

Voluntary Regional Review 2025

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals
in the Rhineland Regional Council (LVR)



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Preface

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Leave no one behind” – this guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda describes an aspiration that is directly reflected in the work of the Rhineland Regional Council (in German: Landschaftsverband Rheinland, LVR). The question if the agreed goals are achieved, will particularly be determined where political decisions shape tangible living conditions: at the regional and local level.

With this Voluntary Regional Review (VRR), we present for the first time the contribution of the Rhineland Regional Council to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As the first supra-municipal association in Germany to do so, we deliberately place our work within an international context, demonstrating how regional self-governance enables global sustainability goals to take effect locally.

Germany’s democratic development has shown that social stability does not arise from stagnation, but from the capacity to collectively shape change. Trust is fostered where decisions are transparent, responsibility is shared, and diverse perspectives are included. This understanding also guides the actions of the Rhineland Regional Council.

As a supra-municipal association, we fulfil key responsibilities on behalf of our member authorities and serve approximately ten million people in the Rhineland. Our more than 22,000 employees implement this responsibility in their daily work. This includes, among other areas, supporting people with disabilities, providing youth welfare and mental health care, promoting education, and preserving and developing the cultural landscape of the Rhineland.

Across all these fields of action, our focus lies in creating equal opportunities for all and enabling social participation—an approach we define as in-



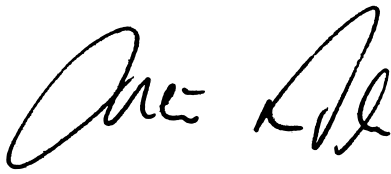
clusive sustainability. Our aim is to actively involve the population in the development and implementation of sustainable processes. Accessible support, education, culture, and social infrastructure not only strengthen individual life prospects but also reinforce trust in public institutions and democratic processes. By safeguarding these structures and enabling people to lead self-determined lives, we are simultaneously contributing to the functioning of a democratic society.

The insights of this report illustrate the diverse ways in which the Rhineland Regional Council contributes to the goals of the 2030 Agenda, and how closely social, ecological, and democratic issues are interconnected. Sustainable development is a shared cross-cutting task that encompasses numerous areas of municipal responsibility—from social affairs, education, and culture to climate protection, mobility, and resource conservation.

At the same time, we wish to highlight the particular role of municipal associations, which assume essential responsibilities on behalf of their member municipalities and thereby make a significant contribution to democratic structures and, consequently, to the collective implementation of sustainable development.

We also regard this report as an invitation to engage in international dialogue on how regional and local actors worldwide can contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I would like to express my gratitude to all employees, political representatives, and partner organisations who have contributed to this report. Together, we are shaping sustainable development in the Rhineland—democratically, inclusively, and with a clear commitment: leave no one behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ulrike Lubek', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ulrike Lubek
Director of the Rhineland Regional Council

Introduction

Context of this Voluntary Regional Review



This report is the first comprehensive sustainability report published by the Rhineland Regional Council (Landschaftsverband Rheinland, LVR). Sustainability reporting is a key tool in sustainability management for analyzing the status quo of sustainable development. The report highlights the current status (2025) of sustainability implementation and addresses key activities (qualitative report content) and selected indicators (quantitative report content).

This report was produced as part of the LVR project „Inclusive Sustainability“ in cooperation with the Sustainability Network North Rhine-Westphalia e. V. (LAG 21 NRW) (LAG 21 NRW). The cooperation process initially involved taking stock of sustainability implementation and drafting an integrated

LVR sustainability strategy. This report combines the contents of these two sub-processes.

An overarching reference point for the report is the 2030 Agenda, adopted by United Nations member states in 2015 to initiate a global transformation towards sustainability. It contains 17 globally applicable sustainable development goals (SDGs, see Figure 1).

As a universal frame of reference, the 2030 Agenda also guides action in Germany at the federal, state, regional and local level. The regional and local level plays a central role as the „local level of action“ in the implementation of the SDGs, as it is at this level that the achievement of most of the 169 sub-goals of the 2030 Agenda will be decided.



Figure 1: The 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals /
© United Nations

Reporting based on the German local sustainability reporting framework

This sustainability report was prepared in accordance with the **German local sustainability reporting framework** (Berichtsrahmen Nachhaltige Kommune, BNK), which was published as an updated version by the German Council for Sustainable Development in 2024.¹ The BNK is intended to help municipalities to measure and thus control the progress of sustainable development at the local level – and to embed sustainability across all municipal administration departments. The BNK is specifically tailored to municipalities. However, strictly BNK-compliant reporting is not possible

¹ The BNK was first published in 2021 against the backdrop of a lack of reporting standards in municipal sustainability reporting at that time. It was developed as part of a „multi-stakeholder dialogue“ with representatives from municipal umbrella organizations, municipalities, academia, and civil society. The BNK was then tested in municipal practice during a three-year pilot phase. Based on the experience gained, the RNE carried out a further comprehensive development process in 2024. The BNK defines content requirements for a municipal sustainability report but allows for flexible structuring of the content. It can serve as both a comprehensive inventory and a monitoring and evaluation tool. The BNK's standard structure consists of eight steering criteria and eleven fields of action. While the steering criteria cover the strategic and structural anchoring of sustainability and cross-cutting issues, the fields of action address specific areas of sustainable municipal development. The steering criteria and fields of action are divided into content-related reporting aspects, which serve as a checklist of the information to be disclosed. The aspects cover qualitative and quantitative reporting content.

with regard to the **LVR as a supra-municipal association**. The LVR acts as a partner to its member cities, districts, and the Aachen city region in North Rhine-Westphalia and performs supra-regional municipal tasks (see Section 1.1 for details).

Against this background, many of the BNK's standard reporting requirements and, in some cases, areas of action are not relevant, as they do not align with the LVR's tasks and responsibilities. Even indicators that are provided for in the BNK are only recorded nationwide at the municipal level (and at the state level). No data is provided at the regional association level within the SDG portal (an online portal of Bertelsmann Foundation and partners, created as part of the SDG Indicators for Municipalities project).

The report, therefore, does not claim to be strictly compliant with the BNK. However, to promote communication with the member bodies of the LVR (the 13 independent cities, the 12 districts in the Rhineland and the Aachen city region), this report adopts the BNK's standard structure wherever possible. The standard structure has been adapted to the specific characteristics of a supra-level local government association. The fact that the **structure is „based on“ the BNK** is not a shortcoming but



rather emphasizes the Rhineland Regional Council's unique position within the local government „family“ (see Section 1.1). As a partner to the municipalities in the Rhineland, the LVR intends for this report to supplement the municipal sustainability reports.

LVR project „Inclusive Sustainability“

The cross-departmental LVR project „Inclusive Sustainability“ (2023–2025) marked the regional council's entry into systematic sustainability management. The aim of the project was to develop an initial **LVR sustainability strategy for 2025** as an overarching strategic approach and an initial comprehensive **LVR sustainability report for 2025** based on the BNK (which reports on the implementation status of the 17 global sustainability goals locally). The project structure and the individual milestones in the process are presented below.

The first step in the project was an internal assessment (based on the administrative board's previous consideration of the LVR's contributions to the 17 global sustainability goals). To this end, a **cross-departmental project team** was established within the LVR-administration. Its members assumed a multiplicative role and consulted other administrative staff where needed. This approach made it possible to overcome traditional administrative structures and gather cross-departmental information.

Given the breadth and interdependence of the thematic areas of sustainable development, this „**horizontal integration**“ is crucial. The project team was coordinated by two administrative staff members who oversaw the on-site process. During the inventory, all LVR core activities that contribute to sustainable development were compiled as part of a qualitative analysis. This activity included action-guiding strategies and concepts, current proposals and resolutions, central objectives, measures, projects, ongoing tasks and programmes, collaborations, networks, and organisational structures. In addition, key results, impacts, and target achievements in the various subject areas were highlighted. The collection was supplemented by an accompanying questionnaire that provided the information required for the BNK's steering criteria. In addition, existing LVR data in the various fields of action were reviewed as part of a quantitative analysis, and suitable indicators for the report were selected and analysed.

Based on the inventory, the **LVR sustainability strategy** was developed (see Section 2.1 for details). The **Administrative Board of the LVR** assumed the role of a project steering committee, which approved the project team's work results in several consultation rounds. In addition, a specialist **working group on sustainable development** was set up to ensure political support for the project. The LVR sustainability strategy was finally adopted by the LVR's Policy **Committee of the 15th Rhineland**

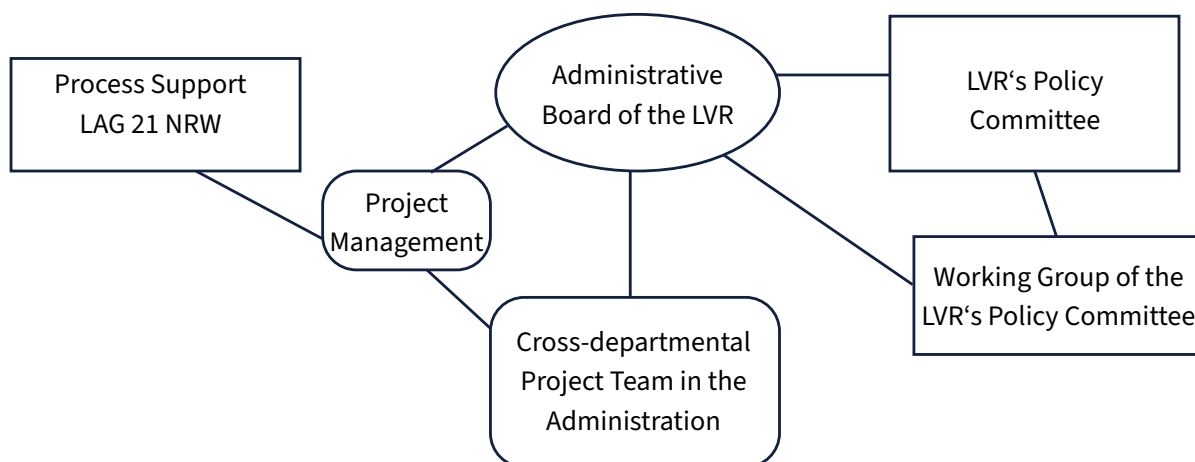


Figure 2: LVR "Inklusive Sustainability" project structure © LVR

Regional Assembly (2020-2025). All goals and measures of the LVR sustainability strategy are presented in this report.

Structure of the report

As described above, the content of this report is presented according to the BNK standard structure of **steering criteria and fields of action**. Since the report does not claim to be strictly BNK-compliant, the structure has been partially adapted to reflect the LVR's tasks and responsibilities. The chapters are structured according to appropriate **subtopics** (based on the aspects of the BNK).

At the beginning of each chapter, the content is summarized in a **tabular overview**, followed by a comprehensive presentation of the goals and measures of the LVR sustainability strategy, along with **other activities and indicators** for the respective subtopic. The activities are highlighted in the text for better orientation.

The **core references to the 17 global sustainability goals** are also listed alongside the report content to embed reporting in the context of 2030 Agenda.

Regional sustainability reporting based on the German local sustainability reporting framework



With the development of an integrated LVR sustainability strategy, the LVR has reached a key milestone in the strategic implementation of sustainability. Successes have already been achieved over many years through the implementation of sustainability activities and the focus on sustainability.

Climate protection has long been a central issue for the LVR. As part of the “municipal family,” the LVR is aware of its role as a model in this regard. Against this backdrop, it has set itself ambitious goals, adopted overarching action programmes, and implemented several concrete climate protection measures (see below).

In 1998, the LVR developed an “**LVR AGENDA 21**” based on the motto “Think globally – act locally.” The LVR was thus the first authority in Germany to introduce an internal Agenda 21 as a management

tool for future-oriented administrative action.

Recognizing that only sustainable action can ensure future viability, the LVR set out within the framework of its Agenda 21 to align its local services and internal structures so that they are equally environmentally friendly, socially just, and economically viable.

In 2001, the LVR became a **founding member of the Sustainability Network North Rhine-Westphalia e.V.** (LAG 21 NRW, www.lag21.de).

In accordance with proposal no. 14/3049, the LVR’s Policy Committee decided on December 14, 2018, to endorse the declaration of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)/German Section titled “**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Shaping Sustainability at the Local Level.**”

The 2016 **Integrated Climate Protection Concept** was an important milestone in implementing Agenda 2030. The earlier framework included an analysis of all climate-relevant areas in the LVR and identified potential measures and strategies to sustain climate protection efforts. The core element of the climate protection concept was a package of 49 measures in the categories of “Cross-structural measures,” “Energy,” “Mobility,” and “Education.” A wide range of climate protection activities have since been implemented with a view to sustainable construction, renewable energies and energy-efficient technology, and the promotion of climate-friendly mobility.

In 2023, the LVR adopted its strategy, “**The LVR’s path to greenhouse gas neutrality.**” In this strategy, the LVR set itself the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible within its area of responsibility and achieving near-zero emissions by 2045. The LVR is guided by legal requirements and scientific recommendations for its sphere of influence. The LVR’s primary goal is to achieve real greenhouse gas neutrality, meaning emissions should be avoided directly on-site (e.g., by reducing energy requirements or adjusting consumption behavior). Where emissions cannot be completely avoided, the next step is to keep them as low as possible (e.g., using low-emission energy sources and choosing more climate-friendly alternatives such as anesthetic gas). Only after exhausting all avoidance and reduction options should the remaining base amount of emissions be offset.

This approach aligns with **North Rhine-Westphalia Municipal Audit Office** (gpaNRW) recommendations. The gpaNRW emphasises that the Regional Council is financed by contributions from its member bodies and must therefore take their budgetary situation into account. Achieving greenhouse gas neutrality at an early stage through compensation measures (the most subordinate means) incurs high costs, which also place a burden on the member municipalities. If the latter have limited budgetary resources, the LVR’s early greenhouse gas neutrality, through costly compensation measures, could jeopardize the municipalities’ climate protection goals, as there may be insufficient financial

resources available. Furthermore, gpaNRW points out that financial resources used for compensation credits would then not be available for implementing climate protection measures in the LVR’s own infrastructure. Hence, gpaNRW welcomes the fact that the possibility of achieving climate protection targets through compensation credits is not among the LVR’s top priorities, in line with the climate ranking of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

As a starting point for future developments, the LVR presented a **greenhouse gas balance sheet** with 2019 as the base year. This document records greenhouse gas emissions for all central business areas of the LVR, using established standards and the most comprehensive activity data available, and presents a realistic picture of possible courses of action. The strategy’s ambitious goals can only be achieved through numerous measures. The LVR is focusing on measures that can be implemented directly on-site. Compensation measures were therefore not considered or accounted for.

Important areas of action include reducing final energy consumption through extensive efficiency measures, especially across the various properties. However, the switch to renewable energies and the substitution of fossil fuels are crucial, particularly with regard to heat supply. The mobility sector also offers great potential for reducing emissions, and although e-mobility is an important component, it is not the only solution. Here, too, the LVR is relying on a diverse mix of measures designed to create opportunities and open up new avenues. The LVR is convinced that climate protection can succeed if the associated opportunities are seized, if it is understood as a joint task, and if the core tasks of the LVR (such as youth and cultural promotion, health, and inclusion) are considered.

On September 29, 2023, in accordance with proposal no. 15/1743, the LVR’s Policy Committee approved the commissioning of the Sustainability Network North Rhine-Westphalia e. V. (LAG 21 NRW) to provide external process support to the LVR with the aim of developing an initial overall strategy for sustainable development with an action programme for the LVR. Simultaneously, LAG 21 NRW

was commissioned to develop an initial structured LVR sustainability report by the end of 2025 in accordance with the established Local Sustainability Reporting Framework (BNK). In addition, a report will be prepared for the UN highlighting the LVR's contributions as a supra-municipal association at the international level.

The first LVR sustainability strategy with an action programme was adopted by the LVR's Policy Committee on July 8, 2025 (document no. 15/3037/1) and was the first comprehensive overall strategy for sustainable development. Guidelines, strategic and operational goals, and concrete measures for implementation were formulated in the following five areas:

- Social justice,
- Lifelong learning,
- Culture,
- Resource conservation and climate change adaptation,
- Sustainable mobility.

The LVR Sustainability Strategy 2025 lays a solid foundation for systematic sustainability management at the LVR, which strategically extends beyond the 16th legislative period of the Rhineland Regional Assembly (2025 to 2030).

The **Rhineland Regional Assembly** determines the LVR's political guidelines. The Rhineland Regional Assembly and its committees are responsible for the political representation of the citizens of the Rhineland. This situation arises because the committee reflects majority ratios in the local elections. The member municipalities elect their representatives for the Rhineland Regional Assembly in their district councils or city councils.

As a supra-level local authority association, the LVR broke **new ground nationwide in sustainability management** at this level as part of the "Inclusive Sustainability" project. The approach, which has proven itself in numerous process support projects carried out by LAG 21 NRW at the local level, was adapted to the specific characteristics of a supra-level local authority association.

