

Lower Saxony – Territorial Instruments 2021 – 2027

Lower Saxony,
Managing Authority ERDF and ESF+



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Niedersachsen

Agenda

1. Background
2. Program “Zukunftsregionen” (*Regions of the Future*)
3. Experiences: Challenges and Positive Findings
4. Learnings

1. Background – Lower Saxony

- 8 million inhabitants
- Large cities and rural sparsely populated areas
- Different regional potentials and challenges
- One ERDF-ESF Multifund Program

⇒ A „one-fits-all-approach“ is not suitable for the Lower Saxon Funding Landscape

⇒ Heterogeneity of the regions must be taken into account in the shape/ structure of funding programs

⇒ **ERDF/ESF 2014 - 2020:** Regional aspects are taken into account in the selection process of operations

⇒ **ERDF/ESF+ 2021 - 2027:** Introduction of territorial instruments (CPR, article 28 a and c)





Reasons and goals for the Introduction of Territorial Instruments

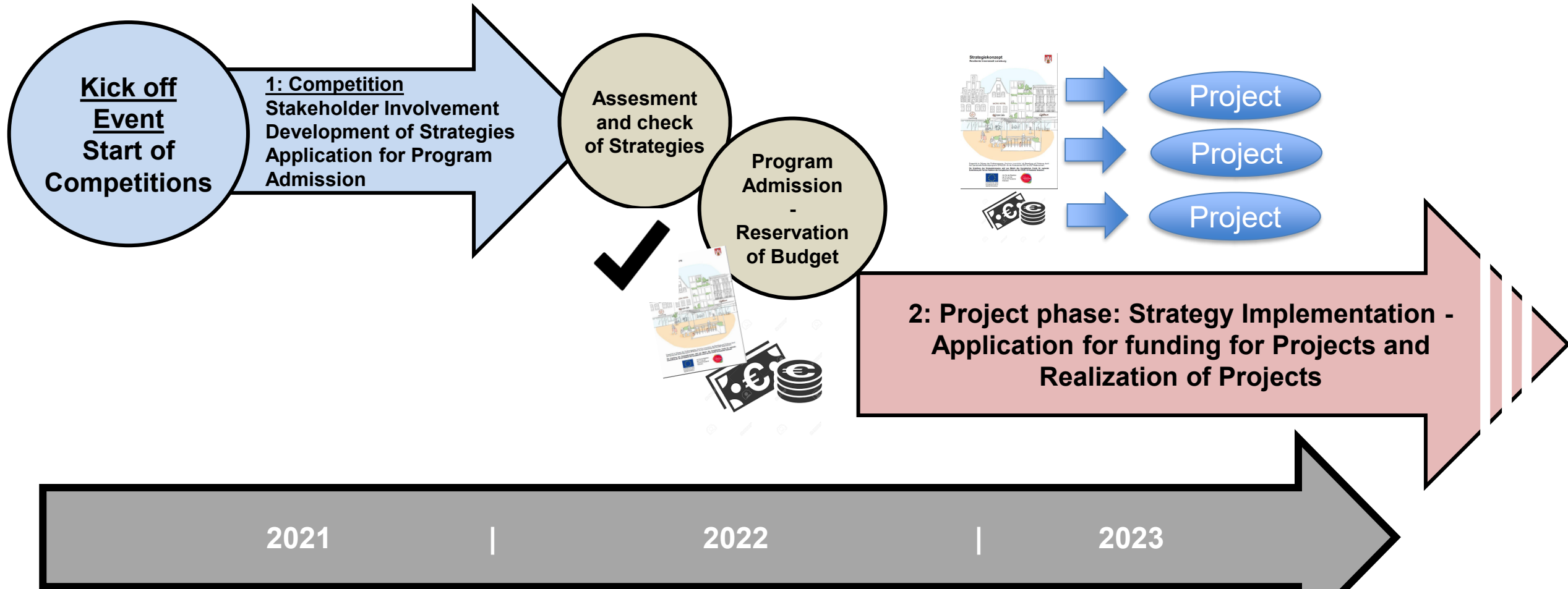
- Strengthen the leeway of regional and local authorities and stakeholders (bottom-up processes)
- Strengthen the cooperations on regional and on local level (especially inter-municipal cooperations)
- Establishment of sustainable structures and strategies on regional and local level
- Implementation of demand-based projects

2. “Zukunftsregionen” (Regions of the Future)

- Integrated territorial investments (ITI) (CPR, article 28 a)
- 95 million Euro (ERDF and ESF+) for the implementation of long-term strategies and projects, based on bottom-up-processes
- Political objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5 (ERDF and ESF+)
- 14 Regions on NUTS-3-Level are collaborating
- Each region is focused on one or two of the following subjects:
 - Regional Innovation
 - Low Carbon Society and Circular Economy
 - Nature and Biodiversity
 - New Work, participation and equality
 - Cultural and recreational tasks



Program Sequence



3. Challenges

1. Number of necessary process steps on different levels results into:

- Bureaucracy and higher likelihood of errors
- Long decision-making processes until a project is approved and implemented
- Long lead time resulting into a slow start of the program

2. Thematic diversity of projects makes state aid law very difficult to apply

3. The ERDF/ ESF+ billing system and the necessity to distribute the ERDF and ESF+ to different priorities and specific objectives is not a perfect fit for holistic and bottom-up funding approaches

3. Positive Findings

- Exciting and well defined projects and action approaches customized on regional needs
- Strategies with a very good quality
- Improved intermunicipal cooperation
- Comprehensive involvement of stakeholders in many cities and regions
 - Creative ideas for the incorporation of citizens and stakeholders
 - Some very active local and regional steering groups

4. Learnings

- Preperation Phase necessary
- Regular exchange between the involved organizations is necessary
- Capacity Building and Support is necessary. We implemented:
 - Events such as network conferences, digital exchange formats,...
 - Trainings on state aid law, horizontale principels, design of project applications, application of scorings, ...
 - Good Practice Exchange
 - Offices for Regional Development as contact points
 - ...

Thank you for your Attention!

**Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Verkehr
und Bauen**

Stabsstelle Verwaltungsbehörde Multifonds

www.mw.niedersachsen.de

www.europa-fuer-niedersachsen.de

Insa Schwob, insa.schwob@mw.niedersachsen.de



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