



"Regions, Cities, Neighbourhoods - strong Partners"

# RegGov

Regional Governance of Sustainable Integrated  
Development of Deprived Urban Areas

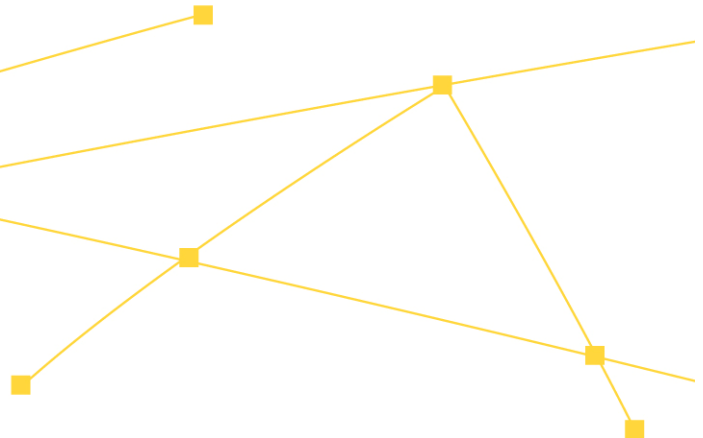
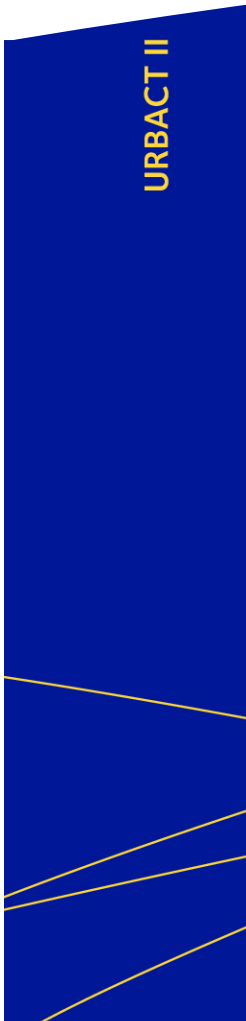
## Local Action Plan

English abstract



### City of Duisburg, Duisburg-Laar, Germany

April 2011



Connecting cities  
Building successes





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## I. Description of the RegGov target area

The target area Laar is the western area of the quarter Laar, which is part of Meiderich/Beeck, a district of the city of Duisburg. The area covers approximately 90 ha and is directly connected to the river Rhine; Laar with its 6,100 inhabitants, is one of the 108 quarters, statistical divisions of the city of Duisburg which have been established within the municipal monitoring system.

The quarter Laar is located between the Rhine in the west and the steelworks Ruhrort of Thyssen-Krupp in the north and east. The main supply centre, which is functionally relatively weak, is located on the eastern edge of the quarter, along the Friedrich-Ebert-Straße, one of the main connection roads between the centre of Duisburg and the northern neighbourhoods.

Physically and socially, Laar is no longer a classical Rhine village, but has become a typical old industrialized neighbourhood of the Ruhr region, characterised by steel and coal. But it still retains some traces of village structures.

The development perspectives are characterised by the attractive location on the Rhine on the one hand, and by the strong environmental impacts of the still expanding steelworks, in direct proximity, on the other. Already in the 1980s in Laar, complex activities for the improvement of the living surroundings were carried out, resulting in improvements in housing quality, especially in the western part oriented towards the river.

The residential settlements contain mainly 4-5 storey buildings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and from the 1950s, as well as workers settlements, mostly owned by two housing companies. The only new construction worth mentioning is the "Wohndorf Laar", a centre for handicapped people, seniors and persons in need of care.

Retail in Laar has only local supply functions. This corresponds to the designation of Laar in the citywide retail and centre concept of 2010

as a local supply centre. In the north, the quarter borders an industrial area; in the west, there is a connection between the dyke promenade and the broader dyke foreland of the Rhine. In the quarter, there is also a small park.

The demographic development corresponds to the average of all residential quarters of Duisburg. The rate of population with migration background is about 43%; two out of three foreigners in Laar have a Turkish ethnic background. The unemployment rate (about 15%), child poverty (about 44%) and the rate of heavily indebted persons (about 12%) are at half the citywide average. The education situation is characterised by relatively low levels of education and a relatively high rate of students from primary schools who enter comprehensive schools. In Laar there is only one primary school left. In the Duisburg social impact ranking, the quarter of Laar ranks 26<sup>th</sup> out of 46. Problems exist in individual areas and do not cover the whole quarter.

