

Mitigating the rising number of sick days through preventive measures to minimize their impact on the volume of work

Measure dimension

Increase efficiency/Change in the work culture

Rating

Great potential, advantageous cost situation and **industry-independent** application counteract **various feasibility barriers**

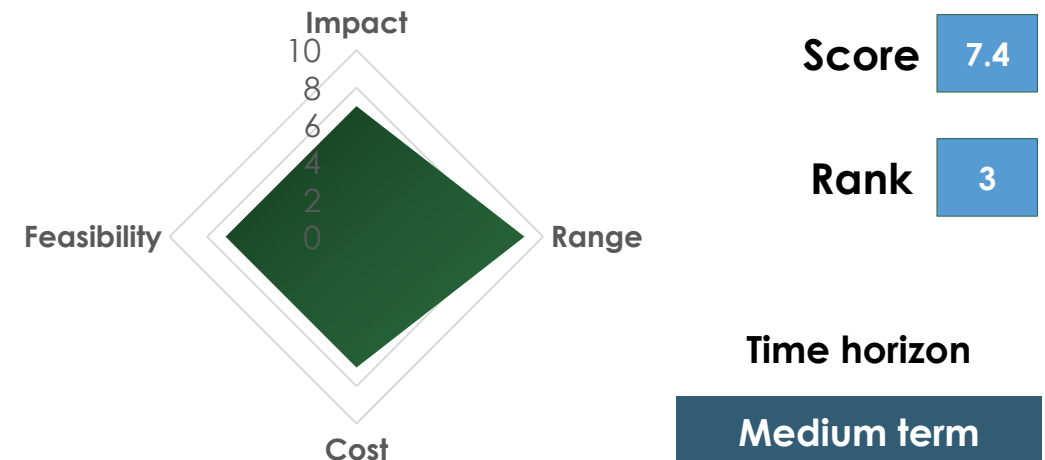
Impact	Compared with similar countries, there is huge potential, coupled with less stress due to more working days, which in turn leads to better health
Range	Cross-industry measure targeting both skill shortages and overall health improvement in the German workforce
Cost	The measure proposes to reallocate current funding for sick leave benefits to increase the impact without additional expenditure
Feasibility	Whether this measure is feasible in Germany depends on factors such as support from the authorities, the commitment of companies and public awareness

Current situation in Germany

Increasing sick days by employee per year since 2007

- DAK Krankenkasse reports the equivalent of a whole year's worth of sick days in the first half of 2023
- TK Krankenkasse records an average of 9.5 sick days per employee in the first half of 2023, an increase compared to 9.1 days in 2022

Main reasons: **Flu** and **colds** as well as **psychological problems** such as stress (more work due to lack of staff)



Germany should increase the effectiveness of the considerable resources available by taking preventive measures to avoid sick leave in the first place

Cross-referencing for validation

- **South Korea** better mainly due to **pressure to perform**, even sometimes death from overwork -> not a desirable situation
- But even **culturally similar nations** such as France, the UK and Spain have fewer sick days, according to this study.
- In addition, Germany spends the **most money on sick leave benefits** as a percentage of its GDP
- The goal for Germany should be to **catch up with these countries**

Country	Less than 5 days	No sick days	Sick leave benefits expenditure (as % of GDP)
Germany	50%	28%	2.3%
Korea	81%	61%	N/A
France	61%	40%	0.9%
UK	67%	33%	N/A
Spain	70%	42%	1.5%

Specific recommendations for action

Investing in **preventive measures** rather than reactive sick leave benefits can **optimize Germany's expenses on health-related costs**

- **Incentives for companies** to actively promote health in the workplace, e.g. by providing fitness facilities or supporting health campaigns
- Enable **home office and flexible working hours** to improve work-life balance and reduce stress
- Support programs to **promote mental health** in the workplace, including training, counseling services and awareness campaigns to **reduce stress-related sick days**