

Background and aims

Against the background of the spatial concentration of health-relevant environmental burdens (e.g. noise, air pollution, lack of green and open spaces) in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the topic of environmental justice is increasingly attracting attention in Germany and elsewhere. Environmental justice seeks to prevent and reduce the socio-spatial concentration of health-relevant environmental burdens and to ensure fair access to environmental benefits. The topic has, however, hardly been addressed in municipal practice (including planning) to date.

In a research project on environmental justice in urban areas (2012-2014) which was funded by the German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA), the German Institute of Urban Affairs (Difu) developed policy recommendations on how municipalities can incorporate a strategic approach for the creation of environmental justice into municipal practices.

In the current research project (2015-2017) carried out by Difu, titled **“Implementation of an integrated strategy for environmental justice – Pilot project in German municipalities”**, key elements of the strategic approach are being tested, with scientific guidance, by means of model planning and implementation projects in **three pilot municipalities: Kassel, Marburg and Munich**. This project, too, is funded by the German Environment Agency under the Environmental Research Plan.

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Questions studied

- How can environmental justice be successfully put on the municipal agenda?
- How can the environmental justice approach be integrated into overarching municipal goals and strategies?
- Which formal and informal instruments are suitable for implementation of the approach in municipalities?
- What conditions (responsibilities, information flow, co-operative approaches) are conducive to an implementation of environmental justice in local government?
- How should the interplay between municipal policymaking and administration be crafted?
- What forms of resident participation and cooperation between different actors can support the implementation of environmental justice in municipal policies and administration?
- What success factors for, and obstacles to, the implementation of the strategy elements for environmental justice can be derived from the model projects?

- Are there any elements that are transferrable and how can this be depicted in the form of tools, checklists and the like?

Project modules

- Provision of activating support for the pilot municipalities Kassel, Marburg and Munich
- Development of a toolbox “Environmental justice at local level” for municipalities providing definitions, background information, checklists, implementation tips and practical examples
- Performance and online documentation of a stocktaking event “Environmental justice at local level”



Working group accompanying the project

The project is accompanied and supported by a working group composed of representatives of science, associations, municipalities, the German states and federal government working in the fields of environment, nature conservation, health and urban development.



Project cycle

As part of the project, several local meetings and events are planned for an exchange of experience between the three pilot municipalities, as is a stocktaking event in Berlin.

Timetable:

- Start of project: November 2015
- Stocktaking event: June 2017
- End of project: October 2017