Steering criteria

Overview of aspects

1 Framework conditions for transformation

- 1.1 Special features of the LVR as a supra-municipal association
- 1.2 Transformation levers and challenges

2 Strategy, goals, and areas of action

- 2.1 Sustainability strategy
- 2.2 Sustainability objectives
- 2.3 Strategic integration of municipal investments

3 Monitoring and evaluation

- 3.1 Monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability check

4 Communication and participation

- 4.1 General public participation and communication
- 4.2 Participation and involvement of people with disabilities

5 Organization and personnel

- 5.1 Working structures for sustainability

6 Sustainable administration, procurement, and contracting

- 6.1 Sustainability in procurement and contracting

7 Sustainable finance

- 7.1 Sustainable finance and economic efficiency
- 7.2 Sustainable investment strategies for financial investments

8 Digitalization and innovation

- 8.1 Digitalization, innovation, and sustainability

Steering criterion

01 Framework conditions for transformation



1.1 Special features of the LVR as a supra-municipal association



As a supra-municipal association, the LVR, together with its sister association, the Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe (LWL), has been an important part of the administrative structure in North Rhine-Westphalia for 70 years. In a nationwide comparison, the **regional associations** are a special feature of North Rhine-Westphalia. The associations have proven their worth for North Rhine-Westphalia, the most populous federal state in the Federal Republic of Germany, with its expansive geography and strong regional structures. The regional associations enable supra-local tasks to be performed, pooling the resources and expertise of several local authorities and ensuring democratically legitimate, constitutional, and economical administration at the regional level. They help to utilize synergies, strengthen regional identity, and perform tasks in a citizen-oriented manner.

History: After the end of the Third Reich, the British military government dissolved the provinces of Prussia and formed the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in 1946. With its founding, the question arose as to how the state and its administration should be structured. The roots of the LVR and its sister association, the LWL, lie in the “Landschaftsverbandsordnung für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen” (Regional Association Ordinance for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia), which was passed by the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia in 1953. The LVR was founded on May 12, 1953.

The constitution of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia guarantees that municipal affairs are to be handled by the municipalities. However, municipal tasks often extend beyond the boundaries of local authorities—for example, in cultural affairs, health, education, youth welfare, and social services. For this reason, the two municipal regional associations—LVR based in Cologne and LWL based in Münster—perform such tasks for the independent cities and districts. Hence, the principle of municipal self-government—that is, citizens’ participation in the performance of tasks—also applies to the region.

The regional associations handle important local **self-government tasks** for the independent cities and districts in North Rhine-Westphalia, which, for reasons of efficiency, economy, or necessity, can be better performed on a cross-regional or supra-local basis. The regional associations have also been entrusted with important **tasks** on behalf of the federal government and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, including the implementation of forensic commitment measures.

Supra-municipal associations are a vital part of the “municipal family” in North Rhine-Westphalia. They are also referred to as the “third level” of municipal self-government, with the districts and independent cities forming the second level and the municipalities the first level.

Both supra-municipal associations are members **of the German Association of Cities, the German County Association, and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities**. They are also part of the **Federal Working Group of supra-municipal Government Associations** (BAG HKV), a voluntary association of 18 supra-municipal government associations (HKV) from eight federal states, each assigned distinct tasks by its respective state legislature.

Supra-municipal associations must be distinguished from other forms of intermunicipal cooperation, in particular municipal associations and special-purpose associations. While the latter are regularly formed on a voluntary basis to perform specific tasks, supra-municipal associations are usually bodies established on a legal basis with specific tasks assigned by law and comprehensive powers.

Today, the LVR works as a municipal association with around **22,000 employees** for the approximately **9.8 million people in the Rhineland**.

As a supra-municipal association, the tasks and responsibilities of the LVR differ significantly from those at the local level (first and second levels: see above). The LVR is committed to inclusion in all areas of life. “Quality for people” is its guiding principle.

The diverse tasks of the LVR, which are performed throughout the Rhineland, can be divided into **four areas of competence**, as summarized in the following overview.

Area of competence	Core activities
Education & upbringing	• Since the beginning of 2020, the LVR has been the provider of integration assistance for children up to school age, which is offered in daycare facilities and as part of early intervention. • In addition, the LVR is responsible for integration assistance for children and young people cared for in foster families (in accordance with SGB IX), cared for in facilities “day and night” (special forms of accommodation in accordance with SGB IX), cared for “day and night” in special educational institutions (school boarding accommodation), or using short-term accommodation services. • The LVR is the legally mandated school authority for the special educational needs of “physical and motor development,” “hearing and communication,” “vision,” and “language – secondary level I.” The LVR currently operates 38 special schools where children and young people with special educational needs are taught. • The two LVR clinic schools teach children and young people who are undergoing psychiatric treatment at the LVR clinics in Bedburg-Hau and Viersen and are temporarily unable to attend their regular school in their place of residence. • The LVR trains social services professionals at its LVR vocational college “Fachschule des Sozialwesens” (Technical College for Social Services) with locations in Düsseldorf and Bedburg-Hau (especially in the fields of curative education, social pedagogy, special education, childcare, and open all-day schools). • The tasks of the LVR State Youth Welfare Office include supervising and advising the approximately 5,900 daycare centers and around 500 residential youth welfare facilities in the Rhineland. These institutions also apply to the LVR for their operating licenses. • In addition, the LVR State Youth Welfare Office advises the 95 youth welfare offices in the Rhineland and the independent youth welfare organizations. It supports youth welfare professionals with diverse training opportunities and promotes the organizations and institutions involved in child and youth work, counseling centers, family education centers, and daycare facilities. • In addition, as the state agency responsible for the distribution of unaccompanied foreign minor refugees in North Rhine-Westphalia, the LVR organizes the distribution of young refugees to the youth welfare offices. • LVR Youth Welfare Rhineland (JHR) is a provider of child and youth welfare services in outpatient, semi-inpatient, and inpatient settings, as well as a provider of training measures. Four facilities offer new prospects to young people who, for various reasons, cannot live with their families.

Area of competence	Core activities
Psychiatry	• The LVR strengthens the mental health of people in the Rhineland through a comprehensive network of psychiatric, psychotherapeutic, and psychosocial services. With nine specialist psychiatric clinics and one orthopedic clinic, the LVR clinic network ensures high-quality, local care for children, young people, and adults. • In addition to inpatient and day care, care also includes outpatient and outreach treatment as well as preventive, rehabilitative, and community-oriented assistance—for example, through ward-equivalent care models and digital services such as the Curamenta portal. The LVR attaches particular importance to involvement, participation, and individual support in the treatment process. • The LVR has been entrusted by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia with the implementation of tasks in forensic psychiatry. Mentally ill offenders are treated at seven LVR clinics with different treatment focuses.
Culture	• The LVR's 20 museums and cultural institutions take over a million visitors on an exciting journey through the ages every year. The museums showcase the wide spectrum of history, art, and culture in the Rhineland. There is a broad range of offerings for people with and without disabilities. • The LVR has a mission to record, preserve, and present history and culture in the fields of monument preservation, archaeology, and archiving. Experts in folklore and regional studies examine the identity of the region. • The LVR supports cultural projects in Rhineland municipalities by providing advice and financial support as part of its regional cultural promotion program. • The LVR's cultural landscape conservation department is responsible for the preservation, maintenance, and development of the Rhineland's cultural landscape. Accordingly, it offers various support programs, implements its own projects, and contributes to the communication and documentation of the cultural landscape.

Area of competence	Core activities
Live & work	• As the largest provider of integration assistance in Germany, the LVR supports around 100,000 adults with disabilities in the Rhineland. Its services include assistance with housing and everyday life, services to promote participation in education and employment, financial assistance for visually impaired, blind, and deaf people, and support for people in particular social difficulties. • As a service provider, the LVR association for WohnenPlusLeben offers adults with intellectual disabilities and mental illnesses differentiated housing and assistance services in all situations and assists them in achieving maximum self-determination and participation. The support services range from individual specialist services provided in the client's home to employment opportunities and round-the-clock care. • Through the LVR Inclusion Office, the LVR supports people with disabilities in their careers and in the transition from school to the world of work—for example, in the form of subsidies for investment costs for employers, for on-site counseling and support, or for information and training for company inclusion teams. • The LVR performs tasks for the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in the areas of war victims' welfare and social compensation (SGB XIV). The LVR provides various care services to people who have suffered ill-health due to special circumstances (e.g., war or violence).

One of the LVR's special features is the **extensive area** it covers. The 13 independent cities and 12 districts in the Rhineland, as well as the Aachen city region, are the LVR's member bodies (see Figure 3). The LVR thus works on behalf of around 9.8 million people in the Rhineland.



Figure 3: Member bodies of the LVR, © LVR

1.2 Levers of transformation and challenges

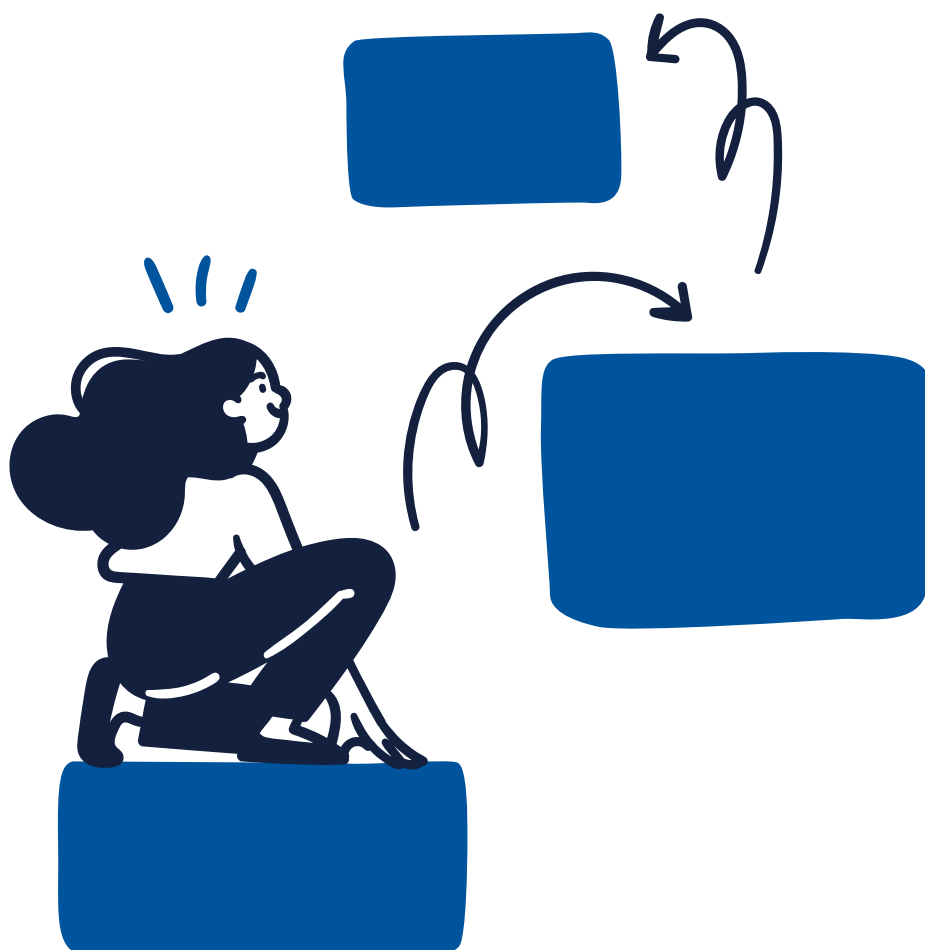
Due to its Rhineland-wide tasks and responsibilities, the LVR can make a special contribution to equal living conditions and sustainable development in the Rhineland.

In all its tasks, the LVR is committed to **inclusion as a human right** — that is, the equal and full inclusion of people with disabilities in all areas of life. As a supra-municipal association, the LVR has set itself the task of helping to shape an inclusive social space in local communities within the scope of its responsibilities. This commitment involves creating conditions that enable all people, in all their diversity, to live self-determined and communal lives (cf. Objective 4 in the LVR Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the LVR; see Section 9.1).

The LVR sustainability strategy is therefore also consistently guided by the principle of inclusive sustainability. For the LVR, this means the association strives for sustainable development for all, with all, and everywhere.

The LVR's efforts are particularly effective when its measures align with those of its member bodies. Hence, the LVR sees itself as a partner to its member bodies.

Implementing these measures is particularly challenging due to fiscal constraints, especially within municipal budgets. The implementation of all measures of the sustainability strategy is therefore subject to case-by-case decisions and financing.



Steering criterion

02 Strategy, goals, and areas of action



2.1 Sustainability strategy



The first LVR sustainability strategy with an action programme was adopted by the LVR's Policy Committee on July 8, 2025 (document no. 15/3037/1). This is the first comprehensive strategy for sustainable development that accounts for both the social and environmental goals of Agenda 2030. The LVR is thus entering into systematic municipal sustainability management and will gain relevant experience in its implementation.

An LVR sustainability strategy must be plausibly derived from the tasks of the Regional Council (see the four areas of competence of the LVR presented in Section 1.1). This fact was taken into account in the final selection of the prioritized **fields of action** for the sustainability strategy.

The strategy therefore focuses on the following priorities:

1. Social justice
2. Lifelong learning
3. Culture
4. Resource conservation and climate change adaptation
5. Sustainable mobility

With its focus on these areas of action, the LVR is entering the field of supra-local municipal sustainability management. In the future, the sustainability strategy may be expanded to include additional areas of action.

2.2 Sustainability objectives

Given the current lack of universally accepted definitions of “sustainability” or “sustainable development,” the LVR’s **understanding of sustainability** is based on the best-known and most frequently cited definition in the Brundtland Report, published by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. According to this report, sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” While the term “sustainable development” describes the process of social transformation, “sustainability” refers to a state—that is, the end of the process.

The LVR sustainability strategy is guided by the overarching **principle of inclusive sustainability** (see Section 1.2). Against this backdrop, the association is committed to sustainable development for everyone, with everyone, and everywhere.

Regarding the sustainability strategy’s fields of action, key guidelines were formulated, and **22**

strategic goals, 51 operational goals, and 166 individual measures were derived. The specific objectives and measures of the sustainability strategy are presented in this report at the beginning of the relevant chapters. These details provide a comprehensive overview of the key objectives, future measures, and activities already implemented by the LVR for each topic area.

In developing the LVR sustainability strategy, sustainability strategies and goals at other levels were considered in the spirit of **vertical integration**. The LVR sustainability strategy was derived from the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) against the backdrop of the specific tasks and responsibilities of the LVR. The SDGs affected were identified during the strategy’s field-of-action design. Vertical links to the German Sustainability Strategy and the Sustainability Strategy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia were also identified. Municipal sustainability strategies of LVR member bodies were also reviewed when developing the LVR action programme.



2.3 Strategic integration of municipal holdings

Many German municipalities have municipal companies—that is, wholly owned and affiliated companies that perform public services for the municipalities. Municipal holdings also make a significant contribution to fulfilling tasks in the LVR. The LVR’s annual **holding report** contains detailed information on all direct and indirect holdings in the LVR’s independent areas of responsibility under public and private law.

The LVR has “Wie-Eigenbetriebe” (own-like enterprises), which are own-like institutions managed according to the principles of an independent company and perform special tasks for the LVR. These tasks include LVR-InfoKom, LVR-Jugendhilfe Rheinland, LVR-Kliniken, LVR-Verbund für Wohnen-PlusLeben, and LVR-Krankenhauszentralwäscherei.



The LVR sustainability strategy also applies to the “Wie-Eigenbetriebe” (LVR-owned companies). The LVR clinics are crucial players in the implementation of the LVR sustainability strategy and are therefore affected by numerous measures. One example is the integration of the decarbonization strategy into the sustainability strategy.

Steering criterion

03 Monitoring and evaluation



3.1 Monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability check

In the future, **monitoring** of the first LVR sustainability strategy is to be carried out in as streamlined a form as possible, particularly in the existing overall management process through annual target agreements, starting at the level of the administrative board between the LVR director and all department heads.

In addition, a differentiated **decision control** is planned for all short-, medium-, and long-term measures mentioned in the sustainability strategy, which is to be presented to the political representatives. On this basis, recommendations for the continuation and further development of the strategy can be derived.

A particular challenge in measuring progress is that numerous statistical indicators — which are updated annually for all municipalities with 5,000

or more inhabitants nationwide and are available digitally via the SDG portal — do not cover the LVR's tasks and responsibilities. Accordingly, the LVR sustainability strategy is not underpinned by the quantitative data typical for municipalities.

Overall, the LVR sustainability strategy should be viewed as a “living document.” The implementation process requires ongoing political consultation and, where necessary, concrete (implementation) decisions on measures. This is also the subject of ongoing reporting to political representatives.

Measure “1.5.2.1” from the action programme of the LVR sustainability strategy also plans the development and implementation of sustainability check-in templates in the context of the new digital landscape information system (LAVEMA).



Steering criterion

04 Communication and participation



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
General public participation and communication	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on „Communication and awareness raising“: • Annual target-group-oriented communication of the implementation successes of the LVR sustainability strategy • Ensuring a high level of awareness of the LVR’s contributions to sustainable development among the state and member bodies • Continuous communication of the guiding principle of inclusive sustainability through sustainable and barrier-free event and exhibition management Activities (selection) • Target-group-oriented sustainability communication • Rhineland Regional Assembly as the civic representative of the supra-municipal association • LVR membership in various committees, commissions, advisory boards, and associations • Central complaints management at the LVR (ZBM)
Participation and involvement of people with disabilities	Activities (selection) • Advisory board for inclusion and human rights • LVR Association for LivingPlusLife Participation Working Group • LVR umbrella campaign “Experience Inclusion” • “Day of Encounter”

Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic goal 1.5: Communication and awareness raising

We increase the public visibility of our social, economic, and ecological activities through transparent and comprehensible information as a contribution to sustainable development in the broadest sense. We strengthen our guiding principle of inclusive sustainability in the Rhineland as a social development process that leaves no one behind.

