority axes – which the Management Authority took advantage of.

Priority axes OP allocations and disbursement in 2007-2013 in EUR

Table 10: Priority axes OP allocations and disbursements in 2007-2013 in EUR (ERDF 2007-2013 Final Report)

<i>Priority Axis</i>	<i>EU Investment</i>	<i>EU Investment Disbursed</i>	<i>Implementation Percentage (%)</i>
1. Innovation, knowledge-based economy and clusters	67.426.298,00	72.097.468,22	106.9
2. Sustainable urban and municipal development	36.547.770,00	4.709.182,14	95.0
3. Resource protection and risk prevention	33.690.000,00	32.379.433,80	96.1
4. Technical assistance	5.736.000,00	5.921.612,15	103.2
Total	143 400 068	145.107.696,31	101.2

For output indicators a similar empirical of high achievement rates emerges (see table 11). The vast majority of output indicator targets including those of the main targets as defined in the regional OP (table 11) were at least fully achieved or even overachieved. Missed targets for output indicators are exceptions.

Table 11: Output (performance) indicators: OPs targets and achievements after end of funding period 2007-13

Output Indicator	Figures	
Number of infrastructure investments	Result	40
	Target	62
	Basis	0

	Target achievement (percentage)	123
Number of investment grants for SME	Result	1.166
	Target	1.245
	Basis	0
	Target achievement (percentage)	123
Share of investments by men	Result	816
Share of investments by women	Result	42
Share of investments by women and men	Result	299
Share of investments by micro enterprises	Result	283
Share of investments by small enterprises	Result	581
Share of investments by medium enterprises	Result	302
Number of investments with direct investment subsidies (SME start-ups)	Result	51
	Target	50
	Basis (1)	96.250
	Target achievement (percentage)	102
Number start-ups by men	Result	34
Number start-ups by women	Result	2
Number start-ups by women and men	Result	15
Number of RTD projects	Result	56
	Target	55
	Basis	0
	Target achievement (percentage)	102
Number of RTD projects – cooperation projects	Result	46
	Target	40
	Basis	0
	Target achievement (percentage)	115
Number of projects in connection with development of environmentally friendly products and production processes	Result	1.011
	Target	995
	Basis	0
	Target achievement (percentage)	102
Area of reactivated land (square km) (6)	Result	0,553558
	Target	0,445000
	Basis	0,000000
	Target achievement (percentage)	124

This overall result is also resembled for result (performance) indicators (see table 12).

Table 12: Result (performance) indicators: OPs targets and achievements after funding period 2007-2013

Result (Performance) Indicators	Figures	
Investment volume in terms of subsidies for SME (in million €)	Result	1.321,94
	Target	1.202,00

	Target achievement (percentage)	110
Financial volume of RTD-projects (in million €)	Result	37,31
	Target	34,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	110
Number of completed and successful RTD-project	Result	56,00
	Target	55,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	102
Number of jobs created (in total)	Result	6.192,6
	Target	5.860,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	106
Number of jobs created (gross, full-time equivalent)	Result	5.845,6
	Target	5.100,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	115
Number of jobs secured (in total)	Result	41.106,7
	Target	36.200,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	114
CO2 emissions avoided (mitigation) (kt) (7)	Result	692.953
	Target	534.00
	Target achievement (percentage)	130
Number of investments in renewable energy	Result	71
	Target	70
	Target achievement (percentage)	101
Additional capacity created in renewable energy (MW)	Result	47.2
	Target	44.0
	Target achievement (percentage)	107
Number of investments in risk prevention	Result	3,00
	Target	3,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	100
Number of beneficiaries in terms of flood protection	Result	1.810,00
	Target	1.250,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	145
Area covered by additional flood protection (m ²)	Result	238.058
	Target	295.000,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	81
Number of waste water treatment plants with enhanced purification technology	Result	3,00
	Target	3,00

	Target achievement (percentage)	100
Number of connected waste water treatment plants	Result	6,00
	Target	6,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	100
Number of projects for sustainable development and to increase the attractiveness of urban areas	Result	11,00
	Target	10,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	110
Number of projects for supporting enterprises, entrepreneurial spirit and new technologies	Result	20,00
	Target	25,00
	Target achievement (percentage)	80

Summarising these results, Baden-Württemberg displays an impressive ERDF programme performance for the funding period 2007-2013. Targets were achieved and sometimes overachieved.

A few highlights can underline this:

- 56 R&D projects (102 percent) with total ERFD expenditures of 37.3 million EUR (110 percent) were successfully completed; these are seen as having tremendous potential for bearing future innovations in enterprises.
- 76 investments in infrastructure could be realised (123 percent), with 26 in research infrastructure; these are seen as supportive to Baden-Württemberg's competitiveness as a location of economic activity.
- Almost 6200 jobs (106 percent) were created through investments in innovation and sustainability with another 41.000 jobs (114 percent) secured on a sustainable level. About 1.200 investments in S&M enterprises (94 percent) triggered an investment volume of more than 1.3 billion EUR (110 percent).
- In the field of renewable energies, additional capacities of 47.2 megawatt (107 percent) were installed. Together with energy efficiency measures, these translate into avoiding CO₂-emissions of 693 kilotons (130 percent). This is assessed as a major contribution to the *Energiewende* (transformation of the German energy system).
- Increasing pollution of (surface) water with micro elements was successfully tackled with the installation of enhanced and innovative purification technology in three wastewater treatment plants (100 percent). This is considered as having established a technical standard for further progress.
- About two thirds of all projects that received funding (1011 in number, 102 percent) were related to environmentally friendly products or production processes
- In this context, natural resources protection – here land – was accomplished as about 554.000 m² or. 55.4 hectare of fallow land (124 percent) were reactivated for development

Consequently, the list of major problem encountered during programme implementation and what was done to tackle them is rather short. The most crucial problem already mentioned was the need to considerable "overbook" priority axis 1 and (slightly) technical assistance as amounts for priority axes 2 and 3 could not be entirely spent. Further major type problems did not occur.

The most important minor problems including the problems that resulted from the one major problem were the following:

- It turned out early during programme implementation that restricting investment grants to S&M enterprises only (according to EU's definition) would be counterproductive as this would have hindered or even prevented project realisation, especially in terms of cluster networks, but also for investments in R&D, particularly in renewable energies. Consequently, Baden-Württemberg applied in 2010 to open the OP for non S&M enterprises. This was granted by a Commission's decision in 2011 while it was assured that this would not question the basic strategic approach that is a target on S&M enterprises.
- Financial means' shifting between priority axes: At the end of funding period (in 2012) it became obvious that for priority axis 2 (integrated sustainable urban and municipality development), projects would often entail a complex and extensive planning and development process. Hence, not all of ERDF's co-financing means reserved for this main goal could indeed be spent until the end of the funding period. Because of that, Management Authority requested a change in OP that would enable to transfer financial means from priority axis 2 to axes 1 (2 million EUR) and 4 (0.7 million EUR) as an additional demand could be reasonably claimed for the latter. Commission allowed for this in 2013.
- Support for innovative start-ups with subsidies: Demand for this had been overestimated. It turned out that start-up enterprises in their infancies rather need appropriate infrastructures such as those that formed a cornerstone of priority axis 2. As a result, subsidies not used were allocated to established enterprises instead.
- Investment support in the form of low interest rates loans: There was far less demand for this as had been expected during elaboration of the OP since market interest rates have constantly decreased after 2007 (due to the fiscal and economic crises). Consequently, this OP element was completely abandoned with a transfer of its financial means to R&D and innovation support.
- Supporting renewable energies: Due to (growing) concurrence with federal and state subsidy schemes (referring to accelerated *Energiewende*), ERDF subsidies were simply not needed in that area to the extent as has been assumed in the beginning. Hence, financial means reserved for it were partially used for resources protection (meaning that they remained reserved to target environmental improvements).
- Too complex implementation and monitoring (compliance control) system (*Vollzugs- und Kontrollsystem, VKS*): The bureaucratic demands coming with the VKS required enormous administrative efforts that were perceived as not being appropriate and efficient. In order to avoid that the rate of mistakes would surpass the substantiality threshold, encompassing compliance controls became necessary. Furthermore, the complete lack of a minimum claims limit for mistakes had the result that smallest amounts of money had to be reclaimed – sometimes literally cents and even one cent only in one case. This did also result in vast incomprehension on the side of beneficiaries. In order to let the added value of EU funding not become discredited, it is, hence, proposed to focus on the control of results achieved (performance control) while leaving management (implementation) and compliance with procedures control to member states.

Evaluation of the 2014-2020 period

(Sources: Baden-Württemberg ERDF OP 2014-2020, ERDF OP 2014-2020 Ex-ante Evaluation; ERDF AIR 2016)

Calls for project proposals already began to be released in the spring of 2013. Until the end of 2016, altogether 18 of such project calls had been issued, covering the entire spectrum of the ERDF

programme measures. In the selection process, comparative methods were applied, i.e., methods following the competition or scoring principle.

All regions (state sub-regions of state) participated in *RegioWIN* competition for ERDF funding. At the end of the two-stage competition process in January 2015, 11 regions were selected with the help of an independent jury. 21 flagship projects have been awarded. Project executors filed their funding applications until January 2016. The financial means for *RegioWIN* of about 68 million Euros have almost completely been committed until the end of 2016. To a large extent, the means have also been formally granted until that date.

Financial implementation of the OP ERFD 2014-2020 proceeded according to plan. However, authorities emphasise that at this early stage of programme implementation, output in the sense of the OP's criteria – meaning projects finished – cannot yet be achieved or only to a small extent. Consequently, output assessment can mostly be based on planning by project executors according to applications only. Figures for the respective indicators were all – at least – within expected parameters. Some indicated an overachievement of targets. The latter could evolve in a way that it would be reasonable adjusting target values of the OP later on. If necessary, Management Authority will approach the European Commission by applying for a change in the OP. However, it was said that is still too early for an overall assessment of the OP in terms of output.

When approaching the most important targets and implementation steps from the 2018 “milestone” perspective, it is worth mentioning that at the end of 2016, 5 of 7 indicators already met these target values. Three output indicators already displayed values of 60, 75 and 100 percent of the foreseen milestone values. That is why it is expected that based on progress with respect to project selection and project implementation, all target values in terms of performance will be met.

For priority axis A, the ex-ante evaluation had verified and confirmed that input and output of foreseen measures will fully contribute to target achievement in terms of underlying performance indicators. As of December 31st 2016, 49 percent of available funding were granted. Furthermore, projects for about 80 percent of all available financial means had been selected. This was in line with expectations and was, hence, assessed as a very good programme performance so far.

In terms of output, all target indicators will most likely be met. Within that scope, several output indicators, such as those for carbon dioxide emissions reductions, progressed as expected or better than that with some single output indicators at 75 percent level yet. About half of the foreseen new buildings in the area of research infrastructure had been constructed, more of these buildings were under construction at the end of 2016. In terms of the experimental plants for phosphorus recovery from wastewater, promising concepts had been presented. Finally, the spending indicator did also develop as expected. Thus, as an overall assessment with respect to priority axis A, it was expected that all milestone targets would be achieved.

For priority axis B, an ex-ante evaluation has also verified and confirmed that input and output of foreseen measures will fully contribute to target achievement in terms of underlying performance indicators. As of December, 31st 44 percent of available funding had been granted. Beyond that, projects for about 80 percent of all available financial means had been selected. Hence, the state of implementation was assessed positively, even though spending rate was only at 0.9 percent at the end of 2016. This is explained with the fact that projects usually have long forerun periods which is why the outflow of funds starts comparatively late, but in larger tranches.

With respect to output, prospects were also positive. It was expected that all almost all target output indicators would be met. Several will be overachieved. For some of the output indicators, final values achieved would even be considerably above initial target values. An important exception, however, will be the decrease of primary energy consumption in public buildings (assessment as of 31st December 2016). This is due to the result of a competition for funding in this area of priority axis B. As a result of this jury-decisions based process, the vast majority of projects awarded were from the

fields of thermal use and sustainable mobility, but not from modernisation of public buildings. As a result, values for this indicator did not develop as had been expected. However, this was also seen as possible and in that a “natural” result of a competition process in which it cannot be known beforehand what projects would win. All other projects of priority axis B, however, developed very well. Within that scope, some output indicators had already reached values of 60 or 100 percent of milestone targets. Outflow of funds had also proceeded as expected which is why the Management Authority expected that all milestone targets of priority axis B will be met in the end. Responsible for the assessment of the OP are administrative bodies, the members of the Monitoring Committee and external providers.

Referring to Q3, for the previous funding period in which the OPs focused on three pillars that are 1. Innovation, knowledge-based economy and clusters, 2. Sustainable urban and municipal development and 3. Resource protection and risk prevention interviewees located the main achievement in these areas (interviews BW-1, BW-2, BW-5, BW-6, BW-8, BW-10, BW-12, BW-13). As a first major achievement, interviewees stressed that rather than being spent broadly, funds (especially ERDF) were increasingly used for pillar 1, i.e. to support enterprises (especially S&M) to reinforce their R&D activities oriented towards the development of new and innovative products and the establishment of related processes. This type of using the funds also increasingly benefited public and private research organizations such as universities of applied science or research institutions outside of the region’s educational system. Closely related, establishing or fostering cooperation between the latter and companies’ R&D branches through concrete projects co-financed by ERDF belongs here.

Besides, spurring more encompassing structural change is widely seen as a major achievement of Cohesion policy implementation in Baden-Württemberg between 2007 and 2013 (especially in former urban “problem areas” with the city of Mannheim as the prime example, see interviews BW-2, BW-5). Usage of funds for flood protection measures was also mentioned, although not particularly stressed as a major achievement (interview BW-12).

With respect to ESF co-financed projects, interviewees located the major achievement in fighting unemployment, but also to contribute to cushioning negative impacts of the financial and economic crisis on the labour market more generally (interviews BW-6, BW-11). Within that scope, ESF funding is first and foremost used for developing and implementing innovative approaches – often with an experimental character – to active the most difficult jobless population segments for labour market integration, e.g. individuals with multiple employment barriers (addiction, lack of formal professional qualification, no educational degree, but also single parent). Support for females in academics as implemented with the *Margarete von Wrangell-Habilitationsprogramm für Frauen* as a means to achieve greater gender equality in research and science is also stressed (interviews BW-1, BW-10) – a programme characterized as “expensive, but good” (interview BW-10).

For Cohesion policy’s current funding period (2014-2020), interviewees emphasized even more the now clearer focus of the ERDF programme on climate/energy transition and innovation – i.e., reflecting specialization and a “cutting edge” issue orientation – as a major achievement (e.g., interview BW-8). A general impression from the interviews is that almost all stakeholders do indeed welcome the strategic changes of Cohesion policy during the last two funding periods as advantageous for Baden-Württemberg (interviews BW-2, BW-5, BW-8, BW-9, BW-10, BW-12, BW-13). “We [now only do] designer products, but no mass products ...” (interview BW-2).

Within that scope, the accomplishments of the *RegioWIN* process in which ERDF funding is awarded in a competition between encompassing regional innovation concepts were almost praised (ibid., but see interview BW-12 for a conscious decision to refrain from participating in *RegioWIN*). For science and research, the creation and improvement of multiple research infrastructures was viewed as a great accomplishment (interviews BW-10, also BW-12).

In terms of the ESF programme, stakeholders see the most important contribution of programme's funding for labour market policy (interviews BW-4, BW-6, BW-11). Here, the funds enable to develop concepts and larger approaches oriented towards activation of those population segments that are not (yet) or hardly employable at the moment for labour market participation. This is, for example, achieved with programmes like "assisted vocational training" that targets young people with severe problems to find apprenticeships (interview BW-6).

Referring to Q4 and Q6, interviewees did not identify serious problems or general problem areas that prevented programmes to meet their goals. This does, however, not mean that there were no problems at all, but that problems were perceived as often minor and no real obstacles for overall goal achievement (interviews BW-2, BW-13). Hence, it can always occur that single project does not perform as expected. Acquiring alternative funding by project stakeholders sometimes hinders project development with the help of ESF, especially in times of near zero interest rates (interview BW-6). A more serious problem, especially in ESF co-financed labour market policy project is the rather short duration of project (maximum three years) and the annual budgeting of projects. This permanent threat of discontinuity is seen as an obstacle for effective work in the social sector (interview BW-11).

Another example are perceptions of a changing business environments abroad which lead to cancelling a certain technology project that aimed at internationalization of companies in one economics cluster (interview BW-5).

Finally, perhaps a more general problem has been identified by one actor for the period 2007-2013 in which the optimal conditions for strategic processes oriented towards innovation had not yet been present (interview BW-8).

