

CASE STUDY DE-1

GREEN BELT FRANKFURT, GERMANY

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

The **Green Belt Frankfurt** was established during a one-year-long project in 1990-1991. It is an area covering around 80 km² in the city of Frankfurt consisting of forest (50%), agricultural area (20%), private gardens and garden plots (10%), parks and sport area (8%), traffic area (8%), traditional orchards (3%), conservation areas (1%).

The main actors are several units of the public administration of the city of Frankfurt am Main, i.e. the environmental agency, the parks department with forestry office, and the urban planning department; different types of land managers (farmers, gardeners, environmental groups, other individuals); as well as the beneficiaries, i.e. inhabitants of, commuters and tourists.

The main ecological and social benefits targeted by the initiative are **providing an area for public recreation and maintaining an area of natural importance** (including distinct landscapes; species and habitats, but also clean water and cold, fresh air).



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KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

The **Green Belt constitution** regulates that no construction may take place within the area. It describes public-legal safeguarding measures, a delineating area plan, and a current and future land use plan. The **integration into local area planning and regional spatial planning** ensures strategic development and connectivity with surrounding areas. Within these processes, an **increasing role of citizen participation** can be observed. The most important limitation to land use is the designation as **landscape protection area**, which is differentiated in zone I (land use focus) and zone II (conservation focus). Nevertheless, there are conflicts between different land users, e.g. because of dog excrements in cultivated areas or between hikers and bikers.

In recent years, extreme heat events contributed to the appreciation of the green belt's role in **climate regulation**, which has led to an increased awareness and support for the green belt and its benefits among politicians and the public.

EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Green Belt constitution safeguards current **land use status**. It is highly dependent, however, on **political appreciation and the reaction to societal challenges** (climate change, demographic change etc). In particular, the **management of urban growth** will be a key issue to secure both level and quality of environmental and social benefits provided by the green belt. The most active environmental and social benefits are the **distinctiveness of the landscape and provision of biodiversity**, while **education and outdoor recreation** as well as **provision of fresh air** are the most central environmental and social benefits. Strengthening these could increase appreciation of agriculture and forestry. In their interaction the environmental and social benefits also contribute to maintaining a **vibrant urban community**. Conflicts between land users are indication of partial overuse requiring further planning attention.



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