Operational goal 1.5.1:

Based on its communication strategy, the LVR will annually report on successes in implementing the LVR sustainability strategy, in a manner appropriate to the target group from the date the strategy comes into force.

Measures:

- **Cross-media presentation of special achievements:** The BEI_NRW 2.0 needs assessment tool will be implemented as an instrument for monitoring the effectiveness of integration assistance services.
- **Central information page:** As part of the Neue WebWelt project, a central information page will be created on lvr.de, where the public can find target group-specific and appealing information about the LVR's goals, sustainability strategy, and concrete contributions to inclusive sustainable development. The page also serves as an anchor and guide for decentralized contributions on this topic.
- **Umbrella brand campaign “Experience inclusion”:** Once the strategy comes into force, the umbrella brand campaign “Experience inclusion” will be supplemented with content that addresses the topic of inclusive sustainability in a way that is tailored to the target group and uses simple, accessible language.
- **Quality assurance of the guiding principle of inclusive sustainability as content:** To ensure a uniform and consistent understanding of the guiding principle within the LVR, a digital information and training module is being developed for all communication managers at the LVR.
- **Sustainability communication in culture:** By 2030, Department 9 will have placed greater emphasis on sustainability issues in culture in its digital communications — for example, through the following:
 - o Themed weeks focusing on sustainability on the Department of Culture's Instagram channel, @lvrkultur, in March 2025 and September 2025 (92.30)
 - o Themed weeks and themed tours (“discoveries”) in ClickRhein with a focus on sustainability are planned from 2025 (at least one themed tour will be implemented in 2025, with more planned) (92.20)
 - o Posts and themed series on the Instagram channel @lvr_kulturlandschaft relating to sustainability, such as the projects of the biological stations and the interface between cultural landscape conservation and nature conservation (91.20)

Operational objective 1.5.2:

The contributions of the LVR as a supra-municipal association to sustainable development in the broadest sense are recognized by the state and member bodies and enjoy a high level of awareness.

Measures:

- **Sustainability check-in proposals:** In the future, each administrative proposal will outline whether a project has a positive or negative impact on the goals of the LVR's inclusive sustainability strategy.
- **Use of existing channels for information transfer:** The LVR uses its existing information channels, exchange formats, and events to draw the attention of the state and member bodies to the LVR's contributions to sustainable development. Topics relevant to the LVR are systematically communicated in the context of the "guiding principle of inclusive sustainability in the Rhineland" and the LVR sustainability strategy.

Operational objective 1.5.3:

The guiding principle of inclusive sustainability is communicated continuously by consistently observing and implementing the principles of sustainable event and exhibition management at all events (including exhibitions) organised by the LVR. This approach specifically aims to enhance accessibility and promote resource conservation.

Measures:

- **Revision of business instructions for holding events:** Inclusion of the topic in the revised business instructions for holding LVR events based on the guidelines for sustainable event management.
- **The "White Clothes" exhibition:** The exhibition workshop is a pioneering project and testing ground for sustainable exhibition practices at the LVR Industrial Museum Textile Factory, Cromford. It ties in with current debates about the possibilities for resource-efficient, carbon-neutral practices in cultural institutions. The exhibition involves simple means and reusable elements, using handwritten posters rather than elaborate scenography and printed text panels. The resulting print products are printed on recycled paper.
- **Review of the sustainable exhibiting guidelines:** Department 9 is reviewing the applicability of the sustainable exhibiting guidelines issued by the State Office for Museums in Baden-Württemberg for its own museums.

4.1 General public participation and communication



Effective, **target-group-oriented sustainability communication** is essential for the LVR. For this reason, a separate strategic goal, 1.5, “Communication and Awareness Raising” was defined in the LVR sustainability strategy, involving three operational goals and various measures. As mentioned previously, one of the plans is to prepare an annual showcase of special achievements in sustainability using a cross-media storytelling approach. As part of the website relaunch, a central information page is to be created on lvr.de, where the public can find target-group-oriented and appealing information about the LVR’s goals, sustainability strategy, and concrete contributions to inclusive, sustainable development. The website also serves as an anchor and guide for decentralized contributions on this topic.

In the **Rhineland Regional Assembly**, elected members from the Rhineland municipalities shape the association’s work. In this respect, the Rhineland Regional Assembly is the civic representation of the supra-municipal association LVR, with the task of representing all people and interest groups within its remit. The Rhineland Regional Assembly is therefore also the central body for advising on the LVR sustainability strategy.

In developing the LVR sustainability strategy, it was necessary to dispense with a steering committee that would involve external stakeholders from business, science, and civil society. The number

of potential stakeholders in the LVR’s extensive association area alone is so large that a reasonably time-limited process aimed at reaching a consensus decision on a sustainability strategy is hardly conceivable. Hence, political participation occurred via a project-accompanying expert working group on sustainable development and broad political consultation on the strategy within the LVR’s political committees, in which local politicians from all LVR member bodies are represented.

The LVR administration is networked with several individuals and institutions on a task- and topic-specific basis and **is a member of various committees, commissions, advisory boards** (e.g., state inclusion advisory boards and expert advisory boards), and **associations** (e.g., membership of LAG 21 NRW). In this context, measures from the sustainability strategy can and should be further discussed in dialogue.





In the interests of citizen-oriented administration, independent complaint channels are also vital, providing customers and citizens with a point of contact. The **Central Complaint Management Department (ZBM)** within the LVR, which was established in 2010, plays a central role in this regard.

In accordance with the underlying service instructions, the ZBM is tasked with working closely with citizens and customers of the LVR to use their complaints, suggestions, and praise to support continuous quality improvement and process optimization within the LVR. By signing the “Corporate Governance Code,” the LVR Administrative Board has regularly reaffirmed its commitment to process-

ing complaints in an open, prompt, and objective manner within the framework of a functioning complaint management system. The LVR Central Complaint Management Department regularly informs the Administrative Board of the relevant results. Positive or negative feedback on the LVR’s work is accepted, regardless of the area to which the suggestion or complaint relates. The neutral and independent complaints management office is located in the LVR staff unit for inclusion, human rights, and complaints, so that reports can also be considered from the perspectives of inclusion, equal treatment, anti-discrimination, protection against violence, and appreciation of diversity.

4.2 Participation and involvement of people with disabilities



The LVR sustainability strategy is guided by the principle of inclusive sustainability (see above), in the sense that the association strives for sustainable development for all, with all, and everywhere. A prerequisite for this inclusivity is that, when planning and implementing measures, the administration systematically considers the participation of vulnerable target groups as a cross-cutting issue. The aim is to turn those affected into participants. The human rights principle of participation has also been anchored for many years as objective 1 in the LVR action plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see Section 9.1).

In the area of political representation, the LVR has had an **Advisory Council for Inclusion and Human Rights** since May 2015. With this advisory council, the LVR is following the human rights principle of close consultation and active involvement of people with disabilities (Article 4, Paragraph 3, CRPD). The rules of procedure provide specifically for cooperation “on an equal footing” with the Landesbehindertenrat NRW e.V. (LBR) association, which plays a leading role in the field of “self-advocacy for people

with disabilities.” The advisory board acts in an advisory capacity to the LVR Committee for Inclusion. According to the rules of procedure, the state government’s representative for people with disabilities and for patients in North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as a representative of the LAG der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege NRW (State Working Group for Independent Welfare Services in North Rhine-Westphalia), participate in the meetings as guests with the right to speak.

The LVR Association for WohnenPlusLeben (Living-PlusLife) is also intensively addressing the issue of participation. A **working group on participation** has been in place **at the LVR Association for WohnenPlusLeben** since 2022, with the aim of enabling and ensuring greater customer participation and co-determination in the long term. The working group has identified and prioritized several topics it will address throughout its work. In 2023, for example, the topic of “employee interaction with customers” was addressed in several workshops and working meetings. The working group is participatory in nature.



Bringing together people with and without disabilities is also one of the LVR's declared goals in its public relations work. To realize this aim, the LVR has created the LVR umbrella campaign "Experience Inclusion." It seeks to make inclusion tangible with all the senses. A central component of the campaign is the "Day of Encounter," the largest inclusive festival and family celebration for people with and without disabilities in Europe. The "Day of Encounter" was first held in 1999 (after a sensational ruling against the self-determination of people with disabilities). It now takes place regularly in Cologne — most recently in 2023, when it was held for the first time on the grounds of the LVR in Cologne-Deutz. Up to 50,000 people with and without disabilities cele-

brate together and send a loud and clear message for better coexistence. The "Day of Encounter" is an inclusive, open-air festival that combines a colorful stage programme and an informative, interactive exhibition. All areas of the LVR are involved.

In addition to the "Day of Encounter," the LVR umbrella campaign "Experience Inclusion" includes other events and offerings: the "Mobile Encounter," the "Celebrate for All" contest, the "Carnival for All" project, and informational offerings for children. The LVR is on the road throughout the Rhineland with barrier-free experiences and interactive offerings.



Steering criterion

05 Organisation and staff



5.1 Working structures for sustainability

The management (including resources) and monitoring of the LVR sustainability strategy in the administration will be conducted in as lean a form as possible within the existing overall management process, through annual target agreements, starting at the administrative board level between the LVR director and all department heads.

On 23 January 2026, following the local elections in North Rhine-Westphalia in September 2025, the

newly elected Rhineland Regional Assembly of the Rhineland convened. It will need to determine how the overarching sustainability strategy is to be politically embedded during the 16th electoral term.

The staffing resources required for the implementation of measures will be clarified in the context of budget planning and overall administrative management through target agreements.



Steering criterion

06 Sustainable administration, procurement, and contract award



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Sustainability in procurement and contract awarding	Activities (selection) • Use of regional food • Raising awareness of the sustainable operation of museum shops and cafés: Various measures to raise awareness of sustainability/fair trade among the operating company and tenants in museum shops and cafés.

6.1 Sustainability in procurement and contracting

The consideration of sustainability criteria in public procurement and contracting is a key lever for promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns.

When purchasing food, the LVR is committed to the “use of regional food.” This topic has long been under consideration at the Competence Centre at the LVR Clinic in Viersen, which is responsible for food purchasing at the LVR. As far as legally possible and subject to regional and seasonal availability, each tender cycle for food framework agreements allows the purchase of regional products within suitable

product groups. This method of procurement is an established standard process. The LVR’s self-catering facilities (clinics), which are affiliated with the framework agreements, decide independently which products they purchase locally, taking into account the respective technical production capabilities and consumer numbers. This approach is part of the standard process. The use of agricultural land is currently being examined—in addition to the increased use of regional products in LVR facilities, LVR land is to be used more intensively for food production, similar to the “edible city” concept.

In 2025, DEHOGA coaches held free consultations at the **LVR museums** focusing on topics such as sustainable material procurement, sustainability labels, food waste, waste management, and alternative cleaning options with the aim of achieving the sustainable operation of museum catering facilities. So far, the LVR Open Air Museum in Kommern and the LVR Industrial Museums have taken advantage of this offer.



Steering criterion

07 Sustainable finances



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Sustainable finance and economic efficiency	Activities • New municipal financial management • Economic service provision
Sustainable investment strategies for financial investments	Activities (selection) • Capital investment guidelines • Concept for “Optimizing liquidity management, taking pension liabilities into account” • Requirements for the “LVR Wohnen und Leben” real estate fund • Provinzial investment Indicators • Liquidity management • Sustainable capital investments • Real estate fund “LVR Wohnen und Leben”

7.1 Sustainable financial management and economic efficiency



As a cost-sharing association, the LVR is aware of its obligation to manage its budget economically, efficiently, and prudently. Its financial activities are geared toward being a reliable and competent partner to its member organisations. To achieve this aim, the LVR has recently developed and implemented a series of programmes, processes, and measures.

Since the introduction of the **New Municipal Financial Management** system in 2007, the LVR has pursued a sustainable financial management policy. The aspects of sustainability are inherent in the system and relate in particular to intergenerational justice, transparency regarding resource consumption, and the congruence of investments and value consumption. Municipal financial management is constantly being developed.

In view of the current interest rate environment, the LVR is successfully continuing its implemented debt and liquidity management after intensive analysis of its liquidity and credit portfolio, thereby

achieving an annual consolidation contribution in the millions. Moderate debt reduction and proactive debt and liquidity management to secure favorable long-term interest rates help maintain the ability to act and operate economically. The “Budget Management” department ensures that **services are provided economically** (i.e., efficient budget planning, control, reporting, etc.). The digital aspect also plays a crucial role here.

In recent years, the LVR has also established a system that ensures the loan portfolio’s repayment structure is, in the medium term, aligned with the predictable depreciation of the LVR’s assets. This means that only the liquidity required for loan repayment is levied through apportioned depreciation. This approach ensures the LVR can finance its necessary investments without creating liquidity surpluses financed by contributions, while also creating a generationally equitable system, because the financing of past depreciation is not passed on to future generations.



7.2 Sustainable investment strategies for financial investments



In 2016, the LVR issued an investment guideline based on a circular from the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government, including initial investment targets related to sustainability (such as relieving the burden on member bodies and making provisions for the long-term security of civil service pension entitlements). In recent years, there has been an increasing expectation that capital investments should be aligned with sustainability criteria. As a public-law corporation, the LVR has a specific role-model function in this regard. By adapting its capital investment guidelines in 2023, the LVR was fulfilling its role-model function and placing greater emphasis on social and ecological public welfare and aspects of good corporate governance in its capital investments.

In connection with the capital investment guidelines—and with a particular focus on relieving the burden on member corporations—the LVR utilises the concept of “optimizing liquidity management while taking pension liabilities into account.” This approach optimizes liquidity management and aims to achieve sustainable returns while ensuring solvency at all times with an appropriate risk structure. It contains coordinated instruments and measures that should lead to a reduction in custody fees and enable a long-term and sustainable investment policy to cover future pension liabilities. The reduction in custody fees and the generation of additional financial income targeted by the concept will lead to an immediate improvement in budget results and thus to indirect relief for the member corporations.

Liquidity management

Year	2021	2022	2023 (forecast)
Million euros	170.1	186.1	434.1
Percent	25.1	26.6	59.8

Optimization of liquidity management, including pension liabilities

Source: Rhineland Regional Council

Due to the persistently low-interest-rate environment, the LVR struggles to achieve a positive return on its investments with banks. Against this backdrop, LVR Financial Management has developed a concept for optimizing the strategy for investing the LVR's financial resources. The implementation of the concept aims to generate sustainable returns while ensuring continuous solvency. At the same time, the investment strategy is intended to reduce the risk associated with banks. In addition, the investment strategy aims to establish further instruments for backing pension obligations in addition to the KVR fund (municipal pension reserve fund).

The indicator divides the calculation of key figures, such as the financial returns on individual investments and information on asset development (distribution and management), into two main indicators: 1) absolute asset value for covering pension liabilities, and 2) calculation of the coverage ratio for pension liabilities.

Over several years, €124.1 million was invested in the KVR fund. In addition, investments totaling €46 million had been made in two residential real estate funds by 2021. These investments increased to €62 million in 2022. The full investment in these two instruments, amounting to €110 million, was completed in 2023. Furthermore, additional investments of €200 million were made in 2023. The reinsurance coverage ratio for pension liabilities is also stated as a percentage, which has increased continuously over the period under review.

One example of how sustainability criteria are considered in capital investments is a **requirement for the real estate fund “LVR Wohnen und Leben”** (real estate funds are investment funds that invest investors’ capital in the acquisition, construction, or financing of real estate). The LVR thereby promotes the provision of sustainable housing in North Rhine-Westphalia (with a right of first refusal for LVR employees, which increases the attractiveness of the LVR as an employer). The investment strategy is supplemented by additional social and ecological investment criteria, including affordable housing, energy sustainability, and a community-oriented approach.

Real estate fund “LVR Wohnen und Leben”

Year	2024	2025 (Fore- cast)	2026 (Fore- cast)	2027 (Fore- cast)
Million euros	50.	100.0	200.0	250.0

Fund volume for the creation and preservation of affordable housing (social); the energy-efficient renovation of inefficient housing, taking social aspects into account (environment and social)

Source: Rhineland Regional Council

Real estate funds enable investments in buildings or construction projects without having to acquire ownership of them. The indicator provides information on the financial volume of the “LVR Wohnen und Leben” fund for the creation and maintenance of affordable housing and energy-efficient renovation. The fund is initially to be launched with equity capital of €250 million, with additional debt capital of €250 million planned initially. The latter is to be replaced by equity in the long term (e.g., through the reinvestment of income). The fund is currently in the launch phase. Depending on market conditions, the equity capital is currently expected to be contributed by 2027.