Some actors have also remarked that for the current period, there might the potential problem of (too) ambitious goals, especially for the goal of resource conservation in the environmental sub-sector (goal of shaping energy transition, see interview BW-12). However, this is still too early to assess.

Interviewees did not refer to major region-specific or programme related problems that prevented or hindered an effective implementation of the programmes. Nonetheless, problems of minor importance were, of course, encountered. One such difficulty was a specifically set-up administrative system for implementation/compliance control of ERDF programme (*Vollzugs- und Kontrollsystem, VKS*) in previous period which proved to be extremely difficult to handle which is why in experienced a massive transformation towards leniency for the current period (interview BW-2).

However, almost all interviewees emphasised the legal obligations that come with the general management of Cohesion policy programmes as a severe problem and (often) a real obstacle to effective implementation. The bureaucratic burdens are perceived as massive and time-consuming. The entire approach – especially with respect to ensuring compliance – is sometimes even described as undue and alien to the German administrative (legal) tradition (see for example interview BW-2). Other see the data collection and reporting requirements (statistics) as excessive with the result that the latter prevented ESF projects from realization (interview BW-6). But the fact that the legal obligations involved in application and also implementation have effectively hindering actors to apply for funding is also known for the ERDF (interviews BW-2, BW-5, BW-8, BW-9). This becomes especially relevant when funding from other (national or Land) sources are available or in times when even regular bank financing with almost no interest rates seem more attractive. In terms of the ESF, smaller potential benefitting organizations simply lack the capacity for application not to mention implementation of projects because of the complicated procedures (see interview BW-11).

Referring to Q7 that was about the relative priority assigned to the four main tasks that are 1) spending the funds 2) compliance 3) performance and 4) publicising achievements, no clear empirical picture emerged from the interviews that would allow to present a listing, except that for most actors

interviewed publicizing achievements is viewed as the task with lowest priority (interviews BW-1, BW-2, BW-5, BW-6, BW-10, BW-12, BW-13, see but see BW-8). With respect to the other three tasks, there is a slight tendency to place compliance on top or at least as the task that enjoys top priority together with one or both of the remaining tasks (interviews BW-2, BW-5, BW-10, BW-12, BW-13). I.e., several interviewees explicitly refrained from presenting such a priority list except for the publicizing.

Compliance is seen as the most crucial or one of the top priority tasks, because it is commonly considered the most dangerous issue involved in implementation Cohesion policy. This is due to the threat of a refunding of financial means from the programme that is looming in case of non-compliance, with all possible administrative, fiscal, but also political consequences that could even be disastrous (for example BW-2, BW-6). As indicated, performance is also viewed as a high priority task (see for example interviews BW-2, BW-6). Interviewees stress that there is a clear focus on indeed using the – rather limited – financial means from the funds for projects that are not only useful and appropriate to achieve the goals, but which are at the same time also innovative. Hence, means from the funds ought to be used for something “more”, something otherwise not done by the region (in that form) in the fields of economic, research or social/labour market policy. Spending the funds is not really deemphasized by interviewees in terms of its relevance (priority level). However, it is mostly viewed as less problematic. Since the ERDF and the ESF programmes are so small in size, total spending of all available means is practically always assured even without placing particular emphasis on it. See part 4 (section 4.1) for reasons why publicizing results is mostly ranked below the other tasks.

The stakeholder survey shows that stakeholders in Baden-Württemberg see the implementation of Cohesion policy in the region either positively or consider themselves unable to assess this. This applies to both, region as well as municipality.

Table 13: How well – in your opinion – have Cohesion policy funds been used in your municipality and region?

	Very well	Well	Acceptable	Poorly	Very poorly	Don't know
Your municipality	20.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Your region	20.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%

Source: Cohesify stakeholder survey, n=10

The empirical picture is similar with respect to the question if Cohesion policy objectives reinforced the development objectives of the municipality. For the municipality, 50 percent agree that it did so 'largely' or at least 'in some way' while 50 percent felt unable to make an assessment. However, the situation is different when asked for the region. Here, 80 percent would confirm a reinforcement of the development goals ('completely or 'largely') while the rest would still say 'in some way'. Hence, no survey participant would deny any positive impact.

The answers to the question to what extent Cohesion policy funds have also helped to increase or decrease development differences within as well as between regions in Germany or between Germany and other EU member states, the answers resemble the previous patterns. Remarkably, disconfirming answers are missing again, with the exception of the EU-wide assessment. For the latter, 30 percent of stakeholders would deny an impact while the majority felt unable to say.

Table 14: To what extent have Cohesion policy funds helped to increase or decrease:

	Decreased	Somewhat decreased	Had no impact	Somewhat increased	Increased	Don't know
Differences in the development level between poorer and richer regions in your country	10.0%	30.0%	10%	0.0%	0.0%	50%

Differences in the development level between rural and urban areas in your region	20.0%	50.0%	10%	0.0%	0.0%	20%
Differences in the development level between poorer and richer areas in your region	20.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Differences in the development level between your country and other EU Member states	10.0%	0.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%

Source: Cohesify stakeholder survey, n=10

Regarding problems and challenges encountered during implementation, stakeholders strongly emphasize the administrative burdens involved in Cohesion policy implementation, but also the scarcity of fund.

Table 15: How significant was the impact of the following problems and challenges during the implementation of Cohesion policy projects?

	Very significant	Significant	Average	Insignificant	Not at all	Don't know
Scarcity of Cohesion policy funds	50.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Problems with obtaining Cohesion policy financing such as complicated rules for submitting applications	50.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Excessive, cumbersome reporting	30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Unclear objectives for evaluating project results	0.0%	30.0%	10.0%	40.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Poor cooperation between project partners	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Excessive audit and control during or after the project completion	40.0%	30.0%	10%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Lack of funds for own contribution (co-financing)	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Difficult access to credit and/or loans for own contribution	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%	30.0%	40.0%
Lack of capacity such as qualified staff	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	30.0%

Source: Cohesify stakeholder survey, n=10

With respect to the question if Cohesion policy funds were used for the municipality's or region's most relevant purposes and if they are also used for purposes, that valued most by local residents, answers are overwhelmingly affirmative. The vast majority of respondents either 'agrees' or even 'strongly agrees' (80 respectively 70 percent) while only a small minority (10 percent) would disagree.

In terms of possible implementation problems due to irregularities in spending, non-compliance with rules, or corruption and nepotism, stakeholders have hardly detected problems here. Only 10 percent see a problem with spending irregularities and/or non-compliance whereas a vast majority of stakeholders (60 to 80 percent) see no problem (have answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree').

However, only 50 percent of stakeholders would support that spending of Cohesion policy funds is adequately controlled, while another 20 percent have expressed a neutral position and 10 percent 'disagreed'. On the other hand a vast majority, again agrees Cohesion policy funds entailed in many positive changes in the municipality/region, which would not have been achieved without the funds (70 percent 'agree' or even 'strongly agree' while only 10 percent 'disagree').

Related to this stakeholders do not support the notion that Cohesion policy funds have been misallocated, i.e., used for the 'wrong projects'. No respondent confirmed this while 90 percent 'disagreed' or even 'strongly disagreed'. However, stakeholders are less enthusiastic with respect to cost-efficient administration of Cohesion policy. Only 40 percent (at least) 'agree' that this has been the case whereas remarkable 30 percent 'disagree' with 10 percent being undecided.

A vast majority of stakeholders considers monitoring and evaluation reports useful (60 percent 'agree' while only 10 percent 'disagree' with 20 percent expressing a neutral opinion). However, although they are at the same time seen as not really difficult to access (30 percent agreement with another 30 percent neutral assessment and only 20 percent disagreement), stakeholders see them as difficult to understand (60 percent say so compared to 20 percent having no difficulties).

Furthermore, they not really used to improve policy-making and implementation (only 30 percent at least 'agree' here with another 30 percent either disagreeing or being undecided; 40 percent were unable to tell).

Finally, there is only average to little attendance of workshops or training sessions. While 50 percent of stakeholder did attend one of the latter that deal with management, attendance of such training events that focused on monitoring, evaluation, or communication was rather low during the last two years (70 to 90 percent did not participate). Overall, this corresponds to a relatively low attendance in any such workshop or training by any representative of the organizations stakeholders work in or are affiliated with (60 percent non-attendance vs. 40 percent attendance).

3.2.2 Partnership

The desk research, based on the Baden-Württemberg ERDF OP 2007-2013, ERDF 2007-2013 Ex-ante Evaluation, ERDF 2007-2013 Evaluation of Communication Plan, ERDF AIR 2014, ERDF OP 2014-2020, ERDF OP 2014-2020 Ex-ante Evaluation; ERDF AIR 2016, reveals that in Baden-Württemberg consultation between regional, local and urban public authorities, as well as economic institutions, research institutions, social institutions and environmental institutions and civic society were held regularly from fall 2010 onwards. Apart from the general consultations there were also consultations in small groups.

The state parliament of Baden-Württemberg also had a consultation of experts, which include people from municipalities, economics, research, and social groups. In December 2010 the important associations were invited to learn about the Cohesion policy.

A monitoring committee, including administrative authorities, national authorities, as well as economic institutions, research institutions, social institutions and environmental institutions and civic society. Besides, institutions against discrimination and for equality, as well as representatives of other EU-fond programmes and the European commission as an advisory member. The monitoring committee examines the programme and the progress towards the goals of the programme. (ERDF OP 2014-2020) This monitoring committee was already used as an efficient partnership structure in the period 2007-2013 and is continued in the following period until 2020.

In the funding period from 2007-2013 Baden-Württemberg was involved in partnerships with Rhone-Alpes, Lombardy and Catalonia to improve their research and technology.

Furthermore, Baden-Württemberg is involved in the following programmes of European territorial cooperation in the funding period from 2014-2020:

- "Alps Rhine-Lake Constance-High Rhine"
- "Upper Rhine"
- "Central Europe"
- "Alps Area"
- "North West Europe"
- "Danube Area"

The major goal of these partnerships is an exchange of experiences, especially in the coordination of research, cluster, networking and transfer of technology.

The Ministry for Rural Areas and Consumer Protection informs stakeholders and the interested civic society as about funding opportunities and creates a communication plan. The following strategies are used to inform stakeholders: publishing operational programmes, information events, flyer, series of events and publishing information via an internet platform.

The communication with the European commission is based on a system developed by the European commission. Besides, the report about the environmental impacts of the OP ERDF, for example, was developed together with the citizens and it can be accessed by the citizens as well.

Overall, the established forums are generally considered effective in promoting stakeholder debate and multilevel governance.

With respect to partnership issues, interviewees generally stressed that the programmes of both, ERDF and ESF are managed in a cooperative manner that implies the inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders, such as addressees of Cohesion policy funding (that would include scientists and researchers), unions, employer organizations, interest groups, or local government actors (including their regional umbrella organizations). Critical voices were not recorded (but see interview BW-3 for some minor issues). At the same time, interviewees would also describe the accountability to civil society as high (interviews BW-2, BW-4, BW-5, BW-6, BW-8, BW-9, BW-10, BW-12, BW-13). Hence, there is not just the Monitoring Committee although it is viewed as a central partnership platform, but a variety of other forums (see in particular interviews BW-2, BW-13). At the same time, interviewees largely confirmed that these cooperation platforms and organs are not “closed circles”, but are open for new actors (ibid. but see interview BW-11 for a countering view)

For implementation of the ESF there is already an established tradition or standard operating procedure to achieve a broad stakeholder involvement “bottom up” as there are sub-regional councils involving all relevant stakeholders, i.e. not just at the *Land* level, but also sub-regionally on the level of districts (*Landkreise*) (interviews BW-6, BW-11).

Interviewees also referred to the large number of events that are held throughout the region by managing authorities (including agencies with delegated tasks) for ERDF implementation in preparation of an OP in order to secure an broad involvement of stakeholders and civil society actors beforehand (e.g. interviews BW2, BW-13.)

Besides, there is the possibility to prepare and submit position papers or concrete proposals from all sides (e.g. currently also for the future funding period after 2020). Stakeholders are also explicitly encouraged to do so, for example for implementation of the ERDF programme with respect to R&D/innovation at the intersection of companies and public research institutions, like universities for applied science – i.e., private and public organizations (e.g. interviews, BW-3, BW-12).

Furthermore, for the current funding period, the *RegioWin* process is already seen as tremendously successful in that regard (interviews BW-2, BW-5, BW-6, BW-8) as it resulted in an even further and more structured mobilisation of actors within the scope of implementation of the ERDF programme.

In Baden-Württemberg, a vast majority of stakeholders ‘agrees’ or even ‘strongly agrees’ with the statement that the partnership principle requires the participation of a wide range of partners throughout the different stages of programming and implementation through consultations, monitoring committee work and other mechanisms (90 percent). With the very same percentage, stakeholders do also support the idea that the operation of the programme’s partnership principle facilitates a shared understanding and shared commitments by partners to achieving the programme's objectives. Only a small minority disagrees with both (10 percent).

3.3 Assessment of added value

The desk research aiming at a comprehensive overall evaluation stresses that it is important to consider the EU added value. That is, the effects of measures implemented should strive to pursue the EU goals, reproducible model projects and focus on the key areas outlined in the ROP (for Baden-Württemberg namely Innovation, Employment and Sustainability). These aspects are to be encouraged in a cooperative manner and held in especially high regard. Added value is created through a number of mechanisms in different areas, which are the following:

Financial (additional funding from public and private actors)

For the Period 2007-2013 a large portion of the projects activated private and public funding. Of the overall cost of 1,443mn EUR, 79.2% are financed by private actors. An additional 7.1% are from public actors.

Strategic (interlinkages between domestic strategies programme and EU funded programmes)

The overarching goals for the ROP 2007-2013 were to

1. secure and advance the competitiveness, employment and sustainable development
2. contribute to a convergence in quality of life for all regions

All of the goals formulated in the 2007-2013 OP are subordinate to these two. Special attention has been placed on the complimentary character of EU coherence measure to the state and federal programmes. This attention plus the emphasis put on the European added value of the projects lead to a thoroughly coherent policy of the state Baden-Württemberg and the EU. Where redundancy arose, such as the funding for renewable energies by the federal agencies (KfW), the authorities responded quickly and diverted funds and efforts to a more complimentary approach. This effort resulted in a financing by the KfW in conjunction with the coherence fund for villages to switch to sustainable energy and similar model projects. Funding for these in particular can be explained by the high priority that European added value plays in selecting and structuring the projects. Officials plan to open a designated point of contact to better coordinate such linkages in the second period of the programme. As of the 2017, however, there does not seem to be such an agency.

Another example for strategic added value are the efforts in goal 2, development of the cities. Baden-Württemberg's higher order centres were already partaking in development programmes by the state. The ERFE is custom-tailored to complement these efforts, deriving measures from the integrated concept for city development put forward by Baden-Württemberg. In the way they are constructed, they are sufficiently different from the state's effort to not interfere with them, but rather allow for a more synergistic effect. Furthermore, the rural areas have their own project (ELR = development projects for rural areas), strengthening infrastructure and businesses. Their design is one of process, focusing on strategic positioning and stakeholder participation. It is explicitly thought of as a model project, whose lessons can be implemented elsewhere in Europe. All these decisions were made to maximize the European added value it can generate. (Interim Report, p. 63)

Administrative (implementation of innovative approaches to domestic policy system, changes in monitoring and evaluation techniques and requirements)

Aside from the EU Cohesion policy framework, Baden-Wuerttemberg is also part of several European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes. In these, the participating regions share experiences and policies of EU Cohesion measures and their implementation. In particular, the goals of furthering innovation and sustainability is a key aspect of the knowledge transfer. For the 2014-2020 period Baden-Württemberg plans to contribute in this area with a water treatment method that allows to extract phosphorus. As an innovative application of science, it is highly applicable to further plants

throughout Europe. It offers the prospect of more independence from the world market. Enhancing this transfer of technology therefore offers a potentially large European added value. (OP2014 p.32)

In order to enhance the transfer of knowledge, Baden-Württemberg's 2014 OP outlines the establishment of point of contacts. They are subsumed to the goal of increasing energy efficiency. On the regional level, they offer enterprises expertise and further contacts in this area. A mediating instance, their success is measured in the amount of consulting meetings they can bring on the way. A state-wide agency then is responsible for coordination on the larger scale and monitoring thereof. By the end of 2016, more than 7200 meetings have been imparted, easily bypassing the goal of 2000 for the whole period.

Overall, Baden-Württemberg can be attested a good external coherency. All instruments are implemented in a way that avoids overlaps and strengthens complimentary effects and synergies. To ensure this over the whole period, structures and processes across the ministries for monitoring and coordination have been implemented. They have been, for the most part, met with a positive response.