Since 2004, Laar has had a neighbourhood office (Stadtteilbüro) with a neighbourhood management run by the Municipality.

## II. Problems & challenges

- Laar's physical structural problems are concentrated in the residential areas close to the industrial sites in the north and east. Due to the resulting low quality of the living surroundings, this diversity of uses and interests has led to significant renovation and modernisation shortfalls.
- The quarter is isolated from other residential areas in between the industrial sites in the north and east, the Rhine in the west and the industrial harbour in the south. A connection to the neighbouring green axes is lacking, and the accessibility of the Rhine bank promenade is insufficient.
- Retail in the former shopping zone along the Friedrich-Ebert-Straße is at risk. A high rate of vacant shops (about 50%) affects not only the remaining retail facilities, but also the overall quality of the residential surroundings in this part of the target area.
- Offers of open spaces and playgrounds for children and youngsters are not sufficient.



- The integration of recently arrived Lebanese immigrants is problematic and holds serious conflict potential in terms of co-existence with the resident population.

### III. Potentials

- The location close to the Rhine and its waterfront represents the key potential of this quarter. There are good chances to realise qualitatively high-value housing projects on empty sites at affordable conditions. The prospect of living close to the river appeals to young families looking for affordable living space in a compact settlement structure, but also to the growing number of elderly people looking for service-oriented housing on the river Rhine.
- The “Wohndorf Laar”, built at the end of the 1990s, has proven to be a focal point for attracting further housing and service facilities for handicapped persons and those in need of care.
- The supply needs of the “Wohndorf” and of households with higher incomes moving into the quarter improve the chances of substantially stabilising the retail offers, both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- After the realisation of leisure facilities within a brownfield regeneration project in the north of the quarter, new connections to the neighbouring green axes might develop, which would at the same time improve the living and leisure value of Laar and reduce the spatial isolation of the quarter.
- Despite being a small quarter in Laar, there is a variety of associations, the oldest founded in 1874. This structure offers good opportunities to strengthen local cohesion and to activate civic engagement for neighbourhood development issues.

### IV. Expected impact and effects on the image

- The settlement of young families with children changes the age structure of the quarter and counteracts the image of an outdated and dying neighbourhood.
- With the new construction of higher quality housing, the quarter attracts households

with a higher income who appreciate the location on the river Rhine and the quiet living conditions.

- The linkage of promenades and recreational-use paths and connections raises the value of the quarter as a residential area with high leisure quality.
- The development of barrier-free connections within the quarter and towards the river Rhine makes Laar, with its existing care infrastructure, an attractive place for elderly citizens. This also enhances the quality of life of the resident elderly population who are satisfied with their own neighbourhood.

### V. Local support groups

The engagement of the City of Duisburg for the interests of Laar is practiced cross-sectorally and on different levels. Following admission to the programme “Socially Integrative City” and on the basis of the municipal development objectives for this quarter, public resources from the EU, the national, regional and municipal levels will be coordinated, mainly by the EG DU Development Agency. The district office of Meiderich/Beeck is concerned with local interests in the quarters and neighbourhoods within the framework of the “district management” and works together with many local actors and institutions. In 2004, with the support of the EG DU Development Agency, a neighbourhood office (“Stadtteilbüro Laar”) was established. On the one hand, it is a municipal institution for consulting the citizens. On the other hand, the office supports the coordination and exchange between the public and private actors and institutions active in the quarter. A “round table Laar” was founded in 2005 with the participation of representatives from associations, schools and other institutions, but also of individual citizens. In plenary sessions and in working groups they discuss the issues of the neighbourhood in the search for solutions. The main civic stakeholders of integrated urban development initiated and activated in part within the district management for Laar are:

- the “Laar Citizens Association” (for a stronger identity and networking in the quarter),
- “Community of Interests Duisburg-Laar”, the editor of a neighbourhood journal,

- two housing companies; further housing companies would like to cooperate at local level if the City of Duisburg would get more involved in the quarter Laar,
- various social and welfare associations,
- the Protestant Family Education Centre (Ev. Familienbildungswerk),
- the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (offers of integration and German language courses).

## VI. Action fields of the LAP: brief report and strategic aims

The integrated Local Action Plan for Laar can rely on the analyses and objectives elaborated at city level, especially the “Urban Structure-Physical Planning” sector concept of 2009, the “Sector Concept Visions for Housing” and an expertise on the housing market from 2006. A cross-departmental “Working Team Neighbourhood Monitoring” programme has been established to determine the requirements for small-scale action.