The LVR is also a co-owner of the insurance group Provinzial Holding Aktiengesellschaft and can therefore exert a corresponding influence on it. This fact is relevant because life insurers are significant capital investors. Provinzial considers the various dimensions of sustainability for itself (it is subject to EU taxonomy, an EU regulation that defines requirements for sustainable investments). Within the framework of its **stake in Provinzial**, LVR can influence three areas: (1) Environment – working towards a sustainable corporate orientation; (2) Social – working towards achieving the statutory goal of participation in economic life in all regions of the business area (goal: “comprehensive provision of insurance cover for the population and maintenance of a customer-oriented, regionally decentralized, balanced market for insurance products”); and (3) Governance – working towards reliable corporate management that maintains the LVR’s financial position in real terms and promotes the fulfillment of its tasks through investment income (i.e., dividends) and financially relieves member corporations of the burden of contributions.

Sustainable investments

Year	2021	2022	2023
Million euros	- 46.0	- 62.0	- 310.0
Percent	- 5.3	- 7.2	- 26.0

Alignment of capital investments with sustainability criteria and reduction of “banking risk” (reduction of cash investments with commercial banks).

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – LVR Capital Investment Guideline.

Sustainable investments consider ethical and moral values in addition to potential returns. In recent years, demand for products and services that combine environmental, economic, and social responsibility has risen significantly. The indicator provides information on the alignment of investments with the LVR’s sustainability criteria and the reduction of “banking risk” (the reduction of cash investments with commercial banks). The value indicates the extent to which investments have already been shifted to investments that take sustainability aspects into account in accordance with the capital investment guidelines. The percentage indicates the active reduction in volumes at banks (reduction in bank risk), i.e., the ratio of the portfolio of shifted investments (funds) to total financial investments (investments in banks and funds). The development shows that, over time, the LVR has continuously shifted more money from conservative investments to investments that take sustainability into account.

Steering criterion

08 Digitalization and innovation



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Digitalization, innovation and sustainability	Activities (selection) • Digital agenda • IT strategy of the LVR • Sustainable digitization in the LVR's central administration • "Digital Social Affairs Department" project • Research project on the development of automated sign language translation • Digital committee work of the Rhineland Regional Assembly and its other committees

8.1 Digitalization, innovation, and sustainability

The ongoing digital transformation is affecting most areas of life for people in the Rhineland. The digital space is increasingly vital, serving as a seamless extension of the physical world. In recent years, the LVR has increasingly addressed the issues of digitization and digitality. It promotes and utilises the opportunities offered by digitization for various structures and processes in order to foster innovation. Possible synergies between resource conservation (e.g., reduced paper consumption) and digitization should be exploited, but potential conflicts of interest (e.g., increased energy consumption from more digital processes) should also be addressed.

A digital agenda (“LVR’s attitude and actions in the digital transformation”) was published in 2023 to provide guidelines for the LVR’s digital transformation over the coming years. The **digital agenda**, which is divided into two parts, was developed through a broad-based, participatory process involving all LVR departments. The first part formulates an attitude towards digitalization in the LVR. Among other things, ethical, inclusive, and organisational guidelines are formulated, each reflected in the agenda as a guiding principle. The second part involves action in digital transformation, providing insight into practice and how and where digitalization impacts the LVR today and in the future.

Attitude

- Digital ethics and social issues
- Digital inclusion
- Change as enrichment
- Participation of employees and citizens
- Digitalization and sustainability
- Legal framework
- Digitalization without discrimination

Action

- Digital access and networking
- Digital processes and services
- Technical innovation and empowerment
- Digital skills and collaboration
- Networked mobility

Figure 4: Contents of the LVR’s Digital Agenda, © LVR

The Digital Agenda is the LVR's primary framework for digital change, providing the foundation for understanding and actively shaping the process of digitalization. The LVR pursues the goal of combining digitalization and sustainability and understanding them as a digital and ecologically sustainable transformation. The possibilities offered by digitalization can contribute to protecting the environment and conserving natural resources. Through the efficient and responsible use and selection of available resources and through intelligent reductions in CO₂ consumption, the LVR aims to actively support sustainable change. For example, the opportunities offered by digitalization can be used to visualize the LVR's CO₂ emissions in a data-driven way, with a view to reducing them in a targeted manner. Digitalization also offers significant potential for efficient property management. For example, energy-efficient, digitally supported building management is a lever for saving resources (such as electricity or gas). In addition to efficient resource use, reducing CO₂ emissions also requires consistent use of renewable energy. The LVR is therefore consistently pursuing a "green IT" approach. The aim is to build on successful projects such as the energy-efficient data centre and the recycling of decommissioned IT hardware. Resource consumption (e.g., paper) is to be reduced in all areas of the LVR through comprehensive digital, media-break-free communication and application submission. Mobility needs are also to be shaped through the use of digital media. In addition, mobility behavior is to be optimized by bundling trips and increasing efficiency with



the various means of transport offered within and outside the LVR.

Based on the considerations in the Digital Agenda and the LVR vision and mission (see Social Justice topic area), an IT strategy for the LVR was published in 2024. The strategy develops guiding principles and overarching goals for IT in the LVR. Furthermore, association-wide coordinated processes serve to further establish central IT control. In addition to control and organisation, other potential areas for IT are identified and placed in the context of the diverse projects already underway. The IT strategy applies across the entire association, ensuring uniform development and control of IT processes. Regarding sustainability, the focus is on the effective, responsible, and future-proof use of IT (referred to as a "green IT approach").

In 2024, the LVR administration was tasked with reporting on its progress toward environmentally friendly digitalization. This included providing a roadmap for achieving the Digital Agenda's goal: ensuring that digital transformation has a sustainable impact and actively reduces resource consumption. As part of the Sustainable Digitization in the LVR Central Administration proposal, an assessment of the implementation of sustainable digitization is being carried out based on the four areas of organisation, communication and training, data, and technology, to derive recommendations for future action based on the findings. It is noted that sustainability is a vital component of the "Digital Agenda for the LVR," the "LVR IT Strategy," and the central strategies for digitization and IT, and it is therefore included in all considerations relating to IT and digitization. Finally, the proposal suggests establishing continuous reporting on "sustainable digitization" every two years.

In line with the **LVR's Digital Agenda**, the **"Digital Social Affairs Department"** project was launched within various areas of the LVR, including the Social Affairs Department. Within this framework, the department's work and business processes are to

be comprehensively redesigned in digital form. The objectives are 1. simple, intuitive, secure, and barrier-free access for beneficiaries and service providers to the services offered by the LVR Social Affairs Department, in particular in accordance with the Online Access Act; 2. Fast and data-protection-compliant communication with (external) customers and partners; 3. The promotion of sustainability (e.g., through the use of future-proof software and digital processes) and climate protection (e.g., through the reduction of paper consumption); and 4. The use and implementation of automation (“robotic process automation”) and artificial intelligence (AI) to relieve the burden on employees and mitigate the shortage of skilled workers and demographic change.

To make the LVR’s digital web content more accessible to people who communicate in German sign language, the LVR has, among other things, conducted a research project to develop automated sign language translation in collaboration with Cologne-based Charamel GmbH (a software company for digital avatars). This innovative solution automatically translates written texts into sign-language videos using avatars. The project used research results from the AVASAG (Avatar-based Language Assistant for Automated Sign Language Translation) joint project funded by the Federal Ministry of



Education and Research. The sign language avatar was initially developed for the LVR advice compass. The long-term goal is to use this technology for all relevant LVR web content.

Based on a decision by the LVR’s Policy Committee, digital committee work was introduced at the beginning of 2015, following a pilot phase. The goal was to replace printed meeting materials with digital alternatives; as a result, the printing and distribution of meeting documents were largely dispensed with. Now in its second legislative period, the use of complimentary mobile devices by political representatives and expert citizens has become an established standard. Digital committee work is also planned for the Rhineland Regional Assembly’s coming legislative period after the local elections in 2025.

Fields of action

Overview of aspects

9 Social justice

- 9.1 Inclusion
- 9.2 Social diversity
- 9.3 Gender equality
- 9.4 Protection against violence and social compensation
- 9.5 Promotion of social engagement
- 9.6 Child and youth welfare

10 Lifelong learning

- 10.1 Education and inclusion in schools
- 10.2 Education for sustainable development

11 Culture

- 11.1 Cultural work and landscape conservation
- 11.2 Cultural education and education for sustainable development in the cultural sector
- 11.3 Promotion of sustainability, participation, and democracy in cultural work

12 Health

- 12.1 Health services
- 12.2 Employee health

13 Building and housing

- 13.1 Sustainable and inclusive construction
- 13.2 Support in the area of housing

14 Decent work

- 14.1 Decent work for people with disabilities
- 14.2 Decent work in the LVR administration

15 Climate protection and energy

- 15.1 Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- 15.2 Reducing energy consumption

16 Resource conservation and climate change

- 16.1 Environmental protection and protection of natural resources
- 16.2 Sustainable waste management
- 16.3 Climate change adaptation

17 Sustainable mobility

- 17.1 Promotion of sustainable mobility

18 Sustainable consumption

- 18.1 Promotion of sustainable consumption
- 18.2 Sustainable tourism

19 Global responsibility

- 19.1 Commitment to Europe and international partnerships

Field of action

09 Social justice



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Inclusion	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “inclusive participation”: • Further development of integration assistance for adults with disabilities • Inclusive opening of social spaces • Support for people with disabilities in the transition from a workshop to a job subject to social insurance contributions • Strengthening of counseling and networking activities to promote the self-determined participation of children with disabilities
	Activities (selection) • LVR’s “Vision and Mission” • LVR action plan “Together in Diversity” • LVR as provider of integration assistance / Measuring the effectiveness of integration assistance • LVR counseling compass • Coordination, contact, and counseling centers (KoKoBe) • Social psychiatric centers (SPZ) • “Peer counseling” as a service offered by KoKoBe and SPZ • Project “Spatial Testing of Integrated Counseling (SEIB)” • Model project “Inclusive Social Space” • Sport as a link between participation and inclusion Indicator • Activities Action plan “Together in Diversity”

Social diversity	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “Diversity and Human Rights”: • Ensuring goal-oriented management for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the LVR diversity concept • Developing and continuously refining LVR-wide monitoring of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the LVR diversity concept • Increasing the proportion of women in underrepresented pay and salary groups Activities (selection) • LVR diversity concept • Diversity Charter • State initiative “Success Factor Intercultural Opening – NRW Strengthens Diversity” • Website on the topic of “Strengthening Democracy – Living Diversity” Indicator • Seminar “New to the LVR – Experiencing Diversity in the LVR”
Gender equality	Activities (selection) • LVR Equality Plan 2026–2029 • Report on monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on Women’s Rights from an LVR perspective • Guidance on dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace • Joining the “Together Against Sexism” alliance • Support for women’s representatives in WfbM
Protection against violence and social compensation	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “protection against violence”: • Anchoring, implementing, and monitoring the principles of protection against violence in the LVR Activities (selection) • Social compensation • Policy paper “Principles of protection against violence in the LVR” • North Rhine-Westphalia State Initiative on Protection against Violence
Promotion of social engagement	Activities (selection) • Rhineland Taler of the LVR • Volunteering in social psychiatric self-help

Child and youth welfare	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “child welfare and children’s rights”: • Anchoring children’s rights, with a focus on poverty prevention in the action strategies of the municipal prevention chains of the youth welfare offices Activities (selection) • Youth welfare institutions • LVR Coordination Office for Child Poverty • LVR support program “Supporting municipalities in the Rhineland in expanding services and coordination structures for children and young people with parents suffering from mental illness and/or addiction” • Project “Independent youth policy under municipal responsibility” • Expert advice on children’s rights at the LVR State Youth Welfare Office • Integration assistance for children with (impending) disabilities until they start school
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9.1 Inclusion



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic objective 1.1: Inclusive participation

We ensure the self-determined and equal participation of people with disabilities in the Rhineland on an equal footing, in close and trusting cooperation with our member bodies and in constructive collaboration with the state and other service providers.

Operational objective 1.1.1:

The LVR has further developed its instruments and support so that integration assistance services for adults with disabilities are provided in a person-centered, effective, and economical manner.

Measures:

- **Impact monitoring through BEI_NRW 2.0:** The BEI_NRW 2.0 needs assessment tool is being implemented to monitor the impact of integration assistance services.
- **Further development of target and measure planning:** Target and measure planning as part of the optimized overall planning process (BEI_NRW 2.0) is being further developed, with increased focus on the rehabilitative nature of integration assistance (empowerment) and on equal participation of people with disabilities through social inclusion.
- **Needs-based support for adults with disabilities living with their families of origin:** The housing and living situation of adults with disabilities living with their families of origin will be empirically examined. Based on the results, the extent to which further development of needs-based services for this target group is necessary will be reviewed.

Operational objective 1.1.2:

The LVR is committed to ensuring that social spaces in its member organizations become more inclusive. This is achieved through the LVR's own accessible local services and increased networking and cooperation with other actors in the social space.

Measures:

- **Strengthening local networks:** The LVR is actively promoting and initiating the expansion of regional case conferences. Continued involvement with the Special Olympics NRW Board of Trustees will facilitate deeper networking with stakeholders across member bodies.
- **Development and implementation of a process for social space development:** This will harness the potential of the social space for overall planning, a process for social space development, including social space mapping, will be developed and implemented.
- **Further development of the counseling concept:** This will empower people with disabilities, provide comprehensive information about their opportunities for participation, and activate and share existing counseling structures.

- **Promotion of volunteering structures:** Especially in the context of the development of outreach treatment.
- **Strengthening trialogue formats in the social space:** This will occur in the member organizations (as distinct from the trialogue advisory board as a participation format of the association headquarters), along with promotion of peers and recovery support in the SPZ.
- **Holistic diversity strategy:** There will be an overall strategy for diversity that considers the interlinking of clinical and non-clinical care, plus the establishment and expansion of a social space network
- **Barrier-free design of information and communication tools:** Barriers in clinical and non-clinical areas will be removed—for example, SIM, multilingual information tools, brochures in easy language, etc.

Operational objective 1.1.3:

The LVR has expanded its steering activities to enable more people with disabilities to transition from a workshop for people with disabilities to a job subject to social insurance contributions.

Measures:

- **Review of the requirements for transition to the general labor market:** As part of the model project “From a workplace integrated into a company to employment subject to social insurance contributions,” two model regions are reviewing the conditions under which the transition from a workplace integrated into a company to employment subject to social insurance contributions can be successful.
- **Questionnaire and advisory tool for the transition:** A customized questionnaire and advisory tool for the transition from a company-integrated workplace to employment subject to social insurance contributions is being developed and introduced.
- **Inclusive woodworking workshop at the LVR Archaeological Park Xanten with the Roman Museum:** Since 2017, there has been an inclusive woodworking workshop where people with and without disabilities work together. In a theory-reduced training program, young people with disabilities are trained as skilled woodworkers.

Operational goal 1.1.4:

The LVR has stepped up its advisory and networking activities until 2023 in order to strengthen the self-determined participation of children with disabilities, regardless of their place of residence and type of care.

Measures:

- **Advising parents seeking help through case management:** LVR case management determines the individual needs of the child, taking contextual factors into account, when advising parents seeking help. Legal guardians are advised on social participation in daycare centers. The advice is provided at the request of the addressees; therefore, no key figures can be given here.
- **Participation in network meetings in local communities:** LVR case managers regularly participate in local network meetings in communities and districts to further develop the concept of inclusion in practice together with service providers.
- **Information events:** In 2025, cross-provider and cross-organization information events on curative education and medical-therapeutic measures in daycare centers or early intervention centers are planned and will be held. Depending on demand, two to four training events per year are planned.

- **Ensuring high-quality care for children and young people with particularly challenging behavior:** In 2025 and 2026, an interdisciplinary working group will develop recommendations for action to ensure sustainable, quantitatively sufficient, and qualitatively adequate care in North Rhine-Westphalia.



Inclusion—meaning the equal integration of all people, with and without disabilities, into the community—is the LVR’s key political objective. Inclusion and diversity are accordingly enshrined as central guiding principles in the **“Vision and Mission of the LVR”**: “We are the driving force in the Rhineland for a diverse and inclusive society and create equal living conditions. We promote and shape a coexistence based on equal opportunities and participation, respect, acceptance, recognition, and humanity. Our historical responsibility obliges us to appropriately examine and communicate the history of the association and to critically reflect on our actions.” This vision and mission guide the entire LVR. Against this backdrop, the LVR is committed to an inclusive society in all areas of life: in daycare, at school, at work, at home, and in the neighborhood.

As a state-mandated institution, the LVR is strongly committed to implementing the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which came into force in Germany in 2009. The CRPD is a mandate for the entire LVR. In all areas and tasks, the LVR must ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights to self-determination, protection from discrimination, inclusion, participation, and access as other

- Z 1. Shape the participation of people with disabilities within the LVR
- Z 2. Further develop person-centered approaches within the LVR
- Z 3. Increase LVR benefits in the form of the personal budget

- Z 4. Co-design the inclusive social space
- Z 5. Establish accessibility in all LVR properties
- Z 6. Establish accessibility in all LVR information and communication media and formats
- Z 7. Develop a universal LVR event design
- Z 8. Apply Plain Language within the LVR

- Z 9. Systematically conduct human rights education within the LVR
- Z 10. Protect child welfare and child rights within the LVR as an inclusive mainstreaming approach
- Z 11. Further develop gender equality within the LVR as an inclusive mainstreaming approach

- Z 12. Systematically examine and adapt regulations and procedures within the LVR

Figure 5: Objectives of the LVR action plan “Together in Diversity,”
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people. The central instrument for implementing the Convention in the LVR is the **LVR action plan “Together in Diversity,”** which was adopted by the LVR’s Policy Committee in 2014. At the heart of the plan are 12 strategic objectives across four areas of action, intended to permanently embed the human rights concerns of the CRPD in the LVR’s work (see Figure 5).