Democratic (strengthening the role of consultations and partnerships):

In general, the government of Baden-Wuerttemberg wants to be a model for democratic participation, in Germany as well as Europe. Consequently, coordination and communication between the stakeholders of Cohesion policy is a key aspect in implementing it. The cooperation between different levels of government is strengthened throughout the process of determining the needs of regions. Exemplary for this deepening are the programmes for high-order centres and rural areas outlined above. Private individuals and corporations are included in the process as well, through a communication plan that goes both ways. Also, knowledge is made accessible for all through the establishment of point of contacts throughout the state.

Overarching goals also include the access to equal opportunities for all. Gender equality and non-discrimination are tackled by a number of measures, for example point of contact (for receiving assistance) for survivors of discriminatory practices.

In general, innovation, science-driven economy and cluster promotion is the most important goal for the cohesion measures, as outlined in the 2007 OP. Its effects are supposed to have European added value.

For the period 2014-2020, maximizing European added value is a stated goal of the OP, on par with the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures. It is to be achieved through smart policies and projects that are reproducible elsewhere. Additionally, they contribute to the Europe 2020 guidelines, integrating in the overlying policies.

Especially in the area of CO₂ emission reduction a large European added value is expected, as the projects are of high quality and transferability. These include ecological innovations, such as the water treatment discussed above.

In conclusion, the European added value is important in relation to the outputs and effects. Keeping in mind its importance, most programmes have at least one aspect that contributes towards it. In contrast to the outputs it is immeasurable in numbers. Nevertheless, the best practices developed by regions and cities for reducing emissions are numerous.

Referring to Q3 that aimed also at revealing a particular added value of Cohesion policy in the current funding process, several interviewees referred to the so-called *RegioWIN* process within the ERDF programme (interviews BW-2, BW-5, BW-7, BW-8, BW-10, BW-12). The added value is particular seen in the bundling of different actors (or types of actors) in the different sub-regions of Baden-Württemberg. The basic character of *RegioWIN* that is competition between encompassing regional development concepts for receiving funding forced the relevant actors at the level of the sub-regions

to think more clearly and more thoroughly about the strengths of their sub-regions and where and how to “strengthen the[se] strengths” (interview BW-2), to find where fostering “intelligent specialization” (ibid.) would be appropriate, and to present a coherent plan how to achieve this with the help of ERDF funding.

In that, interviewees stressed the positive feedback that they received from the regional actors. Without the incentive of being awarded with ERDF funding, this bundling of efforts at the level of the sub-regions would not have happened – or at least not in such a coherent and systematic manner. At the same time, some actors believed that only this process created a sufficient operational basis for intensifying the real strategical challenges and development goals (see interview BW-8). As a result, it seems plausible that the cooperation infrastructure and platforms that have been established and institutionalized within *RegionWIN* sub-regionally will persist and provide promising starting points for general economic development policies and/or concrete projects in the future – even without the “hard” incentive of EU funding (see in particular interviews BW-2, BW-8).

3.4 Implications for citizens CP perceptions and attitudes

Regions play a crucial role in the formulation and implementation of EU Cohesion policy, one of the most important EU policies to foster economic growth as well as citizens’ views on European integration in a positive way. Sub-national governments and parties are an essential part of this approach. The findings indicate that regional parties – not only in Baden-Württemberg – are more supportive of European integration the more funding a region receives from the EU and the more a region depends on EU funding (Gross and Debus 2018). Put differently, political parties adopt more negative stances towards European integration if they run for elections in regions that benefit from EU regional policy to a smaller extent than other regions. This indicates that parties on the regional sphere do consider the money that the region they represent receives from Brussels, which could have implications for how parties—as key actors who link political institutions and decision-making with citizens and their interests in representative democracies—frame European integration and communicate goals of European integration to the citizens. Furthermore, regional parties do not become more sceptical on European integration once their region receives less funding. It seems that there is no ‘signalling game’ which could have important implications for the level of trust and satisfaction with EU institutions among citizens living in the respective region. Further studies, ideally ones that include regional surveys among citizens and cover more EU member states, need to be conducted to shed more light on these possible connections. The descriptive results presented here as well as in other research output of COHESIFY (Dąbrowski et al. 2017), however, indicate that citizens do not identify themselves more with the EU if they are living in a region that benefitted more strongly from EU Cohesion policy in the programming period 2007—13 than citizens in other regions.

4. Cohesion policy communication

4.1 Approach to communication

The 2007-2013 ERDF-programme in Baden-Württemberg has been combined with a regional strategy of the state government. Therefore, the OP has been labelled “Regionale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und Beschäftigung (RWB) – Teil EFRE in Baden-Württemberg 2007-2013”, thus indicating a specific focus on regional competitiveness and employment. The main objectives of the 2014-20 ERDF-programme are the innovation of the economy and the energy transition. For 2007-13, ERDF-funding of 143.400.068 € is allocated to Baden-Württemberg and will be

supplemented by the same amount of public and private money. The overall ERDF-money allocated to Baden-Württemberg in 2014-20 is 246.585.038 €.

The Communication Plan for 2014-20 has been approved by the Monitoring Committee on the 4th of April 2015. It is mentioned explicitly that the level of awareness regarding ERDF-funding is rather low in Baden-Württemberg due to the comparatively low amount of money transferred to the region. This has to be tackled.

The following information for 2007-13 is based on the Communication Plan, the Evaluation of the Communication Plan (kindly provided in advance by the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection Baden-Württemberg), and the several paragraphs in the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) from 2007-14. The Communication Plan has been approved by the European Commission on the 7th of August 2008. For 2014-20, the information is based on the Communication Plan and the AIRs 2015, 2016.

Overall approach to communication

Table 36 in the Annex provides an overview of the three main objectives of the Communication Plan, the measures and activities that are expected to be carried out, as well as the groups that are going to be targeted. The first objective deals with the communication of Europe by highlighting positive results from EU regional transfer money and wants to combine this message with the benefits of regional financial capital. The second objective focuses on the dissemination of ERDF-funding information and guarantees a complete transparency of the funding process. The third objective can be seen as the most "communicative" one because the measures and activities are devoted to the announcement of EU support in the context of EU-funding projects (i.e. by installing billboards, disseminating flyers and posters, providing guidelines and manuals, etc.). There are four different target groups specified in the Communication plan: (i) Potential recipients, (ii) recipients, (iii) general public, and (iv) multipliers. Multipliers comprise departments and authorities involved (regional bank, house banks, climate protection and energy agency), economic, social, and environmental partners as members of the Monitoring Committee, regional and local authorities, professional associations and economic stakeholders, NGOs, EU Info Centres, political representatives, and local, regional, and national media.

The target groups for the period 2014-2020 are the same as in 2007-13, namely potential recipients, recipients, multipliers, and the general public. Three main objectives are identified: (i) information of potential recipients on financing opportunities, (ii) raising EU citizens' awareness level of the role and benefit of ERDF-funding, and (iii) guarantee of transparency by keeping record of projects.

Indicators

Output, result and impact indicators are provided in the following table:

Table 16: Monitoring indicators in the Communication plans 2007-2013

<i>Monitoring indicators in the Communication strategies/plans 2007-2013</i>		
Output indicators	Result indicators	Impact indicators
Number and print run/downloads of publications (brochures, etc.)	Number of recipients	Number of recipients
Number of shared posters	Number of visitors and hits of programme-related webpages	Number of visitors and hits of programme-related webpages
Number of billboards and explanatory plaques	Number of participants of information events	Number of participants of information events
Number of information events	Number of media reports due to press releases	Number of media reports due to press releases
Number of press releases		Number of billboards and explanatory plaques
<i>Monitoring indicators in the Communication strategies/plans 2014-2020</i>		

<i>Monitoring indicators in the Communication strategies/plans 2007-2013</i>		
Output indicators (see table 2 A-3)	Result indicators	Impact indicators

It is specified in the Communication Plan 2007-2013 that there will be exchange of information with ERDF-authorities and responsible persons in other regions, as well as with authorities and responsible person of other EU-funds in Baden-Württemberg. Furthermore, AIR 2010 and the final AIR have evaluations of the Communication Plan, and the Monitoring Committee is informed about the indicators on a regularly basis.

Measures and activities will be evaluated based on output and result/impact indicators. Table 37 in the Annex presents these indicators. Output indicators are highlighted in yellow, result/impact indicators are highlighted in green. Additionally, the different target sets are displayed. This information is based on the Communication Plan.

In 2014-20, concrete measures and activities are distinguished between the four target groups. We present this information in Table 38 in the Annex. Note that recipients are encouraged to get in touch with the general public because this is seen as the most efficient and effective way to communicate ERDF-funded projects.

Budget

The budget for implementing the Communication Plan 2007-2013 is separated into technical aid and information and publicity measures.

Table 17: Communication Plan 2007-13 Budget

Technical aid	
Community contribution	5.036.000€
National contribution	5.036.000€
Total	10.072.000€
Information and publicity measure	
Community contribution	200.000€
National contribution	200.000€
Total	400.000€

Note that "technical aid" also comprises financial resources for administration, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and controlling of measures and activities.

During the period 2014-2020, financial expenses for information and communication are estimated as 1 Mio. €, financed equally by ERDF fund and money provided by the regional government. This is summarized in the following table.

Table 18: Communication Plan 2014-20, Budget

<i>Total allocation</i>	Baden-Württemberg	Unit
Allocation [2007-2013]	10472000	EUR
Allocation [2014-2020]	1000000	EUR

Governance

Managing Authority for the OP 2007-2013 was the *Ministerium für Ernährung und Ländlichen Raum Baden-Württemberg, Referat 45 – Strukturentwicklung Ländlicher Raum*. Contact for information and publicity measures, coordination and implementation of Communication Plan was the *Landesanstalt für Entwicklung der Landwirtschaft und der ländlichen Räume (LEL), Referat 31 – Regionalentwicklung* (State Agency for Agriculture und Rural Areas, Unit 31 – Regional Development).

In the 2007 funding period, a website about the ERDF programme has been launched. General information (brochures, flyers) can be found there, as well as information about the process of applying for funding. Additionally, press releases are uploaded, reports about best-practice projects as well. Annual reports, studies and evaluations can also be downloaded there. A poster with information about the project is provided.

With the period 2014-2020 there are now several departments and authorities in charge although *Ministerium für Ernährung und Ländlichen Raum* remains the Management Authority. These ministries are the Ministry for Economy, Employment and Housing, the Ministry for Science, Research and Arts and the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Energy Economy.

Potential beneficiaries can get information about the European funding possibilities on the website that has been established. Apart from general information, this website also contains help and advice, such as help in the application process, form to download or contact information if further help is needed. A database is established in order to help potential beneficiaries decide whether to apply for funding. For the second half of the funding period, website adaptations or even a slight relaunch is planned, as most of the funding has already been allocated to benefiterers at this time. At this stage, informing the general public about ERDF's role in the region becomes more relevant in order to increase knowledge of the fund. For that purpose, it is seen as crucial to, for example, present successful projects and the manifold benefits they bring for the region and its people.

Beneficiaries are also supported. A poster with information about the project is provided, as well as templates for plaques and the re-designed logo of the ERDF. Additionally, there is a document with guidelines on how to perform PR procedures.

Table 19: Governance framework

Governance framework in the Communication	
2007-2013	2014-2020
Communication networks	Communication networks
Ministerium für Ernährung und Ländlichen Raum Baden-Württemberg [Ministry for Food and Rural Affairs] Referat 45 – Strukturentwicklung Ländlicher Raum Kernerplatz 10 70182 Stuttgart	Ministerium für Ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz Baden-Württemberg [Ministry for Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection] Referat 45 – Strukturentwicklung Ländlicher Raum Kernerplatz 10 70182 Stuttgart
Bodies responsible for implementation of the measures	Bodies responsible for implementation of the measures
Landesanstalt für Entwicklung der Landwirtschaft und der ländlichen Räume (LEL) Referat 31 – Regionalentwicklung (State Agency for Agriculture and Rural Areas) Oberbettringer Str. 162 73525 Schwäbisch Gmünd	–Ministry for Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection –Departments responsible for programming implementation in the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts, the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and

Governance framework in the Communication	
2007-2013	2014-2020
Frau Katrin Böttger (katrin.boettger@lel.bwl.de)	Energy Industry, and the Ministry for Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection –State bank (L-Bank) as the only awarding authority –One communication representative in the secretariat of the State Agency for Spatial Information and Rural Development –External service provider for corporate design –External service provider for design and programming of webpage

According to interviewees, the overall approach to communication is characterised by three major features. First, communication is clearly target group specific. Within that scope, the prime target groups for communication are (potential) beneficiaries. This follows from the design of ERDF and ESF programmes in Baden-Württemberg which are not only small in size, but which do (since 2014) also have only two pillars for the ERDF that are innovations (R&D) and energy transformation (decreasing carbon dioxide emissions) and one related pillar for the ESF that is labour market policy (see above, section 3.1.3). As expressed by one high-level interviewee: “The common man on the street is not the customer.” (interview BW-13). Rather economic actors especially in S&M enterprises, but also researchers and scientists in different types of institutions and the (future) workforce are major target groups. Only stakeholders in a position that obviously covers the task to also address the general public assigns the latter task an equally high priority (e.g., interview BW-8).

Second, especially for the ERDF-OP, communication is project-focused. This means that due the general features of the programmes, communication activities are seen as most promising in connection with concrete projects that have been or are to be realized with financial contributions by EU funds. A typical example here are so-called success stories. Third, there is no clear focus on certain communication forms or tools only with the exception that some forms are hardly relevant as difficult to get access to, e.g. radio and TV. Besides, there is still a widespread reluctance among interviewees to employ social media or certain social media, especially, Twitter, albeit these channels clearly become more relevant as communication options over time (e.g. interview BW-8).

No tremendous changes over time are reported, but necessary adjustments in the course of a funding period. The latter would include measures such as programme websites’ relaunches especially once all funding has been assigned to applicants/projects. After that, interviewees consider further information to become more relevant for website presentation (interview BW-13). Besides, interviewees emphasize an intensification and also professionalization of communication activities since 2014 (i.e., in the current funding period) (see interviews BW-5, BW-6, BW-11, BW-13).

Most interviewees do not consider communication of Cohesion policy programmes or projects as key priority. It is mostly viewed as the task that enjoys the lowest priority. One actor interviewed even described it as a *Randerscheinung* (something on the fringes) of his Cohesion policy work (interview BW-10). Other actors stress that the “decoration should not become more important than the [Christmas] tree.” (interview BW-2)

However, not all interviewees assign communication a lower priority. Some actors involved in Cohesion policy consider it an important task, at least from an ideological point of view (see interviews BW-6, BW-8, BW-13). Nonetheless, the general impression from interviews is that communication of Cohesion policy programmes does not receive the same attention in terms of personnel resources, staff time or as a topic in general debates in meetings or the monitoring committee (e.g. interviews BW-2, BW-6, BW-10, BW-12, BW-13) as the other main tasks. For one part,

this is because financial resources for personnel that focus on communication activities (but also PR in general) are very limited. This would apply to organizations and institutions entrusted with administering Cohesion policy general, but would be even more so for the often only small units within the latter that solely deal with Cohesion policy (for an exception see interview BW-8, here one full-time employee is in charge of social media only). For the other part, it is an expression of stakeholders' often rather low expectation of what could really be achieved with (intense) communication beyond getting the relevant information to the small groups of those persons who are either already well informed or who are anyway viewed as the key target groups. Hence, this reluctance or scepticism mainly concerns communicating Cohesion policy to the general public.

Stakeholders in Baden-Württemberg employ the full spectrum of communication channels in order to disseminate Cohesion policy. However, as could have been expected, there are clear patterns in terms of what tools are mostly used. In that, stakeholders mostly rely on the tools, that they can steer, such as programme websites, leaflets, brochures and press releases or plaques/billboard with EU flag and/or Cohesion policy logo placed on them. Furthermore, when other media are used stakeholders mostly rely on newspapers rather than TV or radio. Finally, although social media have made their way into stakeholders' toolkits, they remain underused. Despite this, only a minority of stakeholder assess communication effective in increasing citizens' support of the EU.

Table 20: How regularly are the following communication tools used to disseminate information about the use of Cohesion policy funds?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Television	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	70.0%	20.0%
Radio	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	50.0%	20.0%
Local and regional newspapers	10.0%	50.0%	30.0%	10.0%	20.0%
National newspapers	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	00.0%
Workshops, seminars	10.0%	30.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Brochures, leaflets, newsletters	40.0%	30.0%	20.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Press releases	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Programme website	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Film clips/videos	0.0%	10.0%	30.0%	60.0%	0.0%
Plaques/billboard with EU flag	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Social media	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%	30.0%	20.0%
Advertising campaigns on television and/or radio	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%

Source: Stakeholder survey, n=10

4.2 Assessment of effectiveness of communication strategies

The desk research shows that information and communication strategy as well as the measures are monitored and evaluated externally. In that, systematic evaluations have been undertaken for the period 2007-2013 and are also planned for the period 2014-2020.