In 2008 the City Council of Duisburg admitted the quarter Laar as an eligible urban renewal area. Laar also benefits from the activities and experiences with the funding of urban development projects in the neighbouring quarter Beeck. Within the framework of the ESF programme “Local Strengths”, micro-projects for Laar and Beeck are carried out together.

All interventions realised and planned in the quarter Laar are embedded within five main action fields aimed at different complementary strategies of neighbourhood development:

- Physical planning and transport, green spaces, housing and living environment; strategic aims: improvement of the appearance of the quarter, improvement of housing quality and amenity values, of the traffic situation and of green and open spaces;
- Local economy and labour market; strategic aims: strengthening local economic structure, improvement of education and employment situation;
- Social issues, coexistence and education; strategic aims: improvement and strengthening of social infrastructure and of the social networks, promotion of intercultural and social coexistence in the quarter, improvement of the state of education;
- Arts and culture; strategic aims: improvement of cultural infrastructure;
- Sports; strategic aims: improvement of recreational and sports facilities.

Generally speaking, for all action fields the individual measures and projects must be linked optimally among each other in terms of contents and the time frame. This applies especially to the coordination of the use of public funding from different funding programmes at municipal, regional and national levels in order to achieve optimal use of resources.

## VII. Planned projects and their objectives

Within the framework of the neighbourhood development of Laar, the following activities and projects have been developed:

- Action field physical planning and transport, green spaces, housing and living environment: creation of attractive housing on the river Rhine (multi-generation housing project, city houses with river view), use of existing empty sites and building areas for more housing construction in the quarter, renovation, modernisation and barrier-free conversion of existing housing space, removal of unmarketable housing stock, barrier-free renewal of the living surroundings, traffic calming measures for the quay street and construction of a barrier-free access to the dyke, modernisation of existing playgrounds, development of the market square area to a new local centre (green spaces, demolishing of or concept for a new use of the bunker, retail facilities), reorganisation of transportation in the eastern access area of Laar, revitalisation of a brownfield with green areas and leisure facilities in the north of Laar connected to the quarter;
- Action field local economy and labour market: relocation of the local supply facilities from the marginalised area into the centre of the quarter (individual consulting



- and support of the enterprises for the relocation), settlement of additional retail and services around the market square (e.g. in the health sector), development of sustainable business concepts for the use of sites and real estate (e.g. for the bunker on the market), promotion of new commercial activities (development of funding rules, adoption of the financing instrument MICROCREDIT DUISBURG), promotion of sustainable self-organisation of neighbourhood economy (initiating a working team “Local Economy” in the Citizens Association), development of consulting, qualification and employment opportunities for underprivileged groups (young generation and women with low qualifications, especially those with migration backgrounds), offers within the programme “Local Strengths” (e.g. language training, internships in industries) and search for new bodies responsible for micro-projects for the creation and establishment of employment in the neighbourhood;
- Action field social issues, coexistence: extension and modernisation of social infrastructure (redesign of playgrounds, additional offers for seniors), establishment of regular recreational offers for children and youngsters (development of projects *together* with the youth), professionalisation of social institutions (seminars for the respective actors etc.), integration offers, strategy for addressing poorly integrated Lebanese families, promotion of intercultural dialogue and contact (in permanently fixed meeting points and within neighbourhood events), development of projects promoting identification with the neighbourhood (development of the slogan “Liveable Laar on the Rhine” and publication of the neighbourhood journal “Being part of Laar - In Laar dabei”);
  - Action field education: extension of the offers of nurseries for children under three years, promotion of pedagogic competences “school for parents”), promotion of students (developing accompanying assistance structures and offers in the quarter), improvement of the transition from school to professional life;
  - Action field arts and culture: use of neighbourhood events for the presentation of artistic and cultural projects (enrichment of neighbourhood life, promoting identification, cultural exchange), improvement of cultural offers (initiating projects for children and youngsters, cultural pedagogic offers for Lebanese children and youngsters), artistic enhancement of facades and illumination;
  - Action field sports: qualification of sport clubs and linkage of their offers, additional offers for children and youngsters, seminars for health education.

## VIII. Monitoring & evaluation

The eligibility of the quarter Laar was accepted in a City Council resolution in July 2008. The district representation of Meiderich/Beeck welcomed the intended admission of the quarter to the programme “Socially Integrative City” in September 2010. The application has been submitted to the responsible Ministry for Economic Affairs, Energy, Building, Housing and Transport of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The Interministerial Working Group (INTERMAG) will decide on eligibility for funding in the year 2011.