The operational implementation of the action plan’s objectives is the responsibility of all LVR departments and divisions (referred to as “CRPD mainstreaming”). To support the process of conscious engagement with the objectives, since February 2016, all LVR documents have systematically included a question on the cover page asking whether they relate to one or more objectives of the LVR action plan. In addition, the action plan’s 12 objectives are anchored in the established procedure for the overall management of the LVR.

Regularly published annual reports detail the specific activities that have been implemented to achieve the LVR action plan’s 12 objectives. These reports highlight the thematic priorities in the implementation process. In recent years, there has been a particularly large number of implementation activities aimed at “further developing person-centred care” and “human rights education.”

Activities to implement the “Together in Diversity” action plan

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
Number	70	64	59	69	59

Number of activities that directly or indirectly contribute to the objectives of the LVR Action Plan

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – Annual Report Action Plan 2024
With its action plan “Together in Diversity,” the LVR aims to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected throughout the LVR. The action plan distinguishes between the areas of “self-advocacy and person-centeredness,” “accessibility,” “human rights education,” and “human rights protection through administrative action.” The annual reports show what the LVR is doing specifically to implement the action plan with its 12 objectives in four areas of action. The indicator provides information on the number of annual central activities that directly or indirectly contribute to the objectives of the LVR action plan “Together in Diversity” for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The indicator shows the LVR’s ongoing commitment to implementing the CRPD, as only new activities are included in the annual reports. Fifty-nine activities were documented for the 2024 reporting year. In addition, the 2024 annual report covers 13 activities that exemplify the implementation of the multidimensional diversity concept.



The LVR is the largest service provider for people with disabilities in Germany. As the provider of integration assistance and supra-local provider of social assistance, the LVR provides services in the Rhineland for around 110,000 people with disabilities and impairments, as well as those with particular social difficulties, in accordance with SGB XII. For example, the LVR approves assistance in individual cases—such as support with housing and everyday social or work participation—or financial compensation for disadvantages, such as blindness or deafness allowances. The aim is to promote self-determination for people with disabilities and full and equal participation in society for all. To this end, the LVR approves individual, person-centred services and works—together with its member bodies and associations of independent welfare and self-help organisations—to further develop services and appropriate, local support offerings.

The Federal Participation Act (BTHG) has significantly strengthened the control responsibility and control obligation of the integration assistance providers. The LVR has developed a theoretical approach to **measuring effectiveness in integration assistance**, in which the target achievements and influencing factors recorded as part of the impact assessment are to be evaluated in aggregate. This approach allows for calculating the impact of the approved measure and other variables on the overall effect, along with their associated probabilities. Since 2024, BEI_NRW 2.0 (a tool for assessing needs) has been tested on a pilot basis, with its impact-monitoring function in individual cases also being examined. The aim is to improve control through impact monitoring and to make needs assessment more efficient, thereby also achieving cost savings in the medium term.

The LVR performs numerous tasks for the people of the Rhineland and offers diverse counseling services or finances corresponding counseling structures provided by external actors. The digital **LVR counseling compass**, for example, highlights the numerous contact points for social counseling services.

As a special service for people with disabilities and mental illnesses, the LVR uses its funds to finance a Rhineland-wide network of contact and counseling centres, the Coordination, Contact, and Counseling Centres (KoKoBe) and the Social Psychiatric Centres (SPZ), which also coordinate opportunities for social interaction and leisure activities. The KoKoBe and SPZ are important points of contact for people with disabilities and their relatives, and they provide advice on independent living. In addition, they help coordinate and further develop outpatient support services for people with disabilities in the respective region, tailored to their needs.

From 2023, a comprehensive further development of the coordination, contact, and counseling centres was launched. By the end of 2025, the KoKoBe associations were strengthened in all local authorities, and a KoKoBe association coordination system established. In addition, regionalized target agreements are to be concluded with the KoKoBe associations in all local authorities. The principles for the further development of KoKoBe are: 1.) Opening up KoKoBe to all groups of people and forms of disability as well as life situations to sustainably improve and promote opportunities for participation for people with disabilities; 2.) Maintaining KoKoBe as a brand (i.e., KoKoBe should continue to use its specific professional expertise, especially for counseling people with intellectual disabilities and their relatives); and 3.) Close cooperation between the LVR counseling service on site and KoKoBe in the region (i.e., rooms are shared, and counseling sessions and counseling conferences can be held jointly in individual cases). The SPZ's work is also undergoing continuous qualitative development.

For many years, the LVR has focused on the peer counseling approach. In 2021, the LVR administration was tasked with implementing “peer coun-

seling” as a standard service within the KoKoBe framework and further developing the qualification process for peer counselors. **“Peer counseling”** refers to counseling provided by people with the same characteristics or in the same life situation as those seeking counseling—in this case, counseling provided by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. Peer counseling at KoKoBe follows certain principles: it is independent and must be coordinated, and counselors require training and receive remuneration. The expansion of peer counseling at KoKoBe throughout the Rhineland is progressing. By the end of 2025, peer counseling at KoKoBe is to be promoted in all local authorities in the Rhineland in line with uniform funding principles.

Peer counseling is also being continuously expanded in the SPZs in the Rhineland. In addition, peer counseling is provided at all LVR psychiatric clinics by “recovery companions” (see also the topic area of psychiatry).

From 2019 to 2022, the LVR undertook the project “Sozialräumliche Erprobung Integrierter Beratung” (SEIB, Social Space Testing of Integrated Counseling). The work aimed to improve counseling and support for people with disabilities through four sub-projects. In the “BTHG 106+” sub-project, for example, LVR counseling was established on-site by LVR case management in the three pilot regions (the city of Duisburg, the Rhein-Erft district, and the Oberbergischer district), and the initial needs assessment began. In addition, strategies were developed for setting up joint counseling and support and for evaluating implementation. At each pilot location, an intensive exchange was initiated between the LVR, the KoKoBe (including peer counseling), and the local authority. Goals for cooperation and the (further) development of collaboration were agreed upon and reviewed regularly. The experience gained from the project was used to draft a framework concept for the further development of the KoKoBe (see above).

To ensure that people with and without disabilities can enjoy the same quality of life everywhere, the LVR carried out the **“Inclusive Social Space” pilot project** from 2021 to 2025. The aim was to develop and test new procedures for the inclusive design of social spaces and to improve opportunities for participation for people with disabilities, closely linking individual needs assessment and cross-case neighborhood work. The project was piloted in three locations: Essen, the Aachen urban region, and the Rhein-Sieg district. Implementation was characterized by regional differences in conditions – only in Aachen (including Herzogenrath later) were the measures fully implemented. The model project will provide valuable impetus for the creation of inclusive social spaces from the perspective of individual participation planning and reveal how to take greater account of environmental factors in integration assistance. The insights and instruments gained are fundamentally transferable (however, their widespread application requires structural adjustments, intersectoral cooperation, and binding implementation in existing specialist procedures). Further transferability of the results is currently being examined.

Sport should be seen as a link between participation and inclusion. As the provider of integration assistance, the LVR ensures the participation of people with disabilities in sports activities on a case-by-case basis through assistance services or mobility aids. In addition, exchanges with the German Disabled Sports Association have occurred in the past in the context of the Special Olympics and the Host Town Programme with the participating municipalities in the Rhineland. The LVR intends to expand its influence as a multiplier, better connecting people with existing resources and advice for inclusive sports initiatives.

9.2 Social diversity



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic goal 1.2: Diversity and human rights

We are aware of the uniqueness of each person across all dimensions of diversity and their individual interactions and values, and we promote this, being firmly committed to equality and anti-discrimination in accordance with the law.

Operational goal 1.2.1:

By 2027, goal-oriented management will be ensured, in line with the planned implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (BRK Action Plan) and the LVR Diversity Concept as a central anti-discrimination strategy.

Measures:

- **Establishment of more effective, LVR-wide management processes:** Development of suitable information and coordination formats between the LVR staff unit Inclusion – Human Rights – Complaints and the departments on ongoing and planned activities, as well as development and support needs with regard to the implementation of the LVR Diversity Concept and the LVR CRPD Action Plan.
- **Anchoring diversity goals in appropriate, cross-cutting LVR projects and activities:** Systematic consideration of diversity goals in appropriate, cross-cutting LVR projects and activities. Such projects include, for example, the “New Working Environments at the LVR” project, “Employer Marketing,” and the “New Otto-Platz Building.”
- **Constructive support for the target agreement process within the framework of LVR overall management:** Binding integration between the overall management of the diversity concept and Focal Point BRK with the coordination of LVR overall management (in the staff of the LVR director).
- **Transfer and further development of the LVR-wide diversity concept to all facilities in the hospital network:** This includes, for example, measures to raise awareness of diversity, promote equality, and combat discrimination.
- **Establishment of diversity management in all clinics:** There is a clinic-specific diversity concept for each institution. The task of the staff unit at the clinic board is to implement and execute this concept in the clinics.
- **Promotion and further development of the triological approach:** An initiative to include service users, relatives, and experts in a way that empowers people with disabilities and mental illnesses to take greater responsibility for their lives. It bridges the gap between individual, person-centred participation (ZR 2) and the collective design of psychiatric care and public network management. Example: Trialogue Advisory Board LVR Clinic Network.

Operational objective 1.2.2:

By 2027, a streamlined and meaningful LVR-wide procedure will be developed to monitor the goal-oriented implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (BRK Action Plan) and the LVR Diversity Concept and their impact. The procedure will be continuously refined based on experience.

Measures:

- **Redesign of reporting system BRK action plan and diversity concept:** Redesign of a streamlined and meaningful joint reporting system for both concepts, providing for differentiation between internal reporting for the administrative board and reporting to political representatives/the public.
- **Central complaints report:** Evaluation and processing of external complaints on the topics of human rights, anti-discrimination, and protection against violence (including measures involving deprivation of liberty) in the central LVR complaints report, also using the new ATeMe IT software.
- **Cross-clinic monitoring of the implementation of the diversity concept:** e.g., by submitting draft resolutions to politicians and advising on and monitoring the implementation of the resolutions.

Operational goal 1.2.3:

By 2028, the proportion of women in underrepresented pay/salary groups will be increased to at least 50%.

Measures:

- **Redesign of childcare services:** We promote a partnership-based work-life balance for both genders through continuously developed measures aligned with needs (e.g., childcare services, flexible working time models for employees and managers, mobile working). Childcare services are aimed at helping employees return to work after parental leave and are designed to offer as much flexibility as possible and promote equal opportunities, including for management positions.
- **Part-time management – dual staffing of management positions:** We promote a partnership-based work-life balance for both genders through continuously developed measures aligned with needs (e.g., childcare services, flexible working time models for employees and managers, mobile working). The option of part-time leadership already exists. It is possible to enable dual staffing for part-time leadership positions beyond 1 FTE to accommodate the necessary coordination and handover times.
- **Networking events:** We promote female junior managers through mentoring, training, and networking opportunities to increase the number of women in leadership positions, taking into account the diversity of women. An annual event for women provides an opportunity to exchange ideas, develop perspectives, sharpen their professional development, and connect across the LVR.

In 2021, the LVR adopted its first association-wide **LVR diversity concept**, which builds on its many years of experience in equality and anti-discrimination work (such as the previously mentioned LVR action plan “Together in Diversity”). The guiding principle behind the concept was the idea that human rights apply to everyone. Hence, the concept integrates and reinforces previous efforts to address additional key dimensions of diversity and their interactions within an overall framework. The concept is based on a human rights understanding of diversity with the aim of equal opportunities and rights for all people. In recognition of the risks of discrimination, the concept focuses in particular on six dimensions of diversity (see Figure 6) that are specifically protected by the General Equal Treatment Act, as well as their interactions.

The LVR’s diversity concept makes anti-discrimination and diversity a conscious part of the LVR’s

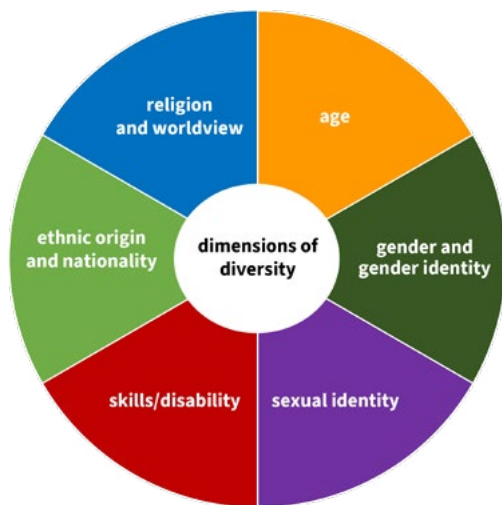


Figure 6: Dimensions of diversity in the LVR diversity concept, © LVR

overall management. On this basis, concrete activities are planned and implemented to improve protection against discrimination within the LVR and promote a positive attitude towards diversity. The concept defines ten strategic diversity goals for the LVR as a compass for the strategic and content-related orientation of activities. These goals relate to the LVR as an employer and a service provider for the people of the Rhineland, and to cross-cutting objectives. The operational implementation of the diversity concept is to be carried out as part of a mainstreaming approach. Hence, changes aligned with the diversity goals are the responsibility of the entire association and are implemented independently across all LVR departments, offices, and facilities.

As a visible sign of its commitment to diversity, the LVR signed the **Diversity Charter of the Charta der Vielfalt e.V. association** in 2016. In addition, the LVR has been actively involved in a partnership within the framework of the state initiative “Success Factor Intercultural Opening – NRW Strengthens Diversity” since 2015. The objectives of the state initiative align with the goals of the LVR diversity concept regarding intercultural openness. The intercultural openness of the LVR as an employer and service provider for the people of the Rhineland is a prerequisite for equal access and participation opportunities for all. The initiative aims to leverage intercultural diversity as a strength, increase the proportion of employees with a migration background, and ensure equal opportunities in the recruitment process and during employment. Fur-



thermore, intercultural skills are to be utilised in the workplace, employees’ intercultural competence is to be strengthened through training opportunities, and discriminatory prejudices are to be eliminated. At the invitation of the state, the LVR participates in regular network meetings of the partner organisations.

Seminar “New to the LVR – Experiencing diversity in the LVR”

Year	2021	2022	2023
Number	67	68	66

Total number of participants in the seminar “New to the LVR – Experiencing diversity at the LVR” per year

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – Evaluation by the Institute for Training, Consulting, and Development

The seminar actively teaches new employees the key principles of equality and anti-discrimination work at the LVR. The seminar is run jointly by the Inclusion, Human Rights, and Complaints Unit and the Equality and Gender Mainstreaming Unit. The indicator provides information on the total number of participants in the seminar “New to the LVR – Experiencing Diversity at the LVR” per year. It shows a largely constant development in recent years and thus a sustained commitment to communicating the LVR’s central social objectives.

On a recently launched **website on the topic of “Strengthening Democracy – Embracing Diversity,”** the LVR provides comprehensive information about its many services and activities related to democratic engagement, participation, and diversity. The website provides information about the specific democracy-related activities implemented by the LVR, how it promotes coexistence among all people on an equal footing, and how interested parties can get involved. The information is conveyed in a lively manner through videos, interviews, images, and texts.



9.3 Gender equality



To specifically promote gender equality, the LVR has regularly updated its equality plans in line with the State Equality Act of North Rhine-Westphalia. In 2025, the current **LVR Equality Plan 2026–2029** was drawn up with a term until the end of 2029. The equality plan was drawn up on the basis of the State Equality Act of North Rhine-Westphalia and sets out specific targets and measures to promote gender equality and work-life balance and reduce the underrepresentation of women. These two key areas are supplemented by the field of action “Protection against sexual harassment in the workplace.” The LVR Equality Plan 2026–2029 builds on and continues the goals of the LVR Equality Plan 2025. It is based on an inventory and analysis of the employee structure. The goals are as follows:

- Creating a balanced employee and training structure for women and men at all hierarchical levels and in all occupational areas
- Increasing the proportion of women in management positions, taking into account the diversity of women
- Promoting a partnership-based work-life balance for both genders, as well as
- Protecting against sexual harassment in the workplace.

To achieve these objectives, the LVR equality plan defines specific measures based on the needs identified during the analysis of the employee structure. The measures outlined in the LVR equality plan to promote gender equality also support the implementation of the LVR diversity concept. In accordance with the State Equality Act, the achievement of the goals of the equality plan must be reviewed after two years at the latest. If it becomes apparent that its goals are not being achieved, measures must be adjusted or supplemented. This is followed by a corresponding report.

In 2025, a report on the monitoring of the implementation of the UN Women’s Rights Convention

from the LVR perspective was published. The UN Women’s Rights Convention, officially known as the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (CEDAW), was enacted in Germany in 1985 and is considered the most important international human rights instrument for women. In its concluding observations on Germany’s ninth state report in 2023, the CEDAW Committee identified several areas in which Germany should strengthen its measures to promote gender equality. Based on these recommendations, several significant areas of action for the LVR were identified and substantiated in the report with measures and activities taken by the LVR. The main areas for action are risks of gender discrimination in the programming of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, combating gender-based violence, and gender equality in public administration.