4.2.1 2007-13 period

In 2010, the Communication Plan has been externally evaluated by Sympra GmbH, located in Stuttgart. All measures and activities proposed in the Communication Plan have been evaluated on a scale from 1 (very good) to 5 (bad) regarding output and result/impact indicators. The specific evaluation scores and the recommendations are presented in Table 2 A-4 in the Annex. Overall, Sympra writes that output and result indicators are satisfying and gives an evaluation of good to very good. Note, however, that Sympra does not mention on which type of information their evaluation is based on.

The final report of the OP has been published in spring 2017. Yet, the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection Baden-Württemberg already provided us with the evaluation of the Communication Plan (version of June 2016). The evaluation of the Communication Plan has a similar structure to the paragraphs on information and public relation activities mentioned in the AIRs (see below). The evaluation is based on the overview list of public relation activities (provided by the Ministry) and also makes use of the comments and recommendations made by Symptra in 2011 for the AIR 2010 (see above). All output and results/impact indicators have been far exceeded, with one noteworthy exception: the target value for the number of recipients was 3.000, but the actual number of recipients is 1.538, even though all numbers are based on data from 2007-2015, thus already extending the time period beyond the programming period (see Tables 2 A-5 and 2 A-6 in the Annex). The website has been viewed by up to 49.120 people per year, there has been a continuous growth in views since the launch. The report highlights several good practice examples. These examples are discussed in section 1.6. The authors state that media coverage is satisfying but that many media reports do not mention ERDF-funding. This is even more surprising in the case of Mannheim because Mannheim received the most comprehensive funding in the programming period but the number of media reports has not been as high as expected (compared to less-funded regions).

Annual implementation reports (AIR) mainly list examples of measures as well as information and public relation activities related to the OP. Yet, every AIR has a paragraph on a short evaluation of these activities. The information is reported separately for output and result indicators. The actual numbers of recipients, posters, participants at information events, etc. can be found in the respective AIRs. In the following, we focus on the analysis of effectiveness of measures and activities as mentioned in the AIRs. In the beginning, the evaluation is most of the time based on subjective judgements by AIR authors. Later on, AIRs provide data on the number of webpages with the highest number of downloads, etc.

In 2007, it is mentioned that due to the late approval of the programme the conducted information and public relation activities can be seen as being successful regarding the visibility of these activities, the level of awareness of the OP, and the role of the Community. Particularly the webpage – already launched at the end of 2006 – and its visibility is seen as a major component of the visibility of the programme. Additionally, information events on guidelines and programmes, and the mobilisation of multipliers, is seen as a success. The evaluation is more or less based on the number of visits on the webpage and the number of participants at the events.

In 2008, AIR highlights the progress of the webpage and especially the so-called “give-aways” (USB-sticks, notepads, and a miniature map of Baden-Württemberg). Contrary to 2007, output indicators of the Communication Plan are now listed and compared with the target values mentioned in the Communication Plan. For example, some of the target values have been achieved or exceeded (e.g. print run of flyers, number of working aids and guidelines, number of seminars and workshops, media coverage), whereas other activities did not reach the target value (e.g. print run posters due to postponement of printing to 2009). The same logic has been applied to result indicators. Overall, most of the target values have been achieved or even exceeded, yet especially the number of hits of the “Förderwegweiser” fell far short of the target value due to its delayed setup only in October 2008. The evaluation is again more or less based on subjective interpretations if the number of multipliers reached at events can be seen as high or low, and overall the conducted information and public relation activities are seen as being successful.

As before, the AIR 2009 lists the number of activities and the target groups reached. The increasing number of visits on the webpage are seen as a successful sign of public relation activities. Again, AIR differentiates between several parts of the webpage to evaluate the hits and visits in a more fine-grained analysis. The miniature map of Baden-Württemberg and the posters have been a great success because the department had to reprint new editions. Almost all output and result indicators

have been exceeded (e.g. the number of participants at target-specific information events). The only exception is the lower number of participants at subject-specific seminars and workshops. AIR does not report why this is the case. Overall, the conducted information and public relation activities are seen as being successful.

In 2010, again most of the target values of output and result indicators have been achieved or exceeded. One major exception is the number of hits of the webpage and the numbers of downloads regarding the publication of a compilation of exemplary projects. The main points of the external evaluation of the information and public relation activities undertaken by Sympra GmbH are listed in 4.2.1 and in Table 39 in the Annex.

In 2011, AIR addressed some of the recommendations of the external evaluation. First, it is mentioned that – following internal revisions and exchange with other administration – there is no additional benefit of establishing a comprehensive social media concept for the OP. Social media would require permanent interaction and up-to-dateness which cannot be done with the current number of staffing. Secondly, due to a change in the OP, the “Förderwegweiser” has been revised and the recommendation to optimize it for search engines had been accepted. Thirdly, the recommendation that administrations should be better informed by the departments has been accepted by revising one of the forms. Fourthly, a better “storytelling” had been recommended and this has been accepted by using two exhibitions to inform citizens about ERDF-funding. The exhibitions are labelled as being “ideal” because they can be transported in total or partly to other events. Furthermore, best-practice projects are part of the exhibitions, thus showing potential recipients how it could be done. Fifthly, event invitations have only been sent electronically, thus following the external recommendation to do so. Sixthly, as recommended, recipients received a flyer for public relation activities. Overall, target values of output and result indicators have been achieved. Note, however, that as from AIR 2011 on, the authors of the AIRs are *not* writing anymore if the information and public relation activities have been a success. Maybe this is due to the positive external evaluation in 2010, so an internal evaluation is no longer needed.

In 2012, a feasibility study on the re-launch and modernisation of the webpage (as recommended by the external evaluation) has been commissioned. All target values of output and results indicators have been achieved.

AIR 2013 mentions that the recommended clipping-service has been tested but there has not been an additional benefit. Consequently, the contract has not been prolonged. Note that no subject-specific seminar or workshop has been organized in 2013.

AIR 2014 mentions the re-launch of the webpage in 2013 but does not say anything about the success of this re-launch. It is noteworthy that most of the media coverage already has been devoted to the new funding period 2014-2010.

ERDF-programme in 2007-13 has been the smallest one in Germany (excluding the city states), thus concerted public relation activities did not work out as expected. Comments and recommendations of external evaluation by Sympra GmbH in 2011 are well-taken. The authors share Sympra’s opinion that programmes like RWB-EFRE in Baden-Württemberg and especially the whole idea of ERDF-funding is too complex to be presented regularly to citizens. Main focus of the communication should be on *specific* projects. Particularly the exhibitions devoted to specific projects are seen as being a valuable communication tool. Providing the media and the general public with information on specific projects has been one of the adopted recommendations by putting the focus of the webpage on these projects and using billboards and posters for specific projects during information events.

Effectiveness in raising visibility and awareness of the policy, funds, programmes; of achievements in economic/social/territorial development and benefits for citizens; and the role played by the EU.

4.2.2 2014-20 period

Whereas there are no evaluation reports available yet, the AIR 2015 does not entail any information the communication strategy in 2014-20. The AIR contains several facts and figures that allow for some preliminary conclusion how successful communication has been during the first years of the ERDF programme period. Baden-Württemberg's ERDF website was visited 10.500 times between April and end of December 2016. 97 percent of visitors were located in Germany with roughly 50 percent of visits coming from Baden-Württemberg. The contents that attracted most interest were the overview of options how to receive funding, the calls for proposals, project examples and the download area ("Download Centre"). On the latter site, the OP and the list with projects were most frequently downloaded.

Several larger and medium-sized *Auftaktveranstaltungen* (kick-off events) accompanied the beginning of ERDF funding period in 2014. One such event took place in Stuttgart chamber of craft's headquarter with altogether 170 participants, including representatives of all state ministries involved as well as envoys of the European Commission. This event is assessed as having considerably increased the general public's awareness of the ERDF in the region.

The largest information campaign with several events in the style of "day of open door" was again embedded in the annual "Europe Week" in May. In order to exploit the advantaged if this form of "face to face" information campaigning even more, it is planned to have these "days of open door" at other times of the year according to beneficiaries' preferences (in practice mostly during the summer). With this form of information dissemination, it is estimated that about 4000 persons were reached in the years 2015 and 2016.

Altogether 90 press releases about ERDF funding were issued by bodies or actors in charge until the end of the year 2016. It is mentioned that these clearly had an impact in the form of a larger number of media report. Again, this is evaluated as having contributed to raising awareness of ERDF's role in the region on the side of the general public.

In terms of more direct forms of advertisement, it is worth mentioning that a new leaflet specifically addressing the general public has been created. This is available for download on the programme's website. This is supplement by a *Bürgerinformation* (citizens' information) that has the goal to present relevant general information on the ERDF as well annual updates on its progress in the region in a concise and "easy to grasp" manner by especially relying the communicative "power" that concrete example have.

Furthermore, several types of advertisement items have again been developed and produced, such as pens and pencils, college blocs, rain protection pull over sheets for bicycle saddles, "anti-stress balls" and textile (cotton) bags in numbers between 500 and 10.000. At the end of 2016, 72 percent of these advertisement items had already been distributed, by either officials or beneficiaries. Finally, in addition to the regular list of projects that is available on the programme's website, a more visualising version has been created, i.e., one that includes more pictures of projects.

Overall, AIR 2016 states that communication strategy 2014-2020 is closely followed in strictly implemented. When taking a broader look at (almost) halftime, the communication and information campaigns have already reached a larger number of persons either (potential) beneficiaries or persons otherwise interested.

The communication strategies for 2014-20 are required to report on the results/experiences of the previous period in 2007-13.

Due to the characteristics of the ERDF and the ESF-programmes in Baden-Württemberg that are quite small in size (see above, section 3), a clear analytical distinction between reaching specific target groups and the general public seems appropriate. Most interviewees' stress that their communication activities are mostly directed towards specific target groups which are usually the prime addressees of Cohesion policy funding and tailored accordingly (interviews BW-1, BW-2, BW-4, BW-5, BW-6, BW-7, BW-10, BW-11, BW-12, BW-13). At the same time, these communication activities are project-focused (see above). However, some interviewees also consider communication to the general public as a priority or at least an equally important task within Cohesion policy communication, but here they stress at the same time the rather modest success so far (e.g., interviews BW-5, BW-8). This depends on position.

In terms of communication to specific target groups – i.e. overwhelmingly (potential) beneficiaries which could also function as intermediating actors or "multiplicators" later on – interviewees are quite satisfied with its effectiveness. At the same time, one cannot really say that interviewees prefer certain communication forms over others or consider them more effective. Within that scope there are, of course, certain communication channels or tools that are more relevant than others depending on target groups (most importantly in terms of communicating in electronic form, especially by providing relevant information on websites or with e-mail newsletters). Related to this, the selection of communication forms and tools is to some extent also determined by the concrete project concerned (see interview BW-8). Finally, some forms are difficult by nature (TV). Nonetheless, as stressed by one interviewee, "all [communication forms] are useful and necessary not least because people are different. Some react on social media [activities], others more on logos. We should do the one thing while not skipping the other." (interview BW-8). Although social media are increasingly employed as communication platforms, most interviewees still express reservations towards these new forms. What makes them sceptical is the question if personnel investments required for that (especially for Twitter) are really "worth the effort", apart from the fact that most organizations and institutions can simply not afford employing a person full-time for social media communication (interviews BW-1, BW-2, BW-4, BW-5, BW-7, BW-10, BW-12, BW-13, but see BW-8).

With respect to reaching the general public as target for communication activities, interviewees' assessment is completely different (interviews BW-1, BW-2, BW-4, BW-5, BW-6, BW-7, BW-8, BW-10, BW-11, BW-12, BW-13). First, as presented and explained above, most interviewees do not consider the general public their prime target group for communication. Second, all interviewees view communication to the general public as a difficult task, especially with respect to raising citizens' awareness about the role of Cohesion funds in the region. Interviewees agree that prospects to achieve that goal remain dim.

In terms of different communication activities, interviewees express their concern that especially using general media (regional and local press, radio, TV) which are, for example, approached with press releases is rather ineffective in conveying the messages. A problem often encountered here is that co-funding for finished projects (e.g. a newly constructed research centre building) is not or only incorrectly mentioned in a newspaper article despite the explicit request to do so (see especially interviews BW-2, BW-5, BW-10, BW-12). But communication to the general public with other classical forms that stakeholders can design and employ on their own (billboards, printed material, website etc.) are not necessarily viewed as more effective, because interviewees clearly see their limited reach or general communication potential. Citizens either hardly notice these communication forms or have to become active in order to receive this information (ibid.).

As explained in more detail below (see section 4.3), what interviewees consider more effective (or quite successful) if compared to other approaches or tools is direct – "face to face" communication with

citizens mostly at regular (i.e.. not communication specific) annual events at the local or regional level (interviews BW-5, BW-10, BW-11, BW-12, BW-13).

The general approach how Cohesion policy is communicated to citizens polarizes stakeholders in Baden-Württemberg. Whereas 50 percent are satisfied with it or express a neutral opinion, the other 50 percent are dissatisfied. However, stakeholders are mostly satisfied with how Cohesion policy is shaped in detail and with the target groups the measures address, while this is less so with respect to Commission's support for communication. At the same time, stakeholders assess the effectiveness of their communication measures and single communication ways mostly positive or neutral with the possible exception of the employment of social media.

Table 21: How satisfied are you with the:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	Don't know
Way Cohesion policy is communicated to citizens	10.0%	20.0%	10%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Branding and messages used to communicate Cohesion policy	0.0%	30.0%	40%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Use of human interest/personal stories	0.0%	20.0%	30%	20.0%	0.0%	30.0%
Support from the European Commission on communication	0.0%	30.0%	10%	30.0%	0.0%	30.0%
Targeting of different groups with different communication tools	0.0%	50.0%	30%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Administrative capacity and resources dedicated to communication activities	20.0%	40.0%	20%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%

Table 22: To what extent are the communication efforts effective in:

	Very effective	Effective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Ineffective	Very ineffective	Don't know/ Not used
Conveying the achievements of Cohesion policy programmes overall and the role of the EU	0.0%	50.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Conveying the achievements of co-funded projects and the role of the EU]	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Using social media to promote the programme and projects	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	0.0%	70.0%
Fostering good working relations with the media and press to reach the general public	0.0%	40.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%	40.0%

4.3 Good practice examples

The desk research shows that neither AIRs nor the several evaluation reports highlight good practice examples in a very detailed manner. Therefore, we just list the few examples mentioned in the reports.

Sympra highlights the presentation of the ERDF-programme on exhibitions such as "Expo Real" in Munich or "Embedded World 2010" in Nuremberg as positive examples. However, the authors do not mention why they reach this conclusion.

The final report on the Communication Plan highlights several communication measures:

- Webpage: illustrated projects with a high quality of photos raises attention and all information has been up-to-date
- the tool looks very professional and is eye-catching (in particular by showing nicely the contribution of the EU)
- Exhibitions with big posters and billboards are seen as very positive due to the large-size, well-structured and coherent message of photos and content
- Many media reports on a project in Pforzheim ("Kreativzentrum im Emma-Jaeger-Bad") over time raised citizens' awareness to this project, thus indicating that *regional* newspapers could be a valuable source to anchor EU-funded projects in the mind of citizens

Interviewees have not referred to communication forms as particular good practice which they would recommend to be implemented elsewhere. However, one finding is quite remarkable in that regard. A majority of stakeholders interviewed stress positive, sometime even very positive experiences with annual events, i.e. the so-called Europe Day (*Europatag*), especially since this day has been moved from May to July. Interviewees perceive their communication activities during these event as quite effective to reach the general public (interviews BW-10, BW-12, BW-13).

One interviewee also mentioned direct personal contacts to be extremely relevant for communication with specific target groups, especially potential beneficiaries of funding. Within that scope, chartering an excursion ship on Lake Constance as an attractive location for an encompassing information event proved quite successful as it attracted many (interview BW-8).

In a similar vein, one local interviewee mentioned the idea to combine a yearly regular event in the city (but which is actually a nationwide event in Germany) with communication activities (interview BW-5). On the *Tag des offenen Denkmals* (day of opened monument), his team seized the opportunity to inform visitors "face to face" during presentations that a particular historical building which had been renovated with ERDF-funding could only be preserved in that form and also with a new usage with the help of EU funds. Hence, such communication activities will be expanded. Other stakeholders reported that they have similar plans for the future, i.e. to focus communication activities on such public events, after initial positive results, like in science and technology with the *Lange Nacht der Wissenschaft* (long night of science) and the presentation concrete EU support for projects (interview TH-12).