The continuous involvement and engagement of local citizens is an essential prerequisite for the success of the overall concept. However, it should not be put at risk by premature high expectations which cannot be fulfilled within a specific timeframe. An intensive civic participation in the detailed implementation of the integrated action plan can only take place if a concrete perspective for funding can be delineated. As the measures have not yet been discussed in participative arenas, indicators for monitoring and evaluation cannot be fixed yet. Project and programme evaluation will be conducted after an intense discussion on the aims accompanying the process.

## IX. LAP timetable

A detailed timetable will be developed following approval of the requested funding and according to the approved amount. An implementa-

tion period of 6-8 years is expected. The aspect of continuity of activities or structures after the funding ends has already been taken into consideration at the beginning of the single projects.

## X. LAP funding

For the implementation of the LAP, the urban development promotion represents the basic financing of the programme. If the respective

personnel resources are available, a local neighbourhood management – together with local actors and on the basis of further funding programmes – shall develop projects in the fields of labour market/economy, real estate owners etc.

As of June 2010, the following funding has been applied for within the programme "Socially Integrative City NRW" for the urban renewal area of Duisburg-Beeck/Laar, quarter of Laar:

Costs	Total target costs in €	2010 Actual in €	2011 Target costs in €	2012 Target costs in €	2013 Target costs in €	2014 Target costs in €	2015 Target costs in €
Total costs	13,541,970	182,900	1,407,550	2,873,400	7,829,820	677,500	570,800
Other cost units*	6,045,000				6,045,000		
Eligible total costs **	7,496,970	182,900	1,407,550	2,873,400	1,784,820	677,500	570,800
<i>thereof:</i>	* Application within the framework of the Ecology programme Emscher-Lippe (OPEL) ** Urban renewal funding (incl. EU and national funding and municipal co-financing)						
Preparation	736,800	133,600	116,000	118,200	120,600	123,000	125,400
Regulatory measures	3,627,170	26,000	823,450	2,162,200	615,520	0	0
Construction measures	400,000	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	0
Special measures as regards urban development	2,733,000	23,300	368,100	493,000	948,700	454,500	445,400

## XI. Impact of the transnational exchange for the LAP production

The work in the URBACT network has contributed to an essential quality enhancement during the elaboration, but also for the first ideas on implementation of the LAP. The broad discussion on governance will contribute to the development of transparent and clear horizontal and vertical structures.

For URBACT, no new LSG structures have been developed. The LAP has been compiled with the participation of the already active sectors in the administration and the target area. For the operational phase, a much broader and more open citizen participation in the form of workshops etc. will take place than has been the case up to now. So far, broad participation has been postponed in order to avoid frustration and in order not to put long-term civic engagement at risk in the event that the projects applied for cannot be realized, or not within the expected timeframe.

In the LAP, Nijmegen, Holland is trying to link a newly developing neighbourhood on the river to a neglected neighbourhood. In the case of neighbourhood development in Laar, a lot can be learned from these Dutch experiences, among others regarding the demolishing and re-building of a new social centre.

The work in the thematic clusters of RegGov offers a variety of very interesting action oriented approaches:

- *Cluster Monitoring*: URBACT results will be integrated into the programme monitoring.
- *Cluster PPP*: Successfully tested projects in the economic sector (e.g. in Sweden) and co-operative approaches with housing companies (e.g. in the Netherlands) are being examined for transferability.
- *Cluster Integration of disadvantaged and excluded groups*: For a better involvement of disadvantaged groups for instance, the use of mediators has proved to be of value. Special offers like the Dutch project “Behind the front door” are being examined for transferability.



## Imprint

**Regional Governance** of Sustainable Integrated Neighbourhood Development – RegGov  
**RegGov** is a Fast Track Thematic Network in the URBACT II Programme.

Further information is available under: [urbact.eu/reg\\_gov](http://urbact.eu/reg_gov)

## Local Action Plan

English abstract

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URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 300 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT is part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund).

Integrated approaches to the development of deprived urban neighbourhoods have proved to be successful in many old EU member states over the last decades. Crucial factors for success are efficient co-operation and a high level of trust between cities and their managing authorities. The challenge is how to develop, implement and fund such policies at a broad European level. The REGGOV Network focused on making practical experiences accessible and supporting partners to develop and implement new integrated strategies for sustainable neighbourhood and urban development.

[www.urbact.eu/reg\\_gov](http://www.urbact.eu/reg_gov)



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