



Just Transition Platform – Policy approach:

DGB LOWER SAXONY – APPROACH ON JUST TRANSITION

Germany, Lower Saxony

This document is part of a series presenting information and lessons learned on policy approaches at national, regional or local level supporting a just transition to a climate-neutral economy. The Just Transition Platform (JTP) assists EU Member States and regions to unlock the support in this transition. Visit the JTP website: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform_en

Member State:

Germany

Region:

Lower Saxony

Sector:

No specific sector but approach has a regional focus

Total budget (€):

As the approach consists of several different projects, a total budget cannot be established

Financing conditions (co-financing rate):

No further information on financing conditions

Sources of funding:

N/A

National funding:

No further information on national funding

Regional funding:

Most of the projects are funded with funds by the State of Lower Saxony

Duration:

The different projects have different time frames.

Responsible Managing Authority/Agency:

German Trade Union Confederation (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB) Lower Saxony

Summary

The DGB follows a comprehensive approach to address just transition in Lower Saxony. Achieving a just transition is a central affair to the DGB and the office of Lower Saxony, Germany, addresses this issue by engaging in several projects with different partners and by working internally to issue different publications and conferences on the issue. Notable examples of projects the DGB is involved with are the Lower Saxony Alliance for

Sustainability ('Niedersachsen Allianz für Nachhaltigkeit'), the Lower Saxony Hydrogen Network ('niedersächsisches Wasserstoffnetzwerk') or the Transformation Guides ('Transformationslotsen'). In addition, the DGB Lower Saxony is issuing a publication series on just transition, which is meant to bringing ideas into politics, and also has organised three climate conferences so far in Lower Saxony.

Type of policy measure/activities:

The DGB's approach to just transition is mostly coined by the engagement in different projects with different regional stakeholders and the publication of work on the topic. The DGB Lower Saxony approach focuses on contributing to a just transition by raising awareness on the topic (especially by internal work and its outputs), influencing politics and implementing practical projects in cooperation with regional actors that are meant to have a direct influence on the ground. Just Transition takes a high priority within the DGB's working. The DGB's approach is meant to contribute to climate transition with a strong focus on achieving a socially just transition.

Goals and approach:

The projects in which the DGB is engaging are mainly enabled by an established dialogue culture in Lower Saxony. Many of the projects are initiated by the state Lower Saxony. However, many ideas for new projects are directly brought to them. The Lower Saxony Alliance for Sustainability is meant to address sustainability at a corporate level. The DGB is involved with the social dimension of the approach. The Lower Saxony Hydrogen Network supports and advises key actors of industry, politics, and science on green hydrogen. Here, the DGB represents the trade unions' and employees' perspectives. With the Transformation Guides, the DGB works together with the employer side to implement transformation within companies.

The DGB's approach tries to incorporate two main goals: on the one hand, the measures followed by the DGB to a just transition should lay a good basis for its members; but on the other hand, the DGB wants to contribute with the measures to the possibility of trade unions' constructive involvement within transformation. The work in projects, but also the more outward looking publication work (e.g. leaflets with demands for state election), is meant to advance the transition with a focus on the trade unions' priorities.

Important outputs, results or achievements:

The projects resulted in different outputs so far. For example, the Alliance for Sustainability developed a transformation study with a strong stakeholder process that created a new content basis. A positive outcome of the Hydrogen network is that the networking between different economic actors is progressing, and different cooperations are being pursued (e.g. with Norway). The Transformation Guides offer training for companies to educate employees as practical guides of digital transformation who should be able to promote independent transformation in their organisations.

The publication series on just transition was only recently launched and, consequently, only its first outcomes are observable. So far, two publications have been produced – the first is an introductory publication for the challenges and needs for a just transition. The second publication is on the importance of green hydrogen for an industrial transformation of Lower Saxony's economy.

Scalability¹ and transferability²:

Some projects the DGB is engaging with could be easily transferred into other regions. The key is that partners come together and follow the same goals. Different perspectives are crucial for a successful approach.

The regional perspective of the approach is valuable, but to some extent limited as several aspects of a just transition cannot be addressed by regional level only (e.g. value chains that do not end at certain borders). Lower Saxony is a business location that is strongly dependent on exports. The issue of how to ensure the competitiveness of products can therefore not be answered at regional level alone. It would be relevant to address macroeconomic aspects at EU level.

¹ Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.

² Transferability entails that a policy approach can be applicable to a similar setting and replicated.

Key success factors and lessons learnt:

Key success factors of the approach are that a high level of expertise could be achieved, especially with the DGB's publication series on just transition. Transition is, in Germany, often well addressed at national level but not at regional level. The DGB's work contributes to answering the issue of how the consequences of just transition must be addressed at company level. A very positive factor is that the approach and the resulting projects bring different stakeholders together with a high interest and expertise. The social partnership aspect by the DGB is crucial to ensure that just transition arrives in politics as well as in companies.

Key challenges:

The partnership approach of the DGB sometimes results in conflicting interests. This is a situation that one must be able to deal with. However, conflicts may arise. The DGB's approach to just transition aims at communication and partnership. Due to this focus, the challenge persists to avoid self-occupation and small-scale coordination.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the current energy crisis have changed the conditions for a just transition in Lower Saxony. Although it remains unclear if and how transformation is accelerated, an effect on employment in central industry sectors is given. Several sectoral strategies exist to address transformation processes, however, according to the DGB, larger policy approaches and corresponding funding measures are needed to make an impact at company level.

Central framework conditions³:

The DGB is the umbrella organisation of eight different trade unions in Germany. In Lower Saxony, the association incorporates more than 600 thousand trade union members and represents their interests vis-à-vis politics. The region Lower Saxony in Germany is facing many transformation requirements while disposing at the same time over some potentials in this area. The main challenges in Lower Saxony are related to the core industry sectors, which are primarily sectors that will

be heavily affected by the transformation (e.g. automotives). Potentials are seen in the area of renewable energy as Lower Saxony is already producing a large share of its energy consumption via wind energy.

Outlook:

For the future, the DGB plans to increase its activities concerning just transition. It is essential for the organisation to identify what is necessary for workers in Lower Saxony, which qualification possibilities are needed, and where new employment opportunities lie. Therefore, it remains crucial to further conduct regional oriented analyses in cooperation with members. The publication series on just transition has only recently started (July 2022) and upcoming publications will further outline the transformation needs and prospects for the economy of Lower Saxony (and Bremen and Saxony-Anhalt).

³ Framework Conditions encompass the institutional, informational and socio-economic factors that determine a given environment (contextual information), e.g. market conditions, access to finance, tax regulation, infrastructure and support.

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