Furthermore, although, as mentioned, the majority of interviewees remains rather sceptical about using social media for communication policy communication, one interviewee reported very positive experiences with videos advertising the manifold options the ESF offers in the region for youth having finished school in their search to find the right profession/career for them. This included the general message that the ESF could specifically assist young people to become active (again), to pursue their personal and occupational goals (e.g. in the form of counselling, but accompanied training measures). These videos were distributed via YouTube and Facebook and perceived as a success, not just because of click rates but also general responses (interview BW-10). This example might indicate that using social media in new and perhaps also unconventional forms could prove effective to reach particular target groups, especially younger persons.

Stakeholders in Baden-Württemberg did not provide further explanations, examples, facts and figures in terms of good practice experiences.

4.4 Media framing of Cohesion policy

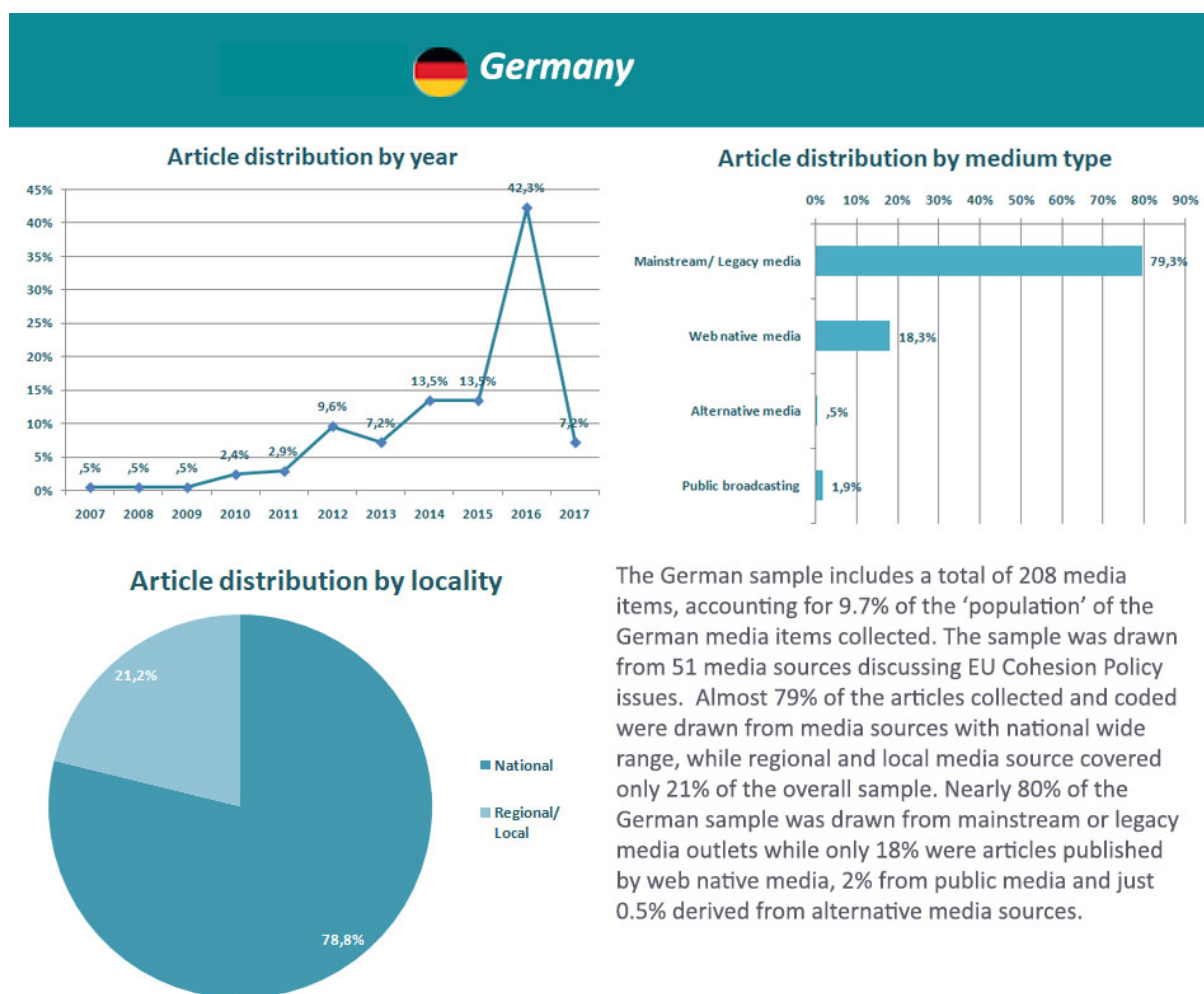


Figure 3: Media analysis

In the framing analysis of the German sample coders all the eight frames consisting the Framing Matrix were identified. The analysis of the German media indicates that EU Cohesion policy is represented mostly in economic and Cohesion terms, as Frame 1 ("Economic consequences") and Frame 7 ("Cohesion") were identified as dominant frames in 30.3% and 20.2% of the articles respectively. In terms of the most commonly applied subframes, subframe 1.2 (17.3%) and subframe 7.0 (19.2%) were the most salient. It should be noted that the "Cohesion" frame has only been found to be that salient only in German media, indicating a trend of the German media to emphasise the importance of convergence among member states and to promote the process of European integration. Additionally, Frame 2 ("Quality of Life") with 12.5% and Frame 4 ("Incompetence of local authorities") with 11.5% were also prominent, while the coders did not identify any frames in 13.5% of the sample.

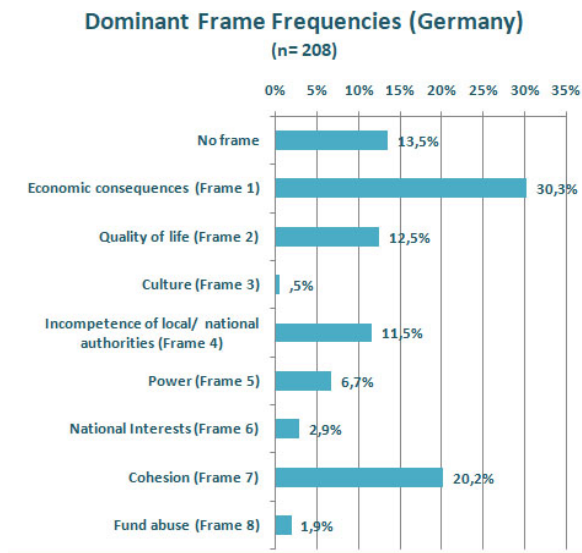


Figure 4: Dominant frame frequencies in German media

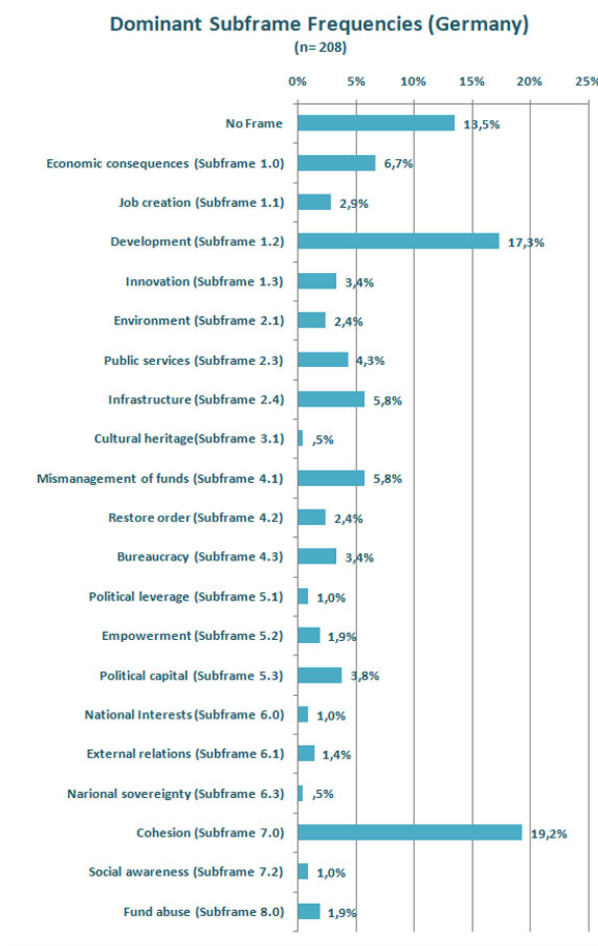


Figure 5: Dominant subframe frequencies in German media

The analysis of the German sample also revealed striking differences in framing between national and regional media, who seem to adopt totally opposite frames in their coverage of EU Cohesion

policy. Regional media interpret Cohesion policy predominantly in terms of its implications on the economy as Frame 1 dominates more than 61% of the analysed news items, while one fourth of the sample employs the “Quality of life” frame (frame 2). On the contrary, the emergence of frames in national media is more balanced, indicating that news presentation in national media approaches the news from several different perspectives.

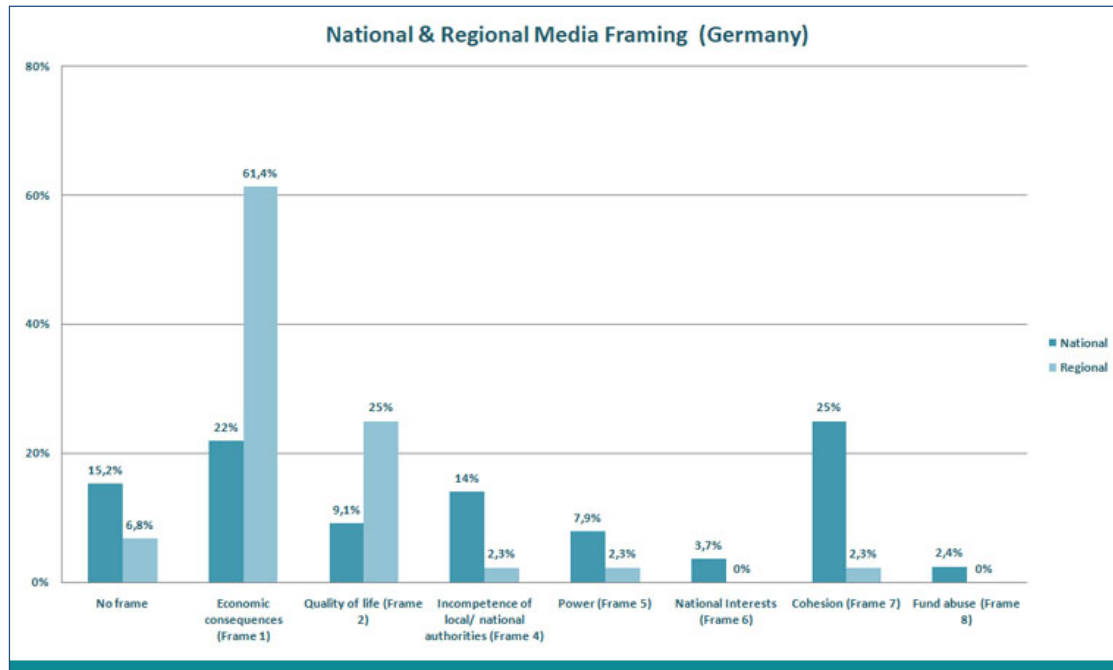


Figure 6: Framing differences between national and regional/local media in Germany



Germany - Europeanization variables

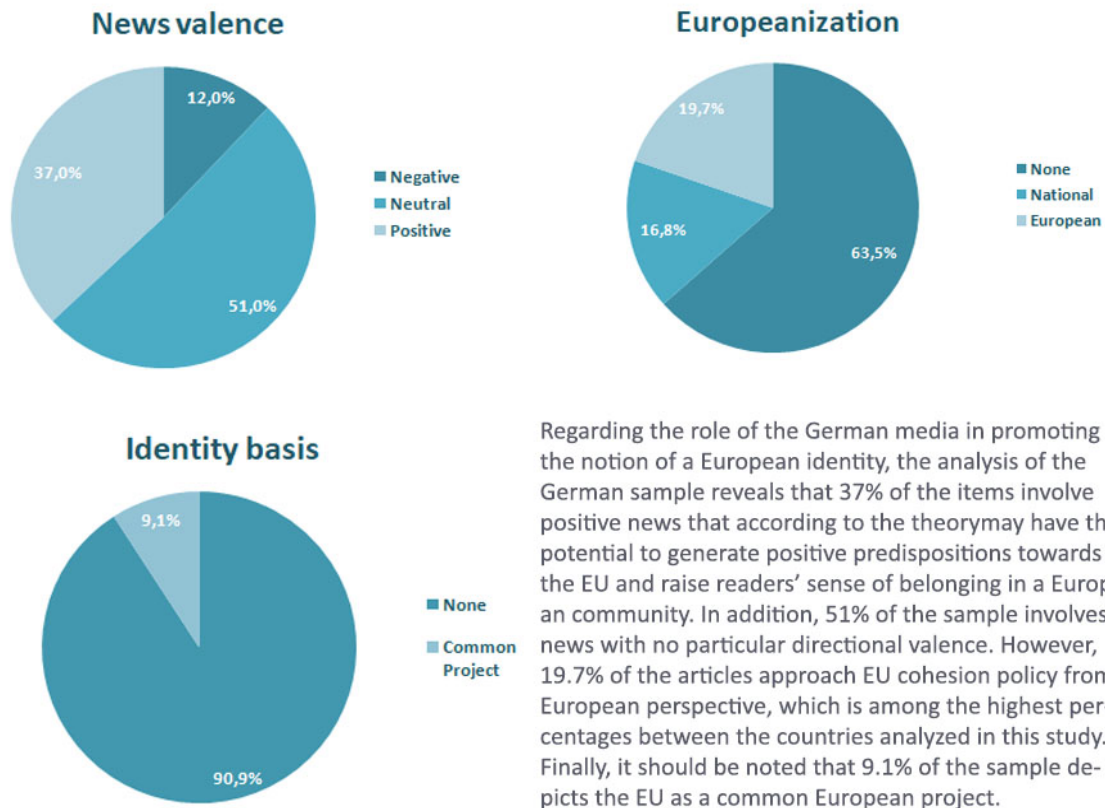


Figure 7: Europeanization variables

Some differences between national and regional media in Germany were also found in relation to the variables that affect the construction of European identity, as regional media tend to report positive news on EU Cohesion policy more often than national media. However, national media are more likely to approach the news from a European, rather than from a national perspective.

4.5 Implications for citizens CP perceptions and attitudes to the EU

Obviously, communication of Cohesion policy is taken seriously by all actors at all levels involved in Baden-Württemberg. Although one could argue that for some actors it is mostly relevant that compliance with communication requirements is always ensured, this is not the general assessment. The *Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum* (Steinbeis Europe Centre)⁶ is an example that there are specific efforts to pursue a more proactive approach to communication, because this institution is lead in personal union by the *Europabeauftragte der Ministerin für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Wohnungsbau des Landes Baden-Württemberg* [Europe Commissioner of Ministry for Economy, Employment, and Housing of the Land Baden-Württemberg] (see section 4.2). Here, communication of Cohesion policy is given a high priority while at the same time searching for innovative and (more) effective communication measures is a matter of course that has been internalised. Consequently, modern communication channels are already used widely, with one full-time employee in charge of Twitter.

Although most other actors involved in communication share the belief that communication requirements are already enormous not to say excessive and that, hence, investing even more efforts

⁶ <https://www.steinbeis-europa.de>.

in communication would be inappropriate, not to say counterproductive, communication as such is far from being indeed downplayed or only by a minority of actors. The full spectrum of communication measures is exploited and constantly expanded. The increasing role of information dissemination online is fully acknowledged and taken into account. Programme websites, to name the most relevant example, have constantly been expanded, modernised and a (more) frequently updated. Overall, there is a clear process of professionalization of Cohesion policy communication. External evaluations do also indicate that communication complies with all criteria and even that it is effective. Based on that there are no severe inherent weaknesses in Cohesion policy communication that would prevent it from having desired impacts. Nonetheless, stakeholders express a different point of view which would hint toward obstacles that are hard to measure (see section 4.2.2.).

However, there are several relevant constraints as to the effectiveness of communication which naturally do also impact (at least potentially) citizens' Cohesion policy awareness as well as their European identities. First, because of the rather small size of the programmes in Baden-Württemberg and their nature with few priority axes and foci on mostly intangible and less visible investments, stakeholders prefer a clear distinction between communication to target groups (potential beneficiaries) and communication to the general public. The latter is often assigned less importance. If communication to the general public is neglected because of that is difficult to assess. At least, there are no clear and unambiguous indications that this would be the case. To the contrary, there are various occasions where significant efforts to address the general public were recorded (see section 4.3.).