Following the LVR equality plan, a **guide on dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace** was produced in 2024, specifically for managers and employees at the LVR. According to the General Equal Treatment Act, sexual harassment in the workplace is a prohibited form of gender discrimination. Employers must take measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and protect employees in the event of sexual harassment in the workplace. The guide provides LVR employees and managers with information and basic knowledge, a list of internal and external contact points and points of contact, and recommendations for action so that they can act competently on the basis of a broad knowledge base.

With the aim of sending a clear signal against sexism, the LVR also joined the **“Together Against Sexism” alliance** in April 2024.

To promote the participation of people with disabilities in working life, the LVR supports employment in **workshops for people with disabilities** (WfbM). In each workshop, the employees elect a **women’s**

representative who campaigns for gender equality.

The women's representatives receive support from a trusted representative of the WfbM and take part in training courses. As the provider of integration assistance, the LVR is committed to ensuring that women's representatives can perform their work effectively—for example, by offering targeted networking opportunities. The LVR also holds discussions with the WfbM in the Rhineland to identify and demand necessary improvements in the implementation or support of women's representatives in the respective workshops.

9.4 Protection against violence and social compensation



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic goal 1.3: Protection against violence

We do our utmost to protect both our staff and those we serve from any form of violence. In doing so, we take into account the particular risks arising from vulnerable living situations in special forms of housing, special places of work and learning, and in (inpatient) psychiatric treatment settings.

Operational objective 1.3.1:

The principles of violence protection in the LVR (according to template no. 15/300) are anchored throughout the association as a strategic basis for action. The precautions for protection against violence specified therein will be consistently implemented by 2030 at the latest, continuously developed under our own professional responsibility, and made visible and assessable through a streamlined, meaningful LVR-wide procedure for monitoring implementation and impact. The results in terms of content will not fall short of the results from previous years.

Measures:

- **New monitoring concept:** A new concept for annual, cyclical, and cross-departmental monitoring of the implementation of the principles of violence protection in the LVR. The results will be brought to the attention of the administrative board and political representatives in a suitable report format and cycle. During monitoring, an exchange of experiences will be invited in order to strengthen cross-departmental cooperation on the topic in the LVR.
- **AGG complaints office:** Systematic evaluation of the experiences of the newly established internal AGG complaints office with a view to improving the protection of employees against violence and discrimination by the employer LVR.
- **Risk management with regard to protection against violence in the LVR hospital network:** The review, expansion, and continuous optimization of the existing risk management system with a particular focus on prevention and protection against violence in the hospital network.

Since 2008, **social compensation** law has been one of the LVR’s core tasks. With the introduction of the new Social Code XIV (SGB XIV) in January 2024, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia once again transferred the tasks of social compensation law to the regional associations. Social compensation is provided to individuals who have suffered health impairments for which the state bears responsibility—either as redress for a special sacrifice or for other specific reasons. This support also extends to their surviving dependents, relatives, and close associates. Those eligible include victims of violent crimes and those who have suffered damage to their health as a result of events during civilian service, protective vaccination or prophylactic measures, or the effects of wars. Victims of the SED regime of the former German Democratic Republic are entitled to the same benefits. In August 2025, the LVR published its first “Annual Report on Social Compensation Law.”

Protection from all forms of violence is a fundamental right of every human being. Hence, the LVR is actively committed to protecting people from violence across the entire association. In 2021, it presented the **policy paper “Principles of Protection Against Violence in the LVR.”** The overarching template aims to ensure that everyone—both those served by the LVR and those employed by it—can expect a consistent and high level of protection against violence. To this end, the policy paper sets out the following precautions for protection against violence, some of which go beyond legal obligations:

1. In all facilities and services where the LVR itself provides services for vulnerable groups (children and young people as well as adults with disabilities and mental illnesses), the existence of a facility-specific violence protection concept is mandatory.

2. The LVR works to ensure that external service providers working with vulnerable target groups develop facility-specific violence protection concepts.
3. All LVR facilities and departments should address the need for violence protection concepts.

Regularly published internal monitoring reports provide information on the status of implementation of these goals throughout the LVR. A third monitoring report was published in August 2025.

In 2022, the LVR also joined the **North Rhine-Westphalia State Initiative for Protection Against Violence**. The state initiative addresses key LVR concerns, as outlined in the policy paper “Violence Protection in the LVR” (see above). In addition to the two regional associations of Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe, the initiative has also been signed by the municipal umbrella organisations (Städtetag NRW, Landkreistag NRW, Städte- und Gemeindebund NRW), among others. Under the umbrella of the initiative, concrete measures are to be prepared and implemented by the end of the current legislative period of the North Rhine-Westphalia state parliament in 2027 to prevent acts of violence in facilities for people with disabilities. At the same time, the initiative aims to contribute to greater self-determination, participation, and life satisfaction for people with disabilities. Protection against violence includes ensuring a high level of violence prevention and ensuring that such incidents are dealt with and investigated. The LVR is represented on the steering and working committees of the state initiative.

9.5 Promotion of social engagement



Social engagement is a vital aspect of society as a whole. As the political representative of the LVR, the Rhineland Regional Assembly has traditionally been committed to recognizing exemplary engagement by private individuals, civil society groups and initiatives, and companies – especially regarding the participation of people with and without disabilities. Various prizes and awards highlight these achievements and initiate positive change beyond the boundaries of the local authority. One example is the Rhineland Regional Council's Rhineland Taler. Against the backdrop of a fundamental reorganisation of the LVR's prizes and awards in 2019, the Rhineland Taler, which had previously been established in the fields of culture and landscape conservation, was expanded to include the category of society. Since 2020, the Rheinlandtaler has been awarded in this category for special commitment to the equal coexistence of all people in the Rhineland in an open and inclusive society. The award ceremony takes place in a festive setting either at the LVR's central administration offices in Cologne or at the award winners' place of work in the Rhineland.

The LVR also promotes voluntary work in social psychiatric self-help. Since 1985, psychiatric support



groups and lay helper groups in the LVR area have been receiving corresponding funding. Supported volunteer associations, self-help organisations, self-help groups, and private individuals are committed to helping people with mental illness and their families by providing information, counseling, discussion, and group services, as well as assistance with everyday tasks such as doctor visits, interactions with government agencies, and shopping. Over the years, volunteer initiatives by people with experience of mental illness and relatives of people with mental illness have been added.

9.6 Child and youth welfare



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic objective 1.4: Child welfare and children's rights

Together with the youth welfare offices, we support the development and education of all children and young people in the Rhineland and take preventive action to combat the consequences of child poverty. As part of our remit, we ensure the participation and protection of children and young people in institutions.

Operational goal 1.4.1:

By 2030, children's rights, with a focus on preventing the possible consequences of poverty, will be anchored in the action strategies of the municipal prevention chains (KPK) of 50% of youth welfare offices in the Rhineland.

Measures:

- **Consulting services for KPK coordinators:** Development of consulting services for KPK coordinators in youth welfare offices in the Rhineland in 2025 – and implementation in line with needs. Note: The LVR State Youth Welfare Office has an exclusively advisory role and can therefore only act upon request.
- **Training events:** Implementation of an average of five training events per year for relevant professionals and multipliers.
- **Participation in in-house events:** Participation in in-house events according to the needs of the municipalities in the Rhineland. Note: The LVR State Youth Welfare Office has an exclusively advisory role and can therefore only act upon request.
- **Publications:** Knowledge transfer and specialist public relations work through regular publications (working aids, specialist articles, report templates, newsletter articles, social media posts, etc.). Key figure: five products per year.

In the area of child and youth welfare, the LVR performs important tasks for the people of the Rhineland. The LVR's core tasks include:

- State Youth Welfare Office in the Rhineland
- Operator of child and youth welfare facilities (LVR Youth Welfare Rhineland)
- Provider of integration assistance services for children with (impending) disabilities until they start school
- Provider of integration assistance services for children and young people with (impending) mental and/or physical disabilities if they receive support day and night in a facility or in foster families.

With its four **youth welfare facilities**, the LVR offers a wide range of services for young people who have experienced crisis situations, neglect, or abuse and whose behavior is challenging. The spectrum ranges from a new home with a partially affiliated school and training workshops to on-site care in a family environment. The aim is to support children and young people in their development so that they can lead independent lives and have the best possible opportunities for their future.

As part of its diverse range of tasks, the LVR State Youth Welfare Office advises and supports local authorities in the Rhineland—for example, in creating improved conditions for all children, young people, and their families to grow up in well-being from the outset. For example, the **LVR Coordination Office for Child Poverty**, which was newly established in 2009 on the initiative of the LVR State Youth Welfare Committee Rhineland, supports youth welfare offices in the development and implementation of integrated municipal prevention chains – starting with early intervention and continuing to a successful transition into training, employment, and a self-determined life. The Coordination Office also provides support for poverty-sensitive action through counseling, training, and process support. Professionals who act in a poverty-sensitive manner can provide opportunities for participation to children and young people affected by or at risk of poverty. In many situations, they open doors to opportunities and incentives that would otherwise

remain closed to children. Poverty sensitivity is not just an attitude; it also provides guidance for professionals, institutions, facilities, and municipalities, and it can help enable young people, children, and their families to participate more fully in society.



With the LVR funding programme “**Supporting local authorities in the Rhineland in expanding services and coordination structures for children and young people with parents** suffering from mental illness and/or addiction,” the LVR also supports local youth welfare offices in fulfilling their role in improving children and young people’s living conditions in a sustainable and targeted manner. The aim is to promote needs-based care and the initiation and continuation of local services. The importance lies in focusing on children and young people whose living conditions are shaped and impaired by mental illness and addiction in their family environment.

The four-year project “**Independent Youth Policy in Municipal Responsibility**” was undertaken as part of a joint funding programme by the Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe State Youth Welfare Offices. The aim was to involve young people more closely in social and municipal opinion-forming processes to raise awareness of their issues and concerns. The programme focused on three: first, to increase the visibility of adolescents and young people within municipal politics, administration, and the public sphere; second, to support the further development and structural anchoring of youth policy concepts and opportunities for co-determination in the municipalities; and third, to establish a North Rhine-Westphalia-wide network. Engaging in participatory processes and learning about local democratic elements are vital building blocks for integrating young

people into a sustainable and open society. Beyond the project, the LVR is continuing its work in the field of independent youth policy through relevant training and counseling services.

The **specialist advisory service on children's rights at the LVR State Youth Welfare Office**, whose structures were established and subsequently finalized in the context of the project "Sozialräumliche Erprobung integrierter Beratung" (see above), seeks to advise actors in the field of child and youth welfare, both within and outside the association, with a focus on child welfare and children's rights, in the spirit of a "mainstreaming approach." The initiative prioritizes a networked "cross-disciplinary perspective" of the specialist tasks of other departments within the LVR.

As the provider of **integration assistance services for children** with (impending) disabilities until they start school, the LVR makes an important contribution to the person-centred support of children with (impending) disabilities in the Rhineland. The aim of the services for children with (impending) disabili-



ties is to ensure self-determination and full, effective, and equal participation in society. The aim is to identify participation impairments in children at an early stage and, through individual support, to avert (impending) disabilities, slow the progression of a disability, or eliminate or mitigate its consequences. Depending on the child's needs, special education services can be provided in day care or (interdisciplinary) early intervention. The participation of children with (impending) disabilities should be ensured through regional counseling and support anchored in the respective social environment, as well as needs assessment.

Field of action

10 Lifelong learning



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Education and school inclusion	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “school authority tasks”: • Ensuring the qualitative and quantitative school space requirements • Ensuring sufficient and qualified school authority personnel at LVR special schools Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “school inclusion”: • Promoting networking among school stakeholders and supporting the further development of school inclusion • Supporting joint learning at mainstream schools through the expertise of LVR special schools • Encouraging active participation in shaping political processes relating to schools and inclusion at state and local level Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “Pre-school and extracurricular education”: • Promoting shared living and learning in childcare facilities • Supporting the transition from school to work for young people with disabilities
	Activities (selection) • LVR special schools • School development planning • Action plan “School Capacity 2030” • LVR inclusion allowance • Promotion of peer group offerings • “System-oriented support for school inclusion (SUSI)” • Student transportation • Project “Learning in the digital world – special school of the future” • KAoA-STAR • Systematic evaluation of school qualifications and career paths of pupils at LVR special schools • Funding of research projects on the topic of transition from school to work: InBeBi, MOSAIK, ANNS-IFD • Erasmus+ accreditation application Indicatoren • LVR inclusion allowance • Development by training occupations in the LVR

Education for sustainable development

Activities (selection)

- Voluntary Ecological Year (FÖJ)

10.1 Education and inclusion in schools



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic objective 2.1: School authority tasks

We fulfill our legal obligations by providing sufficient school space, high-quality equipment, needs-based care and therapeutic services, and qualified school authority staff.

Operational objective 2.1.1:

Based on rising student numbers across the Rhineland and findings from ongoing school development planning (including document no. 15/1072) and the “School Capacity 2030” action plan (document no. 14/3817/2), the LVR will ensure that the qualitative and quantitative school space requirements are met by 2035. Priority will be given to cooperation with municipal school authorities in the LVR’s member bodies.

Measures:

- **School investment and renovation programme:** The LVR is implementing the approved programme for 2024–2035 (submission no. 15/2324).
- **Action plan for school space capacity 2030:** Based on the action plan “School Capacity 2030” (document no. 14/3817/2), the LVR will draw up the identified regional target plans (documents no. 15/1072, 15/1738) by 2026 to ensure the necessary additional school capacity in the Rhineland.

Operational objective 2.1.2:

The LVR’s special schools will have sufficient qualified school staff at all times to guarantee adequate schooling and proper school operations.

Measures:

- **Personnel report for school authority staff:** Preparation of an initial report for LVR schools by December 31, 2026.
- **Personnel turnover monitoring and controlling:** Introduction by December 31, 2026, including the derivation of target figures for staffing levels in the area of school authority personnel.

Strategic goal 2.2: Inclusion in schools

We actively support the development of an inclusive school system in which children and young people with and without disabilities learn together. This is based on Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Operational goal 2.2.1:

The LVR continuously promotes networking among regional school stakeholders throughout the Rhineland and supports their ability to further develop inclusion in schools.

Measures:

- **Inclusive cooperation:** Financial support for inclusive cooperation between LVR schools, mainstream schools, and other partners.
- **Peer group offerings:** Financial support for peer group offerings for students from joint learning.
- **SUSI – System-oriented support for school inclusion:** Guidance function through SUSI. Through SUSI, the LVR guides and informs people seeking advice. It also provides networking opportunities. In doing so, it actively supports school inclusion in the Rhineland and contributes to quality assurance in special education.

Operational objective 2.2.2:

LVR special schools use their expertise to provide operational support for inclusive education in mainstream schools.

Measures:

- **Promotion of inclusive education:** Teachers (state employees) from LVR special schools are involved in inclusive education. As the school authority, the LVR promotes the continuation and expansion of inclusive education through networking (and political) support.

Operational objective 2.2.3:

The LVR actively shapes political processes in networks and specialist events in the field of schools and inclusion at the state level and in the Rhineland municipalities.

Measures:

- Active participation in political processes by the LVR in networks and specialist events in the field of schools and inclusion at the state level and in the municipalities of the Rhineland.

Strategic objective 2.3: Pre-school and extracurricular education

As part of our remit, we support lifelong learning and the best possible support for all people with disabilities, from early intervention to employment.

Operational goal 2.3.1:

By 2030, living and learning together—which includes enabling and empowering processes of experience, development, and reflection—should be promoted and thus ensured for all children in daycare in the Rhineland.

Measures

- **Supervision and counseling of daycare facilities:** The Rhineland State Youth Welfare Office advises and supervises quality standards in approximately 6,000 daycare facilities. To this end, consulting services are planned for operating license procedures and criteria-based audits of 750 facilities per year from 2025 to 2030.
- **Expert advice:** Eight expert advisors will be deployed to strengthen and improve the qualifications of daycare facilities and child daycare providers.
- **Training measures on the topic of language development:** Language development within the daily educational routines of childcare facilities and daycare centres is of central importance. For this reason, the LVR State Youth Welfare Office is developing training measures in 2025 to further qualify and support specialist advisors as multipliers for language education in daycare. These measures will be offered from 2025 onwards. The plan is to train 60 specialist advisors per year.

- **Networking:** Networking between the relevant stakeholder groups in the field of action is being promoted. In 2025, an analysis of existing networks, possible development needs, and suitable concrete measures for 2026 ff. will be performed.

Operational objective 2.3.2:

The LVR actively supports and promotes the transition from school to work for young people with disabilities.

Measures:

- **Formation of expert working group “Transition from school to work”:** This will be a non-public political expert working group.
- **Implementation of “Transition from school to work” research projects:** Scientific analysis and evaluation of conditions for success and obstacles in this transition and subsequent use of the results for the further development of the area of transition from school to work in the political FAK and for the KAoA-STAR programme.
 - o InBeBi research project: “Inclusive vocational education and training”
 - o Research project “MOSAİK – People Orientation School Work Inclusion Competencies”
 - o Research project ANNS-IFD “Tasks, benefits, networks, and interfaces of integration services”
- **Data-based analysis of post-school careers at LVR special schools:** Systematic evaluation of data collected and provided by the Ministry of Education on the transitions and post-school careers of pupils at LVR special schools in accordance with Section 31a of SGB III.