Second, using the general media of Cohesion policy communication is a huge problem. In that, the most important transmission chain does certainly not function properly. However, there are obviously limitations regarding if and to what extent this could really be changed by actors in charge of Cohesion policy communication. Under conditions of constitutional protection of freedom of the press, no one can be forced to print or broadcast EU Cohesion policy topics. Even if Cohesion policy reports appear in the media, journalists cannot direct what to write (e.g. to place EU funding of projects in headlines). Besides, Cohesion policy (even Cohesion policy that becomes very visible) in the region is only one of many issues for making news during the day. This is a decision up to journalists and editors. In the end, Cohesion policy communication actors can only assert a very limited influence if and when Cohesion policy will make it into the media.

Since for Germany regional media are much more relevant for information about European themes in terms of their concrete consequences for the (presumably) regional economy or with respect to living conditions (in the particular region), it seems plausible that Baden-Württemberg's residents who overwhelmingly consume local media should have a good chance to be informed about concrete impacts of Cohesion policy in their region and/or the city or village they live in. At the same time, there should be a greater likelihood that regional citizens consuming regional media have developed rational attitudes towards EU Cohesion policy in which concrete material benefits are crucial for their views on Europe, the European Union and also Cohesion policy. On the other hand, this would at the same time imply that regional inhabitants who receive their information mostly from local media are less likely to be informed about European themes and especially Cohesion policy from multiple perspectives that would also express more balanced views. As a result, they should be less inclined to develop a European identity or a feeling of closeness towards Europe that stems from an internalisation of general European values, like "Europe growing together" (cohesion) or solidarity between member states and other member states or "closer to us" than states outside of the EU.

Contrary to this, citizens of the region who solely or overwhelmingly consume national media (such as one of the "big" national newspapers only) might have a lesser chance to get informed about Cohesion policy's role in Baden-Württemberg, their home region (sub-region) or the place they reside. As a result, they might not or only hardly be informed about concrete co-financed projects and in that material benefits the EU provides. However, because of the frames that dominate national media reporting on Cohesion policy, citizens consuming national media might develop more nuanced views

on the European Union and especially Cohesion policy. What follows from that is a greater predisposition for a European identity and a greater (emotional) attachment to Europe and the European Union that is derived from the perception of a “Common Europe”, solidarity between member states justifying redistributive policies and an acceptance to help other member states and their citizens to progress. The fact that national media reports apply a Cohesion frame much more often than regional media would underline the plausibility of this expectation.

However, given Germany’s role as a net contributor to the general EU budget – a frame that is at least likely to be present in respective media reports at the national level in terms of the subframe “Economic consequences” – citizens consuming mostly national media might also have a greater likelihood to assess Cohesion policy from a cost-benefit perspective. Hence, this could result in less positive and more critical views on advantages and disadvantage of Germany’s EU-membership, but even more so with respect of Cohesion policy made a difference for Baden-Wurttemberg and/or their place of living.

Taking into account the overall importance of the “Economic consequences” frame that is also very relevant in national media (second in terms of percentage) one could reasonably expect that – when assessed from the perspective of the extent of media consumption – citizens in the region, but also citizens in Germany could be more inclined to develop attitudes towards Europe, the European Union and Cohesion policy that are more strongly impact by (subtle) calculations of pros and cons. Even though this could at the same time be counterbalances by the even more prominent “Cohesion” frame at the national level one could, hence, expect a tendency in which the factor “what does this cost us?” plays a crucial role for forming EU attitudes as well as in terms of developing European identities.

Finally, although German media do certainly not frame European themes as overwhelmingly negative nor from a predominantly national perspective, results of the media analysis would at the same time not really support a notion that media reports as such could be particularly supportive for increasing citizens European identities. This would even hold true when considering that the German percentage of frames that view Cohesion policy from a European perspective is among the highest found for all member states analysed. A share of less than 10 percent of articles that depicts Europe/Europeanisation as a common project is not that impressive in the end.

5. Citizens views of Cohesion policy and the EU

5.1 Citizen survey results

Awareness of EU Funding

The citizen survey reveal in interesting general pattern in which there are noticeable differences between the general and the concrete. On the hand, a relatively large number of region’s inhabitants have heard of the ERDF as well as the ESF (see tables 23 – 25). This largely corresponds to representative surveys data that were collected on behalf of the ESF Management Authority and the ministry in charge for administering the ESF in in 2015 (ISG 2015) Here, about 40 percent of respondents confirmed that they had heard of the ESF. Only for the Cohesion fund is the share of citizens who have heard of it considerably lower.

Table 23: Have you heard about the European Regional Development Fund?

Answer	Percentage
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Yes	43,3%
No	55,0%
Refused/don't know	0,6%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500

Table 24: Have you heard about the European Social Fund?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	37,2%
No	68,8%
Refused/don't know	0,0%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500

Table 25: Have you heard about the Cohesion Fund?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	10,2%
No	89,0%
Refused/don't know	0,8%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500

On the other hand, a considerably lower percentage – less than one third – of citizens have also heard of concrete projects in their locality or in the region that had been co-financed by the EU (see table 26). This corresponds to the relatively low number of persons asked – again less than one third – who confirmed that they have noticed any type of public acknowledgment of EU funding in their surroundings (see table 27).

Table 26: Heard you heard about EU funded projects for own region or city?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	30,8%
No	68,0%
Refused	0,0%
don't know	1,2%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500

Table 27: Have you noticed any public acknowledgement of EU funding in your region/town in the form of banners, placards etc.?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	27,2%
No	71,6%

Refused/ don't know	1,2%
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Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500.

Perceived Impact of EU Funding

This discernible difference between the abstract and the concrete dimensions of Cohesion policy funding can also be observed when it comes to assessing the impacts of European funds in respondent's region or locality. While vast majority of persons asked would not only confirm that Germany as a whole has benefited from EU-membership, but also that EU-funding had a positive or even very positive impact in Baden-Württemberg and in their place of residency, only a small share of survey participants would confirm such positive impacts for themselves (see tables 28-30).

Table 28: The impact of the funding of the European Union on region or city was ...

Answer	Percentage
(very) positive	66,2%
No impact	16,2%
(very) negative	4,5%
Not applicable/refused/ don't know	13%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500.

Table 29: My country has benefited from being a member of the European Union.

Answer	Percentage
(strongly) agree	80,6%
Neither agree nor disagree	10,0%
(strongly) disagree	7,8%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500

Table 30: Have you benefited in your daily life from a project funded by any of [the] three funds?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	10,0%
No	85,4%
Refused/don't know	4,6%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500

Finally, respondents are undecided on the issue if funding within the scope of Cohesion policy made a difference for Baden-Württemberg or the location they reside in. About one third of citizens would attribute positive or even very positive impacts. However, a majority of survey participants tends to assess funding as either negative or irrelevant for regional or local development (see table 31). One could speculate that the latter result stems from a calculation that Germany is a net contributor to the EU-budget in general and in that also to Cohesion policy funds. Hence, respondents who denied

a difference to the positive might believe that more money could have been allocated to their region without a European 'loop way'.

Table 31: How do you think your region or city would have developed without EU funding?

Answer	Percentage
Much/somewhat better	13,4%
Same	39,0%
Somewhat/a lot worse	31,8%
Not applicable	6,8%
Refused/don't know	9,0%

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500

EU Attitudes, European Identity and Attachment

As the data of the COHESIFY presented in Table 32 reveals, an overwhelming share of people in Baden-Wuerttemberg feel very or closely attached to the city or village they live in, to their region and in particular to their country. While a majority of people say that they feel very attached to Europe (52.4%), only 47.2% state the same about the European Union, indicating that there is still some distance towards the EU and their institutions when comparing with the geographical area of Europe and the attachment to the nation state. However, only 20 percent of the respondents in the COHESIFY citizen survey identify themselves with the country they live in, that is Germany, while 51.8 percent consider themselves as Germans and Europeans and 27 percent as Europeans. Thus, an overwhelming majority of people in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg identify themselves fully or partly as Europeans, which demonstrates again the high degree of attachment to Europe, which is, however, not as high when it comes to the European Union and its institutions.

Table 32: Degree of attachment to city, region, country, European Union and Europe among citizens in Baden-Württemberg

People may feel different degrees of attachment to places. Please tell me how attached you feel to	City/village	Region	Country	European Union	Europe
Very	64,2	60,6	72,2	47,2	52,4
Somewhat	26	26,8	22,4	35,4	33,2
A little	5,8	8,2	3,8	11	9,4
Not at all	3,6	4	1,2	5,8	4
Don't know	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,6	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	500	500	500	500	500

Source: COHESIFY citizens survey, N=500.

5.2 Focus group results

Three focus groups with 10 participants from Baden Württemberg were conducted.

Cohesion policy

Participants across all the three focus groups were not familiar with Cohesion policy. In DE 1 and DE 2, where participants discussed the meaning of Cohesion policy, two views emerged. One view was

that Cohesion policy aims at reducing regional disparities with a particular focus on less-developed EU regions:

Participant 2, DE 1: *"In my eyes, EU structural policies are connected with structurally weak regions like perhaps in Eastern Europe which can benefit from this funding, but with us in Western Germany, such projects tend to be seldom, but I could also be wrong."*

The second view consisted of abstract cohesion narratives about bringing states closer together:

Participant 2, DE 2: *"That the members of the EU are merging together, are getting closer to each other, this must be the result of cohesion if I understand the term correctly."*

Participant 1, DE 2: *"I think that the goal could be to bring different states in connection, to overcome language barriers whereas this often means to use the English language if many or several languages are involved."*

Participants were familiar with the ESF (DE2), which was mentioned without a prompt, albeit without a discussion about its specific goals or role within Cohesion policy. There were big differences concerning participants' awareness of EU-funded projects between the groups. In DE 1, participants could not recall any EU-funded projects. In DE 3, EU-funded projects were associated with Erasmus and one participant mentioned the renovation of buildings. On the other hand, in DE2 a range of projects were mentioned in the fields of education, social inclusion, and infrastructure as well as the territorial cooperation strand of Cohesion policy (Table 32).

Table 32: Participants' reference to projects' co-financed by EU funds

Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocational training programmes for electricians and plumbers - School competition
Social inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects for the integration of homeless young adults
Infrastructure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bridge over the Rhine near Lörrach and Weil - Motorways in East Germany - Renovation of buildings (the Abbey of Lorsch) - Roads in other Member States
European territorial cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art projects involving cross border regions - Music project involving musicians from Germany, France and Switzerland

Even though participants in DE 1 and DE 3 had limited knowledge of EU-funded projects they believed that EU funding for regional development was a good idea and that the impact was positive. In two focus groups (DE 1 and DE 3), participants discussed the added value of EU-funded projects. In DE 1, one of the participants emphasised the added value of the EU in the area of tackling climate change, where EU Member States alone are not able to solve problems related to climate change unless they cooperate. In DE 3, after learning from the moderator that the EU co-financed the Popakademie (a

higher education institute for popular music and music business in Mannheim), a participant questioned the financial additionality and project utility of EU funding in Germany:

Participant 3, DE 3: *"I could imagine that even without the EU, there would be a Popakademie. But if it could not be financed, I would not grieve a missing Popakademie. [...] ... if the money was spent for schools instead of the Popakademie – please don't be upset – it would be better because the education system in Germany is as important as in other countries, and we must make more for our schools, from sanitary facilities, efficient gyms to sufficient teaching stuff that really cover the lesson times. I would prefer if the first funding domain of the EU was education so that the schools could be – one might say – perfect in all countries."*

The main type of problem affecting Cohesion policy identified by participants in all the groups was the lack of communication, which could increase awareness of EU-funded projects in the region. In DE 1 and DE 2, participants also highlighted the administrative effort required to apply for EU funds, which was perceived to discourage potential beneficiaries from participating, for example:

Participant 4 (DE2): *"I have got the impression that with all the projects that we carried out, the temporal expenditure needed for the settlement was not in reasonable proportion to the work that we have performed; we need to substantiate every cent that we spent and the forms that we had to fill in were so complicated that one has to wonder if there are possibilities to simplify the procedure."*

The problems with communication related to weakness in the publicity of projects as well as the publicity of funding opportunities. Below we provide extracts to highlight the way participants described these problems in Baden Württemberg:

Communication	Participant 1, DE 1: <i>"Well, I think the purpose is primarily to fund projects, but in a second step, one could use it to communicate that the EU is great, it does a lot of things for you, it fosters your region. In my eyes, this second step is missing because it is not the primary purpose of the funding to finance communication to the citizens, but this would be helpful because citizens think that the EU costs a lot of money and that there is so much bureaucracy and that they can't benefit from the EU."</i>
Bureaucracy	Participant 2, DE 2: <i>"What I have learned about this project was the extreme administrative effort and the fact that quite a few people that tried to initiate such projects became lost in the bureaucratic jungle and gave up."</i>

European identity

European identity was discussed from the point of view of culture and civic rights. The discussions were similar in the three groups. Participants believed that Europeans share a common history and culture, but with some national differences in terms of ways of thinking, traditions and languages. In DE 2, participants noticed that the Second World War continues to be a source of division between Europeans. Despite the fact that participants saw similarities between EU member states what they highlighted most was differences defined in nation-state terms.

The freedom of movement, the euro and the absence of border controls in the EU was emphasised as a mechanism that facilitate contact between people in all the groups. Cultural exchange, travel and getting to know other countries were considered important elements of European identity. The single market and the economic opportunities it provides were also discussed in positive terms. Moreover, some participants thought that common EU institutions provide a sense of European identity, yet, at the same time they believed the EU should not be equalised with "Europe", which

includes also other nation states (e.g. Switzerland, Norway). Apart from national cleavages, participants identified economic inequalities and territorial differences as additional dividing elements among Europeans. Participants highlighted the economic crisis as an example that has increased disparities between Germany and Southern European countries. The differences in this case are constructed in economic terms, representing Germany as the 'rich' country against the 'poor' South.

European identity and Cohesion policy

The participants discussed Cohesion policy and EU-funded projects as an element of European identity in two of the three groups (DE 1 and DE 3). In DE 1, participants thought that EU funded projects cannot have a damaging effect on European identity, but they expressed scepticism as to whether EU funds can foster European identity. Participants thought that if one benefits directly from EU-funding, this might strengthen their European identity. More attention to the topic was paid in DE 3, where participants disagreed whether EU funded projects contribute to a sense of Europeaness – this was one of the rare focus groups across all study regions, where disagreement among participants was present. Two of the participants, believed that funding can support the creation of European identity and one of them believed funding from the EU was the only way:

Participant 1 (DE 3): *"I think that this is the only possibility how Europe can spiritually grow together. Lets' say one of the only possibilities because money simply fosters development. As many people cannot afford making holidays abroad and only get information about, for instance, saving Greece, growing together is, in my eyes, incited somehow by the financial support, and therefore, the funding is not the only, but the most important mean."*

Participant 2 (DE 3): *"[...] if such funding is visible and has a significant effect in the sense of enriching life in the city or elsewhere and of making life more pleasant so that the funding flows into interesting and intelligent projects, it must have a positive effect and contribute to improve the image of the EU and to strengthen the European thinking so that there is a kind of spiritual approximation between the peoples of Europe."*

The third participant in DE 3 was more sceptical on the importance of EU funding for European identity mainly due to citizens' disinterest and poor project visibility. Moreover, this participant believed the single market and the benefits arising from it were more important in creating European identity:

Participant 3 (DE 3): *"Surely, money makes a difference, but finally, we see in the behaviour of certain governments, for example Hungary and Poland, that the funding of projects in these countries does not lead to a greater identification of the government with the idea of the EU, but it turns out that the governments often express themselves in a contrary way. [...] I stick to my opinion that I have uttered at the beginning, I consider it to be a windfall effect, the money is welcome, but it only influences on certain groups – and I am sure that this is only true for those that are better qualified, that have a graduate degree – that start to reflect and admit having benefits from the EU, but a great part of the population doesn't even take notice of what the EU really means to us."*

In conclusion, participants connected the potential of EU-funded projects as an element of European identity with the promotion of projects and the interest of citizens to be informed.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Key findings

Despite the relatively low share of EU funding in domestic expenditure for regional and related policies and the overall small financial volume of the ERDF programmes, Cohesion policy nevertheless proved to have a considerable impact in the region. In line with the general economic and structural strengths of the region and corresponding to the broader regional and local

development goals and strategies of the state, funds have indeed been used following the principles of “intelligent specialisation” and “strengthening strengths”. Even though the impact of Cohesion might be negligible in terms of concrete and measurable outputs such as regional GDP or GDP per capita in the short run, it cannot be denied that funds will **positively impact regional development in the long run** by making significant contributions to those areas that enjoy highest priority in the Baden-Württemberg, especially innovation in key economic sectors. In that, funds are welcomed and inserted to ensure that the region remains “on top”, not only in terms of competitiveness.

Consequently, it was generally confirmed by key stakeholders at all levels that Structural funds were clearly in line with the local and **regional development priorities**. More importantly, perhaps, there is a common perception that this “matching” turned even better during the last two funding periods. Funds are especially noted to provide significant added value to increasing sub-regional competitiveness and economic development by providing real incentives for close(r) cooperation between all relevant stakeholders on that level with the goal to push these sub-regions forward.

ESIF delivery and performance did not really encounter major **problems** which could be attributed to regional factors, the design of programmes, implementation decisions or the general management approach. Usually, the most severe problems emerge from the need to change the OPs in order to react to unexpected macro-economic development or project related obstacles of idiosyncratic character. In order not to lose funding, financial means had to be transferred from areas (priority axes) where not needed to those with an additional demand. Thus, absorption is no problem at all.

However, there were **other challenges**. The major reported policy implementation problems in the previous as well as the current period relate to **excessive audit and control**, as well as the **complexity of EU rules and procedures** regulating access to ESIF funding, along with excessive reporting requirements (such as statistical information on project beneficiaries to be submitted). These are seen as alien to national administrative traditions, sometime undue and even as strangling. The legal obligations that come with the management of Cohesion policy programmes are assessed in way that they would (often) form a real obstacle to effective OP implementation, sometimes also for project realisation in the first place. The bureaucratic burdens are perceived as massive and time-consuming. This came even more to light during funding period 2007-2013 for which an overly complex implementation and audit control had been installed as a result.

In terms of **citizens’ awareness of Cohesion policy** in the region, there is an interesting empirical picture in which there appear **remarkable gaps between the general and the more concrete aspects of Cohesion policy**. On the one hand, a relatively large number of region’s inhabitants have heard of the ESIFs (except the Cohesion Fund). On the other hand, a considerably lower percentage of citizens have also heard of concrete projects in their locality or in the region that had been co-financed by Structural Funds. Nonetheless, knowledge of ‘Cohesion policy’ or EU funded projects among the citizens appears to be above the average awareness levels across the regions covered by this study. Corresponding to this, a vast majority of citizens surveyed agreed with a positive or even very positive view on the impact of Cohesion policy funding in the region and in their place of residency. However, citizens are rather undecided on the issue if Cohesion policy funding made a difference for Baden-Württemberg or the location they reside in. Somehow in contrast to that, citizens’ understanding of the value of ESIF support for the local economies and communities is perceived by the key programme stakeholders to be generally low.

There are some indications that the predominantly positive views of Baden-Württemberg’s citizens on EU membership, EU integration and the benefits of EU funding for their region do at least partially also translate into a sense of **European identity**. Albeit region’s citizens feel closer to their village, city, region and especially their nation, about half of the population would also indicate a close attachment to Europe and the EU, which is remarkable. Even more clearly, an overall majority of region’s residents with a multiple identity of being German *and* Europe that is far greater than the share of those identifying as German only would also speak for a pronounced European identity.

Communication activities at programme and project level are significant in scope and quality and aim to raise the awareness and understanding of the role of the EU and the contribution Structural Funds make in Baden-Württemberg. There are at the same time considerable efforts observable to publicise the activities and achievements of the ESIF programmes in the region. Within that scope, there is a large continuity in the communication activities (as, for example, related to the single communication measures and tools) in 2014-20 as compared to 2007-2013. Naturally, the gaining of importance if new media and especially social media leaves its imprint on communication, albeit usage of these media channels remains limited so far. The general impression is that communication activities are constantly professionalised. However, key stakeholders at all levels also express a widespread scepticism as to the usefulness, but more so the prospect for success of communication addressing the general public. A view prevails that communication activities are not only “part of the deal”, but also something that should be and is taken seriously. However, this should not entail to ever more increase efforts as the “decoration” should not become more important than the contents.

As a result, the need for (further) efforts to ensure a more proactive approach to publicising and promoting the programmes in Baden-Württemberg is doubted which may limit the effectiveness of communication measures. But this would intermingle with general constraints on communication success and how these constraints are perceived by stakeholder involved in communication or the conclusions they draw based on their experience with these constraints. More precisely, this means:

- Interest of the media in Cohesion policy-related topics appears to be limited: the media is largely indifferent to ‘Europe’ and Cohesion policy, with stories being rarely picked up (even when explicitly approached so with press releases, invitations to communication events or phone calls)
- Regional and local media tend to present positive Cohesion policy-related news more often than national media, although the European perspective is clearly more present in national media
- Citizens and the media are interested predominantly in the results rather than funding sources of projects that start or have been successfully realised (“that things get done”): the media is largely indifferent to the source of support and, instead, interested in its effects (the outcomes and achievements of policy and human interest aspects); mentioning the funding source is even often omitted when requested to be included by communication actors
- There is a tendency to down-play European dimension and contribution in announcements and media stories: The EU dimension of support is often omitted or downplayed, while there is a tendency to highlight the actions, achievements and impact of domestic (including local) actors; fewer articles frame Cohesion policy from a ‘European’ perspective emphasising the EU dimension in local media (however, not nationally), instead national and local interests, and priorities, especially economic effects, dominate the news stories of Cohesion policy
- Communication activity is overall given a relatively low priority in the chain of implementation priorities at programme and project level, with main focus being on compliance above other considerations most importantly performance, but also publicising achievements; this is only different for actors whose work focus is on communication
- There appears to be a weak approach to indicators that measure progress and effectiveness of communication activity at project level (but not necessarily at programme level); however, the usefulness of such an approach would most likely largely be questioned by vast majority of regional actors, i.e., there is an inherent danger that such an approach would be perceived as an increase of regulatory obstacles that come along with Cohesion policy implementation
- The region specific nature of Cohesion policy funding in Baden-Württemberg (towards intangible investments or investments, hardly noticeable without further knowledge, such as

research infrastructure) reduces visibility and presents a challenge in terms of ESIF communication, especially as this trend will most likely continue after 2020

6.2 Scientific conclusions

Scientific conclusions can be drawn with respect to four major issues:

1. EU Cohesion policy and its effectiveness
2. Material incentives and citizens' attitudes towards the European Union or citizens' European identities
3. The nature of communication measures, their impacts and approaches of scientific inquiry of effectiveness
4. Systematic and continuous data collection in order to enable more rigorous and thorough analyses

First, EU Cohesion policy obviously is effective while there is not necessarily a connection to size (financial volume) of programmes. As a result, an immediate and measurable impact on regional economic growth – meaning on the aggregate level – may not be the most relevant output reference, especially not on the short run. This would also hold true for other aggregates outputs, like the regional unemployment rate.

As Cohesion policy's effectiveness is something that has to be assessed in the long run, panel analyses might be a suitable approach for analyses that should be utilised more often. Furthermore, the Baden-Württembergian case study demonstrates that funding for some priorities (especially in period 2007-2013) or large shares of the overall funding volume of programmes (2014-2020) are distributed unevenly across the region – either on purpose or as result of a competition between sub-regions (sub-regional development strategies, *RegioWIN*).

Because of this, research inquiring into the (measurable) impact of Cohesion policy should aim at disaggregation in terms of the level at which this is analysed. Hence, it would make sense focusing analyses on regions of a NUTS₁ region (sub-regions of the entire region). Although there are obviously data available problems involved, as, for example, annual growth rates at a sub-national or even local level are hardly available not to mention measured on a regular basis, other relevant output targets could be analysed as dependent variables, like job creation, unemployment or investment activities. Given the uneven distribution of ESIF means, this would also allow for quasi-experimental research designs. Do sub-regions and municipalities that received funding perform better over time?

Besides, obviously, establishing a direct link between the size of material benefits the European Union provides in regions, cities and other municipalities and the extent to which residents of the latter develop a European Union identity (become a "European citizen") or how close they feel attached to Europe in general and the European Union in particular, proves difficult. Again, this would especially refer to research on an aggregate level, i.e., for the region as a whole. While it is clear and also been taken into account within this study that this would also depend on citizens' knowledge and awareness of these material benefits, other personal characteristics, like the level of education, are also highly relevant. However, several other predisposition and preoccupations of a person, e.g. prior knowledge of the EU, the level of European attachment already present, but also such factors like having personal contacts across European border are likely to be of high relevance. Hence, these should be taken into account as control factors. At the same time, looking more closely at interaction or conditioning effects might be a suitable research approach. For example, it seems likely that

knowledge of EU's Cohesion policy entails a greater feeling of closeness to the European Union, but only for persons who already had been EU affine before (at least to a minimum extent).

Besides, this would again imply to conduct more experimental studies. When informing participants in such a setting about the role of Cohesion policy in their region or place of residence, it would be interesting to analyse if and to what extent this would make a difference for persons with varying degrees of prior knowledge of the EU, Cohesion policy or in terms of an existing presence of a European identity.

In terms of communication, it seems that there seems to be no "best approach", especially in terms of communication to the general public. However, this is also because the idea of a "best approach" is neither pursued by the European Commission, nor by relevant actors at the regional level (Management Authorities, other actors at programme and project level). Instead, there is a clear emphasis on a broad employment of communication tools and an "instrument mix". However, this would not allow to inquire into the impact of single or selected instruments, at least not in a systematic way. Their utility cannot be assessed separately.

However, it would, of course, be interesting to know more about the varying impact selected communication tools have. Again, this would strongly hint towards the usefulness of experimental research with respect to this issue. On the one hand, experimental research designs would enable testing for the influence of selected communication instruments only. On the other hand, experimental research designs would also allow for testing if variation in the design of single instruments could make a difference in terms of impact (e.g., very short, short and longer brochures, brochures with more graphs and text as compared to those with more pictures, including pictures in contexts of personal success stories). Last, but not least, experimental research designs could very well be applied in natural settings. If more and larger in size communication tools, such as billboards or plates, are visible on co-financed infrastructure, does this increase acceptance of the European Union or support of European integration in general? Does the increase the number and quality of media reports about Cohesion policy's role in the region or in communes that receive funding? Are such media reports – then – crucial transmission chains in that regard?

Finally, obviously, there is a lack of relevant regional survey data (*Länder* in Germany, NUTS 1 throughout Europe). This has to be tackled if one is really interested in regional populations' opinions of the European Union, the perceptions of Cohesion policy or European identities and respective changes over time. So far, people are not regularly polled at the regional level in German in terms of these issues. Existing regular polling instruments touch upon European themes only remotely or not on an annual basis. This is unsatisfactorily. The European Union should think about its own role here. A possible remedy could be regional Eurobarometer surveys for member states from time to time.

Very last, in terms of a classical political science research topic, it is promising investigating positions of parties at the sub-national level and especially in terms of Cohesion policy. Closely related to this, there is a need for further research to what sub-national parties speak about Europe or the European Union and to what extent they emphasise European topics and with what frames they do that.

6.3 Policy implications and recommendations

- Reconsider the role of ESIF communication to the general public in regions in which programmes are of small volume and tailored to very specific and few goals (few priority axis, focus on R&D, technical innovations, but not general infrastructure); how important is it?
- Reconsider how to balance ESIF communication to the general public as compared to communication to (potential) beneficiaries and multipliers and if region's Management Authorities could be given more leeway where to focus their communication activities on.

- Give regional Management Authorities more discretion in terms of communication in general, e.g. by refraining from too detailed description (sizes of plates, where to place posters, number of produced and distributed items with ESIF logos etc.).
- Enable full-time communication personnel for social media channels communication by clarifying that this personnel can be financed from technical assistance funding.
- Put greater emphasis on “face to face” communication and encourage Management Authorities and all other persons involved in communication to seize opportunities whenever there is a chance to communicate Cohesion policy on-site within the scope of regular (annual) events in region, cities, local communes. In addition, shift the focus more clearly on success stories here, i.e., where they can be given an eyeing and haptic “dimension”; the same applies to on-site personal communication for all concrete projects (inauguration of new research infrastructure buildings, days of “open door”, e.g. in modernised wastewater treatment plant, “Long Nights of Science” at research institutions that profited from ERDF funding).
- Establish guidelines that beneficiaries are to be more clearly involved in Cohesion policy communication for the purpose (do not let them remain passive only).
- Allow for more time flexibility in terms of “Europe Week” or “Europe Day” communication activities, give Management Authorities the option to move major Cohesion policy activities usually taking place at “Europe Week”/“Europa Day” at other days of the year whenever officials consider it appropriate in order to reach more citizens.
- Expand this sort of activity (i.e., comparable to “Europe Week” or “Europa Day” Cohesion policy communication measures) to a number of events more than once a year, with major communication activities concentrated in different locations of the region.
- Pursue a more active role in communication yourself, e.g. by embedding Cohesion policy communication in more general, professional EU PR and information campaigns that would also communicate the general advantages brought by the EU/EU-policies to citizens (“four freedoms” or consumer protection).
- Mostly use simple and core messages to be conveyed to citizens.
- Establish permanent representations in regional capitals assigned not only with Cohesion policy communication tasks (to be performed in close cooperation with Management Authorities), but also general PR work and information campaigning for the EU; be present on-site for communication whenever possible, including at smaller events.

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⁷ Not shared yet with project partners because it is an internal document liberally sent by Managing Authorities. It is going to be part of the final evaluation report of Baden-Württemberg EFRE 2007-2013 that will be published in spring 2017.

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8. Annexes

Annex 1: Stakeholder online survey response rates

Table 33: Stakeholder online survey response rates

Contacts	Full responses	All responses	% of full responses	% of all responses
38	10	19	26,3	50,0

Annex 2: List of interviewees

Table 34: List of interviewees

Interview	Abbreviation	Date	Type of organisation	Role
1	BW-1	07.11	Interest group, NGO, civil society organisation	Vice chair, region
2	BW-2	08.11	Regional state institution	Vice departmental head; Divisional head for EU-affairs
3	BW-3	14.11	Interest group, NGO, civil society organisation	Chair, region
4	BW-4	15.11	Regional state agency	Department for EU-affairs, supervisor
5	BW-5	16.11	Local state institution	Business support department, team leader for start-up support, subsidies and crisis management
6	BW-6	28.11	Regional state institution	Vice departmental head, vice divisional head for EU affairs
7	BW-7	29.11	National state institution	Department, vice divisional head
8	BW-8	04.12	Interest group, NGO, civil society organisation	Chair/chair of department for EU-affairs
9	BW-9	06.12	Regional business association	Department for EU-affairs, supervisor
10	BW-10	06.12	Regional state institution	Department, vice divisional head for EU affairs
11	BW-11	14.12	Interest group, NGO, civil society organisation	Regional organization, board member/chair EU-affairs
12	BW-12	19.12	Regional state institution	Department, vice divisional head for EU affairs
13	BW-13	23.01	Regional state institution, Management Authority	Chair; vice chair

Annex 1: Focus group characteristics

Table 35: focus group characteristics

FG	Location	Date	Number of participants	Number of female participants	Age range (min age)	Age range (max age)
DE 1	Mannheim	27/07/2017	3	2	21	27
DE 2	Mannheim	10/01/2018	4	0	57	67
DE 3	Mannheim	02/28/2018	3	1	30	63

Annex 2: Communication plan measures and indicators

Table 36: Communication measures, activities, target groups 2007-13

Communication strategies/plans		
2007-2013		
Main objectives	Measures	Target groups
O1: Communicating Europe by highlighting positive results from EU regional transfer money in combination with regional financial capital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development and expansion of web presence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Posters, information brochures, flyer – Directives and programmes – Information on eligibility conditions, application procedures and deadlines, contacts – Press releases – Best-practice reports – List of beneficiaries – AIRs – Studies and evaluations – Information on EU support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential recipients 2. Recipients 3. Multipliers 4. General public
O2: Dissemination of information and guarantee of complete transparency of ways of ERDF-funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. "Förderwegweiser" [a compilation of general information of CP funding opportunities, ERDF OP, contacts, and more specific information on application procedures] <i>located on web page</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential recipients 2. Recipients
O3: Announcement of EU support in the context of EFRE-funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Poster and flyers (especially at the beginning of the programming period) 4. Recipients get poster and flyer with announcement of EU support, and they are requested to install the posters publicly for a reasonable period 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential recipients 2. Recipients 3. General public
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Publication of best-practice projects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential recipients 2. Recipients 3. Multipliers 4. General public
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Guidelines and manuals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multipliers (authorities)
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Information events and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One big event per year – Target group-specific events 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential recipients 2. Recipients 3. Multipliers 4. General public

	7. Subject-specific seminars and workshops	1. Multipliers (authorities)
	8. Media coverage in local, regional, and national media	1. Potential recipients 2. Multipliers 3. General public
	9. Flagging of service building of administrative authority	1. General public
	10. Briefing of recipients via application documents and allocation decisions ["Zuwendungsbescheide"]	1. Recipients
	11. Publication of list of beneficiaries	1. General public
	12. Billboards and explanatory plaques (funded projects)	1. General public

Source: Communication Plan 2007-13.