The LVR performs important tasks for the people of the Rhineland in the area of school education. The LVR's core tasks include:

- The legally mandated sponsorship of (currently) 38 special schools, two clinic schools, and the LVR vocational college “Fachschule des Sozialwesens” (Technical College for Social Services).
- Supporting students with disabilities as a provider of integration assistance.

As **an employer**, the LVR offers various apprenticeships for young people. The LVR has significantly increased its commitment in this area in recent years. Children and young people with special educational needs are taught at LVR special schools in the areas of vision, hearing, and communication; physical and motor development; language (secondary level I); and emotional and social development. As the statutory school authority, the LVR provides the necessary school premises and equipment. It is also responsible for the school authority staff. The LVR organises and finances special school transport for students' daily commutes.

The LVR is also committed to inclusive schooling for as many students as possible. Together with various partners, it develops programmes and initiatives to promote inclusion in schools, including in the area of inclusive sports.

The LVR has therefore launched its own support programme for vision, hearing, communication, language (secondary level I), and physical and motor development. This is the **LVR inclusion allowance**, an important tool for promoting inclusion in schools. Since the 2009/2010 school year, the LVR has been using voluntary funds from the LVR Inclusion Allowance to support Rhineland school authorities in their efforts to enable children and young people with special educational needs to attend mainstream schools. Amongst other things, it provides funding for necessary equipment and structural adaptations. The LVR inclusion allowance serves as incentive financing and needs-based individual case support, supplementing state funding programmes. It ensures that the areas of support the LVR is legally responsible for as a school

authority are given appropriate consideration in regional inclusion efforts. The LVR's voluntary funding therefore focuses on the provision

of equipment and the barrier-free refurbishment of premises—areas in which mainstream school authorities often have a high need for support and advice due to the specific circumstances of each case.



LVR inclusion allowance

Year	2012/ 2013	2017/ 2018	2022/ 2023
Number	85	121	148
Total in euros	97.615	366.547	370.444

Number of eligible applications and funding amount from local school authorities for the LVR's funding priorities

Source: Rhineland Regional Council

Promoting joint learning for children and young people with and without disabilities in the Rhineland is a declared goal of the LVR. The LVR inclusion allowance makes a significant contribution to integrating LVR schools with mainstream schools and actively supports joint learning for children and young people with and without disabilities. The indicator provides information on the number of eligible applications and the amount of funding provided by local school authorities for the LVR's funding priorities. The figures always refer to the school year that began in the year shown. The LVR's funding priorities are divided into the areas of “hearing and communication,” “physical and motor development,” “vision,” and “speech.” Funding may also cover “furniture,” “renovation,” or “technology.” Most of the financial resources are used for funding measures in the area of “renovation.” This category includes, for example, the installation of acoustic ceilings or wall absorbers. Funding for technical equipment relates in particular to the priority area of “hearing and communication”—e.g., the procurement of sound field systems. Over time, the number of eligible applications and the amount of funding have risen continuously.

Another component for supporting and further developing inclusion in schools is the **“System-oriented Support for Inclusion in Schools (SUSI)”** advisory service. SUSI has three main objectives: guidance, networking, and information. The service is independent and inclusive. It guides those seeking advice on school inclusion to counseling and support services tailored to their needs. It also helps network existing counseling and support services in the area of school inclusion and provides information to multipliers in line with their needs. Experts are supported in their work to promote and strengthen joint learning at the local level. This aim is achieved through regional, socially oriented networking of relevant experts and by imparting expertise. For example, experts from LVR schools are referred to the areas of hearing and communication, vision, physical and motor development, and language. The overarching goal of the service is to enable professionals in the municipalities to answer the many questions about school inclusion or identify the relevant expert partners and, if necessary, refer them to the appropriate person. SUSI’s advisory services are already used throughout the Rhineland. An evaluation of advisory requests (fall 2025) shows that the issues raised are often highly complex and individual, spanning diverse topics. Most inquiries concern school support, followed by cost coverage, responsibilities, and the appropriate contact persons. With its SUSI advisory format, the LVR offers those seeking advice important support in clarifying their concerns about “school inclusion,” thereby contributing to quality assurance and the further development of inclusive educational processes in the Rhineland.

The LVR’s ongoing school development planning has revealed a sometimes dramatic increase in student numbers, particularly at LVR special schools focusing on physical and motor development and language. By 2030, the demand for school space is expected to grow to around 60 missing classrooms, representing a shortfall for around 600 students. For the LVR, as the legally obligated school authority, this will result in immediate or foreseeable necessary measures, investments, and additional personnel and material costs. At LVR special schools or in regions within their areas of responsibility that are

threatened by a shortage of school space, the LVR is seeking to ensure the orderly schooling of pupils on a permanent and long-term basis.

To remedy the existing and impending shortage of school space, in 2020, LVR’s Policy Committee commissioned the administration to implement the **“School Space Capacity 2030 Action Plan.”** Given that the LVR is committed to inclusion and promoting joint learning for children and young people with and without disabilities, it is also committed to further developing the inclusive school system with its action plan. To address the existing and impending shortage of school space, the LVR is focusing primarily on integrating systems—that is, on cooperation between general schools and the LVR’s special schools. To this end, cooperation between mainstream school operators and the LVR should be sought, with a view to upgrading existing schools and building new, inclusive ones. However, isolated construction measures by the LVR must always be the last resort, limited to cases where local cooperation is not possible.

In 2024, the LVR administration developed a school investment and renovation programme for 2024–2035. This programme includes addressing the urgent, short-term need for additional school space at special schools focusing on physical and motor development in Essen, Euskirchen, Mönchengladbach, and Wiehl through interim solutions or rentals. Since 2015, the LVR school administration has regularly provided an overview of the school qualifications and career paths of pupils at LVR special schools at the end of each school year. Since the 2018/2019 school year, school qualifications have been presented in a time series comparison, divided into “different goals” and “same goals” according



to the focus of special education. Different goals include qualifications in the intellectual development and learning programme. The same-goal category includes secondary school diplomas, intermediate school diplomas (Fachoberschulreife), technical college entrance qualifications, and general higher-education entrance qualifications (Abitur). The overall picture from the statistical survey shows that more than half of young people complete their school career with a specific qualification from the mental development and learning programmes. These qualifications are particularly prevalent in the physical and motor development support programme. Only in a few cases do graduates of LVR special schools succeed in entering vocational training directly. For most school leavers from LVR special schools, further vocational preparation or training is required. Just over a quarter of young people move directly from school to a workshop for disabled people (WfbM). Graduates from the physical and motor development programme are particularly likely to move to a WfbM.

A few years ago, representatives of the LVR special schools asked the LVR, as the school authority, to organise a project on the pedagogical and didactic use of digital media in LVR special schools, involving the schools and the school supervisory authorities at the district level. Against this background, the pilot project “Learning in the digital world – special school of the future” aims to support the pedagogical and didactic use of digital media in LVR special schools. For LVR schools, the project will focus directly on the special requirements of pupils with specific support needs resulting from their individual disabilities and medical conditions. The project aims to develop proposals for the best possible digital equipment and its optimal pedagogical and didactic use as a basis for optimal learning conditions for all students at LVR schools. A report on the pilot project’s interim results was published in August 2025. So far, 26 of 38 LVR special schools are participating in the pilot project.

Due to disability-related reasons, only a few students at LVR special schools can travel to school daily by public transport. For this reason, the LVR has set up a special transport service for students.

Around 1,600 school bus routes operate every school day as part of the student transport service – more than 100 transport companies are contracted to transport around 6,000 students daily. The special **school transport service** is a voluntary service provided by the LVR to enable students with disabilities to participate in everyday school life at LVR special schools. Legally, there is only an obligation to reimburse the LVR as the school authority.

Since 2017, the KAoA-STAR programme (“No degree without a connection – school meets the world of work”) has been providing young people with disabilities with individually tailored career guidance. The aim is to tailor the transition from school to working life to their needs and promote participation in the labour market. The programme is implemented by the regional integration services (IFD) on behalf of the LVR Inclusion Office. They accompany young people from grade 8 onwards throughout the career orientation process, from potential analysis and internships to career path conferences. The LVR KAoA-STAR coordination office manages the programme in the Rhineland and works closely with the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Federal Employment Agency, and other partners. KAoA-STAR is financed by state, federal, and compensation levy funds, as well as the European Social Fund (ESF). KAoA-STAR contributes to sustainably strengthening equal opportunities and professional participation for young people with disabilities in the Rhineland.

The LVR Inclusion Office is funding several scientific research projects to further develop support services for the transition from school to work. The aim is to analyse the conditions for success and the obstacles in this transition process and to derive concrete recommendations for practical action.

Since 2020, the **InBeBi** – Inclusive Vocational Education and Training research project has been investigating the educational and employment trajectories of young people with severe disabilities in the Rhineland. The focus is on the factors that promote successful transitions into vocational training and employment.

The joint project MOSAIK – Menschen Orientierung Schule Arbeit Inklusion Kompetenzen (People Orientation School Work Inclusion Skills), launched in 2025, is developing a skills grid for the inclusive design of the transition to the world of work. The aim is to facilitate access to the general labour market for young people with cognitive and physical impairments.

The **ANNS-IFD** research project—Tasks, Benefits, Networks, and Interfaces of Integration Services—highlights the role of integration services (IFD) in the transition from school to work. The focus is on their effectiveness, cooperation structures, and the optimization of interfaces with schools, employment services, and companies.

The results of the research projects are continuously incorporated into the strategic development of LVR services and the design of inclusive transition structures. In this way, the LVR is making an important contribution to the scientifically based promotion of a successful transition from school to work and the participation of young people with disabilities in working life in the Rhineland.

Interest in overseas vocational training has increased significantly, and many vocational training institutions have been active for many years. In this situation, the EU Commission has sought funding instruments that simplify administration for all participating institutions. With the Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027), the EU Commission is creating access to learning mobility in vocational training. Accreditation is the standard access for institutions. Erasmus accreditation is a tool for organisations in the fields of vocational education and training, school education, and adult education that want to embrace cross-border exchange and coopera-

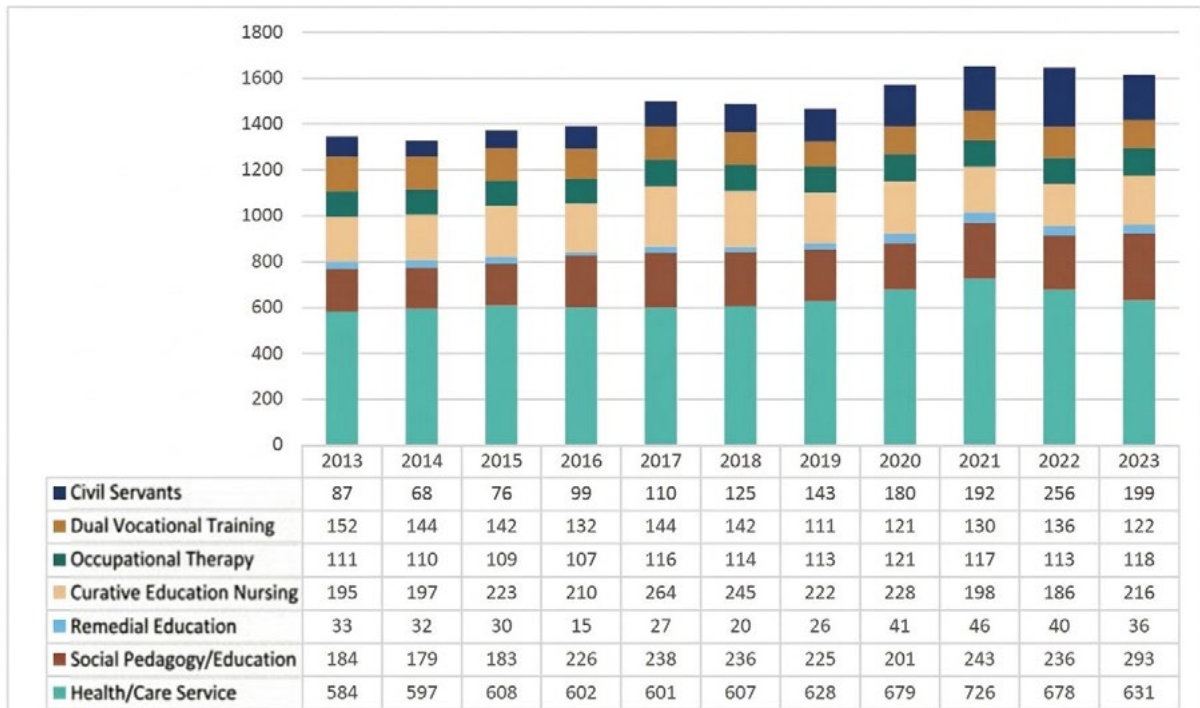
tion. Accreditation is valid for the duration of the programme and provides easy and secure access to funding for learning mobility.

The LVR has successfully applied for **Erasmus+ accreditation** and can benefit from the EU education programme in the field of “vocational training” until at least the end of the current EU funding period in 2027. As an accredited consortium leader, the LVR thus gains simplified access to funding that enables the implementation of work-related stays abroad. In 2024 and 2025, pilot projects are planned for trainees and educational staff, particularly in the areas of nursing schools and administrative training. The programme offers opportunities for a variety of formats, including multi-day group excursions and individual stays lasting several months for trainees, as well as job shadowing and participation in courses and training for educational staff. Interested parties in other LVR training areas can also express their interest.

Following the successful accreditation, an annual funding application was submitted for the first time in 2024 and approved at the maximum amount of around €259,000. With this funding, an estimated 100–150 participants will benefit from possible mobility abroad in the first LVR Erasmus year, 2024/2025.

The LVR Erasmus+ coordination office was filled for the first time in 2024. The role of the new coordination office is primarily organisational, aimed at relieving the administrative burden on the LVR training centres, which are primarily responsible for didactic and practical work. It establishes structures for the regular and, in the long term, association-wide secondment of learners and educational staff abroad.

Development by training occupation in the LVR



Number of trainees by training occupation in the LVR

Source: Rhineland Regional Council

The LVR is one of the largest municipal employers in the Rhineland. Through its diverse services for people with disabilities, in youth welfare, psychiatry, and culture, it offers training in numerous areas. In doing so, it accompanies and supports trainees in theoretical and practical learning. The following figure provides an overview of the development by training occupation (number of persons) for the years 2013 to 2023. The total number of training programs across all areas is generally rising over time, with slight fluctuations.

10.2 Education for sustainable development



Education for sustainable development (ESD) is a central aspect of promoting sustainability, enabling people to think and act sustainably through information and awareness-raising.

One example of an activity in this area in the LVR is the **Rhineland Voluntary Ecological Year (FÖJ)**. In 2025, the FÖJ Rhineland celebrated its 30th anniversary. Over the years, it has continually improved and expanded in quality. Inclusion and participation, personal and professional orientation, democracy education, and education for sustainable development have become the cornerstones of the FÖJ Rhineland. Feedback from participants shows that young people benefit greatly from the FÖJ and are empowered to find their way forward.

As part of the FÖJ Rhineland, young people aged 16–26 are committed to the environment and society. In FÖJ placement locations throughout the Rhineland, young people are working for a livable future through practical nature conservation, environmental education, and gardening activities. The volunteers explore the ecological, social, and economic backgrounds of the challenges facing society in accompanying educational seminars.

These are organised as participatory events by the FÖJ central office at the LVR State Youth Welfare Office, which is also responsible for the overall organisation of the FÖJ and for advising, training, and supervising the FÖJ placement sites. From the outset, the FÖJ has had a socio-political quota. Half of the funded places are given to volunteers without a school leaving certificate or with a Sek1 qualification. From 2011, the inclusive approach was promoted more broadly. Now, 15% to 20% of volunteers each year have special needs. The programme's overarching goals are to encourage volunteers to take responsibility for themselves and the environment and to develop personal and professional perspectives. Through the FÖJ, the LVR strengthens knowledge and design of a sustainable environment and the use of natural resources.