Table 37: Communication indicators 2007-13

Measure/activity	Indicators	Impact indicators
	Output indicators	
	Result/impact indicators	
1.1 Publicity events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of publicity events [Goal: ca. 15 events in 2008+2009; then: according to demand] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential recipients Multipliers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of participants [Goal: ca. 800 participants for 2008+2009] 	1.1.1
1.2 Subject-specific seminars and workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of events [Goal: six events p.a.] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multipliers (authorities)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of participants [Goal: ca. 125 participants/p.a.] 	1.1.2
1.3 News coverage in local, regional, and national media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of press releases [Goal: ca. 10 press releases/p.a.] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential recipients General public Multipliers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of media reports due to press releases [Goal: ca. 20 media reports/p.a.] 	
1.4 Flagging of service building of administrative authority	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public
1.5 Briefing of recipients via application documents and allocation decisions ["Zuwendungsbescheide"]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of recipients [Goal: ca. 3.000] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recipients
1.6 Publication of list of beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of webpage hits [Goal: ca. 1.500 hits/p.a.] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of downloaded lists [Goal: 150/p.a.] 	
1.7 Billboards and explanatory plaques (funded projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of billboards and explanatory plaques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public

Table 38: Communication measures, activities, target groups 2014-20

Target group	Measures/activities
General public	Logo and corporate design
	Online presence (webpage)
	Advertising material (based on good experience in 2007-13; notepads, pens, pencils, bicycle saddle cover, anti-stress ball, miniature map)
	Flyer and citizen information
	Posters for recipients
	Exhibition boards
	Information events
	Publication of compilation of projects (in several languages)
	Press information
(Potential) recipients	Webpage
	Data base
	Information events
	Application material and "Zuwendungsbescheid" (aid granting decision)
Recipients (for their public relation work)	Poster for recipients
	Templates for boards and signs
	Provision of logos
	Assistance
	Central contact
Recipients (provision for general public)	Billboards and explanatory plaques
	Description of projects in data base
	Advertising activities on its own initiative
Recipients (for potential recipients)	Mouth-to-mouth advertising

Source: Communication Plan 2014-20.

Table 39: Evaluation of Communication Plan by Sympira in 2010

Measure/activity	Short summary	Evaluation	Recommendation
1. Webpage (http://www.rwb-efre.baden-wuerttemberg.de/)	– called as being without an "adequate aesthetic effect" but it is still be seen as acceptable (even though there are typos, different font sizes, etc.)	Output: 2-3 Result: 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernizing webpage Integrating state-of-the-art features (search tool, contact form) Direct link to webpage of the ministry should be on every single page

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Praising the up-to-dateness of the webpage – (Very) good ranking in search engines 		
2. "Förderwegweiser"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current status missing – Good editorial concept 	Output: 2 Result: 1-2 (only print)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Update of document with current name and picture of minister
3. Poster and flyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Impressive no. of publications (21) in 2010 – Positive evaluation of so-called "RWB-EFRE USB-Sticks" 	Output: 1-2 Result: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Circulation figures of and information on publications of other departments should be known in the ministry
4. Guidelines and manuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Target number already met 	Output: 1 Result: 1	
5. Information events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Annual event with more than 100 participants is a success – But: no media reports on the event (unsatisfying) 	Output: 1-2 Result: 2 (only no. of participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – For the next event, there also should be a media event (e.g., press conference or exclusive interview with minister)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 28 target group-specific events reached more than 1.900 interested persons which is far more than the requirements in the Communication Plan 	Output: 1 Result: 1 (only no. of participants)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 8 subject-specific seminars and workshops is more than required in the Communication Plan 	Output: 1 Result: 1 (only no. of participants)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – General information events and activities are expedient 	Output: 1 Result: 1 (only no. of visitors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visitor registration on information events should be more transparent
6. Media coverage in local, regional, and national media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No. of 46 press releases is four times higher than targeted – Some technical issues – More than 200 publications, but ca. 14 per cent did not mention ERDF or EU-funding 	Output: 1-2 Result: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Webpage should be mentioned at the end of a press release – Recipients should get a short handout for public relations
7. Achievement of goals in the Communication Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication Europe difficult b/c of the complexity of EU-funding and the high number of actors involved; better: focus on specific projects which is evaluated positively – Transparency of funding opportunities good but capacity of the programme is not fully present for NGOs and companies (no. of participants for a specific 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Better storytelling – Information flyer on EU-funding in Baden-Württemberg should be revised to be more appealing – Proposal to set up an own e-mail address for ERDF-funding – Social media activity should be extended considerably

	information event is fine but could be higher) – Announcement of support and benefit of Community intervention should be higher for "Resource protection and risk avoidance" (focus 3)		
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Note: Evaluation on flagging of service building of administrative authority, briefing of recipients, and publication of list of beneficiaries is not required.

Source: AIR 2010.

Table 40: Comparison between target values and actual numbers

Measure/activity	Indicators	Target value	2007-2015
<i>Output</i>			
Posters and flyers	Print run poster	5.000 (in 2008+2009)	5.713
	Print run flyer	10.000 (in 2008+2009)	54.880
Guidelines and manuals	No. of guidelines and manuals	3 for entire funding period	16
Target group-specific information events	No. of events	15 in 2008 and 2009; more if necessary	186
Subject-specific seminars and workshops	No. of events	2008-2009: 6 p.a.; more if necessary	32
Media coverage in local, regional, and national media	No. of press releases	10 p.a.	225
<i>Result/impact</i>			
Webpage	No. of visits	10.000 p.a.	274.035
"Förderwegweiser"	No. of hits	3.000 p.a.	17.651
	No. of ordered or downloaded exemplars	300 p.a.	18.375
Publication of collection of exemplary projects	Hits on webpage	6.000 p.a.	32.775
Annual information event	No. of participants	100	5.939
Target group-specific information events	No. of participants	800 for 2008+2009	9.879
Subject-specific seminars and workshops	No. of participants	125 p.a. (2008+2009)	774
Media coverage in local, regional, and national media	No. of media reports	20 p.a.	1.082
Briefing of recipients via application documents and allocation decisions ["Zuwendungsbescheide"]	No. of recipients	3.000	1.538
Publication of list of beneficiaries	No. of hits on webpage	1.500 p.a.	15.614
	No. of downloaded lists	150 p.a.	20.903
Billboards and explanatory plaques (funded projects)	No. of billboards and explanatory plaques	no target value fixed	49

Source: based on information in the final evaluation report of the Communication Plan 2007-13.

Table 41: Evaluation of the Communication Plan (final report)

Measure/activity	Evaluation
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1. Webpage	Output: 1 Result: 1-2
2. "Förderwegweiser"	Output :1 Result: 1
3. Poster and flyers	Posters: Output: 1 Result: 2 Flyers: Output: 1 Result: 1 Information and advisory materials: Output: 1 Result: 1-2
4. Publication of best-practice projects and exhibitions	Output: 1 Result: 1-2
4. Guidelines and manuals	Output: 1
5. Information events	Overall output: 1 Overall result: 1-2
6. Media coverage in local, regional, and national media	Result: 1

Source: based on information in the final evaluation report of the Communication Plan 2007-13.

Annex 5: Online Survey Questionnaire

EFFECTIVENESS

Q1. How well – in your opinion – have Cohesion policy funds been used in your municipality and region?

	Very well	Well	Acceptable	Poorly	Very poorly	Don't know
1. Your municipality						
2. Your region						

Q2. To what extent have the Cohesion policy objectives reinforced the development objectives of your municipality and region?

	Completely	Largely	In some way	Not much	Not at all	Don't know
1. Your municipality						
2. Your region						

Q3. To what extent have Cohesion policy funds helped to increase or decrease:

	Decreased	Somewhat decreased	Had no impact	Somewhat increased	Increased	Don't know
1. Differences in the development level between poorer and richer regions in your country						
2. Differences in the development level between rural and urban areas in your region						
3. Differences in the development level between poorer and richer areas in your region						

4. Differences in the development level between your country and other European Union Member states						
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Q4. In your opinion, has Cohesion policy during the last 10 years or so helped to make residents of your municipality/region support the European Union more?

1. It has helped a lot
2. It has rather helped
3. It has had no impact
4. It has had a rather negative impact
5. It has had a very negative impact
99. Don't know

IMPLEMENTATION

Q5. How significant was the impact of the following problems and challenges during the implementation of Cohesion policy projects?

Please chose the appropriate response for each item:

	Very significant	Significant	Average	Insignificant	Not at all	Don't know
Scarcity of Cohesion policy funds						
Problems with obtaining Cohesion policy financing such as complicated rules for submitting applications						
Excessive, cumbersome reporting						
Unclear objectives for evaluating project results						
Poor cooperation between project partners						
Excessive audit and control during or after the project completion						
Lack of funds for own contribution (co-financing)						
Difficult access to credit and/or loans for own contribution						
Lack of capacity such as qualified staff						

Other – please specify including significance rating:

Please write your answer here:

Q6. How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statements:

Please chose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Cohesion policy funds finance those investment projects which your municipality/region needs the most						

In your municipality/region Cohesion policy funding goes to investment projects which are most valued by the local residents						
There are many irregularities in spending Cohesion policy funds due to non-compliance with EU rules						
Fraud, such as corruption or nepotism, is common in spending Cohesion policy funds						
There have been many positive changes in your municipality/region thanks to Cohesion policy funds, which would not have been achieved without the funds						
The spending of Cohesion policy funds is adequately controlled						
The money from Cohesion policy funds is in most cases wasted on the wrong projects						
The administration of Cohesion policy has been delivered in an efficient (cost-effective) manner						

PARTNERSHIP

Q7. The partnership principle requires the participation of a wide range of partners throughout the different stages of programming and implementation through consultations, monitoring committee work and other mechanisms. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the operation of the partnership principle in practice?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
1. The way the programme partnership operates is inclusive, open and fair						
2. The operation of the programme's partnership principle facilitates a shared understanding and shared commitment by partners to achieving the programme's objectives						
3. Partners are only interested in promoting their own organisational and financial interests						

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
The monitoring and evaluation reports provide adequate information on the implementation and performance of the programme/s						
The monitoring and evaluation reports of the programme/s are easily accessible						
The monitoring and evaluation reports of the programme/s are easy to understand						
The monitoring and evaluation report results are used to improve policy-making and implementation						

TRAINING

Q9. In what Cohesion policy workshop or training sessions did the representatives of your organisation/municipality/region participate in the last two years (select all that apply)?

1. Management
2. Control
3. Monitoring
4. Evaluation
5. Communication
6. Nobody participated in such events
7. Other

Other – please specify:

COMMUNICATION

- Q10. How regularly are the following communication tools used to disseminate information about the use of Cohesion policy funds?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Television					
Radio					
Local and regional newspapers					
National newspapers					
Workshops, seminars					
Brochures, leaflets, newsletters					
Press releases					
Programme website					
Film clips/videos					
Plaques/billboard with EU flag					
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube)					
Advertising campaigns on television and/or radio					
We have not launched any action					

○

Other communication tools – please specify including rating:

○

EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION

Q11. How satisfied are you with:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	Don't know
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			nor unsatisfied			
The way Cohesion policy is communicated to citizens						
The branding and messages used to communicate Cohesion policy						
The use of human interest/personal stories						
The support from the European Commission on communication						
The targeting of different groups with different communication tools						
The administrative capacity and resources dedicated to communication activities						

Q12. To what extent are the communication efforts effective in:

	Very effective	Effective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Ineffective	Very ineffective	Don't know	Not used
Conveying the achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes overall and the role of the EU							
Conveying the achievements of co-funded projects and the role of the EU							
Using social media to promote the programme and projects (e.g. Twitter, Youtube, Facebook)							
Fostering good working relations with the media and press to reach the general public							

Q12a. If you wish, you may supplement your reply with explanations, examples, facts and figures:

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Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The media mainly report negative stories about EU Cohesion Policy						
During publicity events, politicians mainly highlight the local/regional dimensions of projects						

to claim credit for themselves, rather than the role and contribution of the European Union						
The media do not highlight the European Union role and contribution in a sufficient way						
The key programme communication messages have adopted an appropriate form to reach their target audiences						
The communication messages have been consistent at country or regional levels						
There is insufficient resources and priority dedicated to communication by programme stakeholders						

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON CITIZENS

Q14. How effective do you think each of these communication measures are in increasing citizens' awareness of EU Cohesion Policy?

	Very effective	Effective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Ineffective	Very ineffective	Don't know	Not used in my region
Television							
Radio							
Local and regional newspapers							
National newspapers							
Programme website							
Video/film clips and presentations							
Plaques/billboard with EU flag							
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube)							
Media/advertising campaigns on television or radio							
Press releases							
Brochures, leaflets, newsletters, other publications							
Events							

○

Other communication measures – please specify including rating:

○

Q14a. If you wish, you may supplement your reply with explanations, examples, facts and figures:

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Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The communication activities have led to an increased awareness among citizens of the contribution of Cohesion policy to regional and local development					
The communication activities of Cohesion policy funds increase the sense of belonging of citizens to the European Union					
The communication activities of Cohesion policy funds contribute to increasing citizens' support for the European Union					
Citizens mistrust Cohesion policy communication activities and messages or consider them to be propaganda					

Q15a. If you wish, you may supplement your reply with explanations, examples, facts and figures:

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Q16. Do you have any concrete ideas for improving the communication of Cohesion policy achievements to citizens? Please specify and explain the reasons behind your suggestions.

Annex II: Interview Questionnaire

The interviews should relate to the following key themes and questions adapted to the specificity of the organisation interviewed. As noted, all monitoring committee members should have a general understanding of all the topics covered at the programme-level, given that these topics are addressed during monitoring committee meetings that they attend.

General question

Q1. Can you describe your role in this organisation? What is your role regarding Cohesion Policy?

Socio-economic challenges

Q2. In your opinion, what are the main socio-economic needs and problems that the programmes are trying to address over the last two programme periods (2007-13 and 2014-20)?

Achievements

Q3 What have been the main achievements of the programmes over the last two periods (2007-13 and 2014-20)?

Q4. What challenges and problems, if any, led to programmes or parts of programmes failing to meet their goals?

Institutional framework and management

Q5. What are the key features of the management structure for the programme/s?

Q6. Were these implementation structures effective in delivering programmes/projects? What were the main challenges?

Q7. What is the relative priority placed on the tasks of 1) spending the funds 2) compliance 3) performance and 4) publicising achievements? Why?

Partnership/public fora

Q8. What are the main partnership structures and forums for discussing Cohesion policy implementation and performance/achievements?

Q9. To what extent are these forums open and accountable to civil society?

Visibility and profile of Cohesion policy

Q10. How high is the public profile and visibility of the Structural Funds in your region and country?

Q11. Are citizens aware of the existence of Cohesion policy funds as well as the impacts on the development of their region?

Q12. Do politicians publicly acknowledge the contribution of EU funds to regional development?

Q13. Have there been efforts to increase the profile of Cohesion policy in your region/country, and if so, how has this been done?

Media coverage

Q14. How is 'Europe' and Cohesion policy viewed and reported by the media at national, regional and local level (e.g. journalist stories)? In your opinion, is the tone negative or positive and why?

Q15. How do the programmes manage relations with the media? (e.g. press releases, specialised press officers, establishing strong relationships with the media so that the Structural Funds are understood in advance of press releases etc.) Could media relations be improved and if so how?

Approach to programme communication

Q16. How would you characterise the overall approach to communication in the programme in terms of the key priorities of the communication strategy, communication measures and target groups? Has the approach changed over time? Why?

Q17. Is the communication of Cohesion policy programmes and projects considered a key priority (e.g. in terms of resources, staff time, monitoring committee debates etc.)? if not, why?

Communication tools and activities

Q18. Which communication tools do you use most and least, and why?

Q19. To what extent is social media used to promote programme achievements and interactive engagement with stakeholders (e.g. through twitter, facebook etc.)?

Q20. What is your assessment of your publicity and communication efforts so far? Which information activities have been the most and least effective? Why?

Q21. Can you think of any communication good practices in your country/region? *[probe for any aspect of communication such as the approach to branding/visual identity (EU Funds logo and messages); specific communication measures/activities (e.g. communication events, use of media/social media, websites, successful campaigns, etc.); support offered to beneficiaries to comply with communication requirements (e.g. online tools, meetings, helpdesks); and communication techniques (e.g. visuals, storytelling) at programme or project level]*

Q22. Can you think of any ways of improving the communication of EU policy objectives and results to the public?