Field of action

11 Culture



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Cultural work and landscape culture preservation	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “Exploring and Preserving”: • Strengthening the protection and awareness of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Lower German Limes” • Cultural enhancement of the former Frimmersdorf power plant in the context of structural change • Protecting and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage • Researching the history of the LVR and its predecessor institutions with a view to local self-government and democratization Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “Promoting”: • Raising awareness of sustainability in cultural work among all funding recipients Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “Advising and networking”: • Continuation of advisory, training, and networking services for the Rhineland cultural scene and landscape • Implementation of projects in cooperation with international and regional partners
	Activities (selection) • Funding lines • Role of the World Heritage Officer • Cooperation agreement World Heritage Site Lower German Limes • LVR cultural conferences • Publication “rheininform” • LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn – new permanent exhibition • Preservation of historical monuments • Rhineland Nature Parks Working Group • LVR Cultural Landscape Network • Annual conference • Plant propagation • LVR Regional Seed Promotion • European Garden Network

Cultural education and education for sustainable development in the cultural sector

Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “Cultural Education”:

- Further development of existing offerings with a focus on “reappraising and presenting the history of psychiatry” and “raising awareness of the challenges of the present”
- Realization of exhibitions and projects with a direct link to sustainability

Activities (selection)

- “rheinforUm” event series
- “f[o]cus auf...” event series
- Digital platform “kultur-klima”
- Communication strategies in the structural change of the Rhenish lignite mining area
- “Nature and School” educational partnership
- “MiQua...op Jöck!”
- “Municipal Culture and Sustainability” program
- LVR Open-Air Museum Lindlar
- “ERNA: Practical Building Blocks for Nutrition and Sustainability”
- LVR Industrial Museum
- Education Climate Plus 56 Network
- Max Ernst Museum of the LVR: Special exhibition “Surreal Futures”
- LVR Lower Rhine Museum Wesel
- Special exhibition “Small Stones – Big Impact. Gravel Turnaround in the Lower Rhine Region!?” and new permanent exhibition
- Research internship “Museum of the Future” at the LVR State Museum in Bonn

Promoting sustainability, participation, and democracy in cultural work	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “Participation and Involvement”: • Design of educational and cultural offerings with a focus on participation and cultural involvement Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “Strengthening democracy”: • Offering training for all employees on how to deal with anti-democratic tendencies • Implementation of measures to strengthen resilience against anti-democratic ideologies and promote a commitment to human rights Activities (selection) • Sustainability working group • Further training “Transformation Manager Sustainable Culture” • Staff positions for ecology and outreach • Public transport discount tickets • Switch to electric cars • Increase in the proportion of reusable elements • Measures for sustainable digitalization • Switch to LED lighting • Free admission to LVR museums for certain groups of people • “LVR Mobility Fund” • “Travel for All” • “Audience Development Strategy” • Coverage of costs for sign language interpretation • North Rhine-Westphalia Diversity Round Table Indicator • Further training “Transformation Manager Sustainable Culture” of the Action Network Sustainability
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11.1 Cultural work and landscape conservation



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic objective 3.1: Research and preservation

We discover, research, communicate, and protect the cultural heritage of the Rhineland.

Operational objective 3.1.1:

By 2030, the LVR will implement at least five measures to intensify its efforts to protect and promote awareness of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Lower German Limes as part of the Rhineland's Roman archaeological heritage.

Measures

- **Role of the World Heritage Officer:** The LVR will serve as the World Heritage Officer for 19 municipalities and six districts across 24 archaeological sites. This includes a two-year position until 2026 to support the communities adjacent to the Limes with regard to (museum) presentation (LVR-Landesmuseum Bonn, LVR-LMB).
- **Concept for a mobile visitor centre:** Under clarification.
- **Project application “Lower German Limes”:** The ERDF project application was submitted on January 31, 2025.
- **Analog valorization through exhibitions:**
 - a) New permanent exhibition area “Lower German Limes” on the 1st floor of the LVR-Landesmuseum Bonn, planned for 2025
 - b) Limes Pavilion in the LVR Archaeological Park Xanten with Roman Museum: Since 2024, the Limes Pavilion has been offering insights into the regional history of the Lower German Limes. In the modern exhibition building, visitors can experience the Limes through a walk-through Rhine, interactive media tables, entertaining films, and a game for tablets.
 - c) See also: “MiQua...op Jöck! Lebenswelten am Limes” (point 3.4.2.7).
- **Digital enhancement and integration into existing portals:**
 - a) The inclusion of Lower Germanic Limes sites in the Kuladig information portal is currently being reviewed.
 - b) Contributions on the Lower German Limes are being included in the Rhineland History portal.
 - c) Together with the LVR-Amit für Bodendenkmalpflege im Rheinland (LVR-ABR), the LVR-LMB is continuing to develop the Cross-Cultural Timeline on the Lower German Limes, which was created as part of the state exhibition “Rome’s Fluid Borders.”
- **Archaeological research into Roman settlement activity at the site of the Colonia Ulpia Traiana from the High Imperial period (including the pre-colonial settlement and the late antique fortification):** In the previous concept (Colonia Ulpia Traiana – a settlement in the Roman Empire) of the LVR Archaeological Park Xanten (LVR-APX). The civilian city of Colonia Ulpia Traiana was the focus of research and a presentation, which largely ignored the pre-colonial settlement and its function within the Lower German Limes. This also applies to the entire late antiquity period.

Further archaeological research is necessary to meet the requirements of the World Heritage Site and create the scientific conditions for the comprehensive integration of late antiquity into the protection, presentation, and exhibition concept of the CUT.

Operational objective 3.1.2:

By 2030, the LVR will work on the cultural enhancement of the former Frimmersdorf power plant with at least three measures as part of the “Structural Change in the Rhenish Lignite Mining Area” project.

Measures:

- **Establishment of a monument trail:** The LVR is establishing a trail in the former Frimmersdorf power station.
- **Frimmersdorf portal educational element:** The LVR will use this portal in the former Frimmersdorf power plant to provide an overview of the region’s cultural heritage.
- **Stories of the Rhenish mining area:**
 - a) The interdisciplinary LVR project “Communication strategies in the structural change of the Rhenish lignite mining area” integrates current research questions on how society is dealing with the challenge of climate change in the specific context of the phase-out of lignite mining and coal-fired power generation. With the project “Stories in the Rhineland Mining Area,” the LVR is helping to connect cultural actors and local documentation centres.
 - b) The LVR-LMB is providing objects for the planned Garzweiler opencast mining visitor centre (to be completed in 2026) and is advising the designers in collaboration with the LVR-ABR.

Operational objective 3.1.3:

The LVR will ensure the protection and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage with at least three further measures.

Measures:

- **Archive of Everyday Life:** The Archive of Everyday Life is continuously digitally and analogously archived for the long term and sustainably valued by the LVR Institute for Regional Studies and Regional History.
- **KuLaDig:** The information system on the historical cultural landscape and the cultural heritage of the landscape raises awareness of the formative influence of humans on their environment. The preservation and protection of cultural heritage can only take place on the basis of prior recording, description, and explanation. This is achieved with KuLaDig.
- **Rhineland mill region:** Preservation and development of historic mills and hydroelectric power plants through the sustainable use of hydropower as a renewable energy source; project measures: consulting, networking and information, specialist conferences, and excursions.

Operational objective 3.1.4:

To mark the 75th anniversary of the LVR in 2028, the history of the LVR and its predecessor institution will be researched against the backdrop of local self-government and democratization with at least five measures.

Measures:

- **Various offerings:** Several analog and digital offerings are currently being developed.

Strategic objective 3.2: Promote

We promote the cultural heritage of the Rhineland and its cultural landscapes in close dialogue with the people.

Operational goal 3.2.1:

By 2030, the LVR will raise awareness among 100% of funding recipients to take sustainability aspects into account in their own cultural work.

Measures:

- **Inclusion of sustainability criteria:** Inclusion of sustainability criteria in the funding guidelines of the LVR Department of Culture, tailored to the specific objectives and requirements of the individual funding guidelines.
- **Review of checklists:** Review of checklists for their applicability to the respective funding lines (e.g., Lower Saxony checklist for ecological sustainability).
- **LVR planting material funding:** Based on a decision by the LVR's Policy Committee, the LVR funds measures to preserve and restore culturally and historically significant landscapes by providing planting material.
- **1,000 trees for Brauweiler:** Development of a project in which trees are planted with the participation of the population in and around Brauweiler.
- **LVR regional seed funding:** This funding strengthens the population of regional plant species and contributes to the preservation of biodiversity.

Strategic Goal 3.6: Consulting and Networking

We advise, train, and network the cultural scene in the Rhineland.

Operational goal 3.6.1:

The LVR will continue to provide the same level of advice, training, and networking services for the cultural scene and landscape in the Rhineland until 2030.

Measures:

- **LVR Forum on Nature Conservation and Cultural Landscape with a focus on biological stations and nature parks:** Organisation of an event at the thematic interface of nature conservation and cultural landscape management to network biological stations and nature parks. An event on the topic of forests took place in May, and another on the topic of moors in November 2025.
- **Cultural landscape conservation as a public interest body:** Submission of statements as part of the LVR's participation as a public interest body in all planning procedures. Raising awareness of cultural heritage as a protected resource, especially historically preserved landscape elements and structures.
- **AK Natur und Landschaft des Region Köln/Bonn e.V. (Nature and Landscape Working Group of the Cologne/Bonn Region):** Development of a climate change adaptation concept for the region and the development of further intermunicipal/regional strategies and guidelines on sustainability, spatial planning, and landscape development.
- **LVR Culture Conferences:** Annual conferences for networking among Rhineland cultural professionals, the independent scene, and employees from cultural administrations and cultural policy. The LVR Culture Conference 2025 on May 21, 2025, focused on economic sustainability under the motto "Culture. Sustainable. Economy."

- **Continuation of the “Kultur-Klima” platform:** The Kultur-Klima platform will remain in place until 2027. The focus on “ecological sustainability” is to be deepened, among other things, through new pages on the platform on the topics of first steps toward sustainability, mobility, and material management/sharing. An extension beyond this is being sought.
- **Establishment of the “Kultur-Klima NRW” network:** The aim is to establish a strong network of cultural actors in North Rhine-Westphalia who share knowledge and develop ideas to promote sustainable cultural practices. The kick-off took place in October 2024 at the Ruhr Museum in Essen. Another meeting took place in October 2025.

Operational goal 3.6.2:

By 2030, three projects will be implemented in cooperation with international and regional partners.

Measures:

- **Participation in the “Culture Makes School” programme:** East Belgium will include selected extracurricular learning locations of the LVR and network partners in the East Belgian funding programme “Culture Makes School.”
- **Establishment of the Mittlere Wupper nature reserve hiking trail:** This project by the Hendrichs drop forge in Solingen examines Solingen’s natural landscape in the context of industrial history, urban planning, and civic engagement. It highlights how nature and human activity have influenced and continue to influence each other. The project includes several measures. One of these is the creation of a hiking trail around the drop forge, featuring information boards. In addition, there will be tours in KuLaDig, Komoot, Actionbound, etc.
- **Education-Climate-plus-56 project:** Since June 2023, the LVR Industrial Museum has been part of the nationwide Education-Climate-plus-56 network. Here, educational institutions throughout Germany are working together to promote climate protection and a sustainable society. Three locations of the LVR Industrial Museum (the Alte Dombach paper mill in Bergisch Gladbach, the Ermen & Engels power plant in Engelskirchen, and the Cromford textile factory in Ratingen) have been focusing more on climate education since 2024.

The LVR performs important tasks for the people of the Rhineland in the field of culture and landscape conservation. Core tasks include:



- Operating 20 museums and cultural institutions
- Promoting culture and advising museums
- Cultural landscape conservation
- Preserving historical monuments in the Rhineland.

The cultural work of the LVR is as diverse as the culture of the Rhineland. The LVR aims to record, research, preserve, and nurture this diversity in one of the oldest and most vibrant cultural regions in the heart of Europe. The LVR's cultural institutions and initiatives help shape this cultural landscape. The aim is to implement new ideas while securing the existence and expansion of existing institutions.

The LVR has formulated specific strategic guidelines for its communication in the field of culture. These guidelines were adopted, further developed, and operationalized as part of the development of the sustainability strategy in the field of culture: 1.) "We discover, research, communicate, and protect the cultural heritage of the Rhineland"; 2.) "Through the content of our exhibitions, events, and projects, we bring sustainability issues to society and provide impetus"; 3.) "We promote the cultural heritage of the Rhineland and its identity as a holistic cultural landscape in close dialogue with the people"; 4.) "We advise, train, and network the Rhineland cultural scene."

The LVR Department of Culture is currently developing a strategic vision that anchors sustainability as a core element.

Given the importance of accessibility, inclusion, and diversity to the LVR's activities, these criteria are already reflected in many of its funding guidelines. In line with the specific objectives and requirements of the funding guidelines, sustainability should also be included as a desirable criterion. In addition, the extent to which sustainability can be made a mandatory criterion will be evaluated in the coming funding rounds.

Some of the LVR's specific achievements in the field of **cultural work** are presented below:

- In 2021, the LVR concluded a **cooperation agreement on the Lower German Limes World Heritage Site**. The Lower German Limes (Rome's earliest linear border) was recognized as a World Heritage Site at the 44th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2021. North Rhine-Westphalia thus has another UNESCO World Heritage Site, involving 19 Rhineland cities and municipalities and six districts. The cooperation agreement regarding the future management of the World Heritage Site assigns the LVR the task of World Heritage Commissioner. One of its main tasks is to prepare periodic reports for UNESCO.
- Since 2013, the LVR has been inviting cultural actors from the Rhineland to the annual LVR Culture Conferences. In addition to information on current cultural policy issues, the conference is based on suggestions and proposals from the Rhineland's cultural regions. In 2025, the LVR Culture Conference was organised with the thematic focus "Culture. Sustainability. Economy." The conference examined the questions of what contribution culture makes to economic growth and how cultural organisations and cultural actors act in an economically sustainable manner. It also discussed whether growth is the (only) right path and how cultural organisations grow within the framework of their values and capabilities. In 2024, the LVR Culture Conference focused on social sustainability under the motto "Culture. Participation. Experience." In 2023, the LVR Culture Conference highlighted the ecological dimension of sustainability with "Culture. Climate. Action." The entire organisation and implementation were conceived with sustainability in mind (including, for example, vegan and regionally produced catering, the avoidance of printed materials, and incentives for sustainable mobility).
- Twice a year, the **publication "rheinform"** provides specialist articles on current developments in the museum world, including participation, inclusion, and sustainability, and reports on anniversaries, new openings, special

exhibitions, and personnel changes in Rhineland museums. It also provides readers with information on museum-related dates,



training opportunities, publications, and the latest news. Above all, however, the magazine is a platform for Rhineland museums' interests, showcasing and presenting their work and institutions.

- The LVR is, among other things, the sponsor of the **LVR-Landesmuseum Bonn**. The museum displays treasures of archaeology, art, and cultural history from over 400,000 years. On its 200th anniversary in 2020, the museum was fundamentally redesigned with a view to inclusion and participation and entered into a target agreement with the LVR in the spirit of "design for all" across construction, design, and content. This approach applies to the architecture and routing, the guidance system, and the exhibition design, as well as the labeling and communication, including digital media. The concept was developed through a participatory dialogue with the public to realize a "museum for all." With the help of a new permanent exhibition, an informative, inclusive, and participatory presentation of Rhineland cultural history is now possible. The museum has been awarded the patronage of the German UNESCO Commission for the redesign process.
- The LVR Office for the **Preservation of Historical Monuments** in the Rhineland specializes in the preservation of monuments and contributes to climate protection through repair and conservation methods tailored to the materials used. Monuments are durable, reusable, repairable, and made of durable materials, which enables them to save enormous amounts of CO₂. Monuments and monument preservation are therefore perfect examples of "green culture." The consulting practice focuses on promoting the further, resource-efficient development of the entire building stock. A green energy supply and structurally efficient energy upgrades further optimize the positive ecological balance of monuments. A brochure has been published on energy efficiency in historic buildings. A



position paper, including a checklist for solar systems on historic buildings, is also available online.

In **cultural landscape conservation**, the focus is on preserving, maintaining, and developing the Rhineland cultural landscape. Some of the LVR's activities in this regard are presented below:

- In 2004, the LVR founded the **Rhineland Nature Parks Working Group** to create a platform for exchange and cooperation among the six Rhineland nature parks. Nature park projects are specifically promoted. Funding is provided for projects that focus on the preservation, maintenance, development, or communication of the Rhineland cultural landscape. Measures that address at least two of the following aspects are eligible for funding: inclusion; maintenance of the cultural landscape; strengthening local identity; recording cultural landscape elements
- using the LVR's own KuLaDig information system; environmental education; and initiation of educational partnerships.
- As part of the **LVR Cultural Landscape Network**—a cooperation between the LVR and the 19 biological stations in the Rhineland—the LVR has been implementing projects at the interface between cultural landscape maintenance and nature since 2007.
- The **annual conference** of the LVR Department of Cultural Landscape Conservation in September 2025 focused on climate change in the Bergisches Land region.
- With its **plant material funding**, the LVR supports measures to preserve and restore culturally and historically significant landscapes by providing plant material. The LVR focuses particularly on woodlands that shape the cultural landscape. Providing plant material in a targeted manner secures and supplements their stock.
- The LVR regional seed subsidy programme supports the enhancement and replanting of species-rich grasslands. Areas rich in species and flowers have become rare in the Rhineland. They once shaped the region's landscape and served as habitats for a wide variety of animals and plants. The targeted provision of regional seeds aims to restore this original state. A status report published in 2025 stated that LVR regional seed mixtures have been sown on





approximately 58.2 hectares to date. The areas receiving support cover 11 districts and nine independent cities in the Rhineland.

- The LVR is a member of the European Garden Heritage Network, a partnership of government

organisations, tourism agencies, non-profit associations, regional municipal associations, foundations, and other garden owners, with the aim of promoting the preservation of parks, gardens, and green spaces.

11.2 Cultural education and education for sustainable development in the cultural sector



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic objective 3.5: Cultural education

Cultural education is crucial to us and supports education for sustainable development (ESD). Together with our partners, we use our (content-based) programme in exhibitions and projects to reach people of all ages in an informal way, enabling them to understand global challenges and develop appropriate solutions. We bring sustainability issues into society through cultural work and provide impetus for change.

Operational goal 3.5.1:

Further development of the existing programme with two main areas of focus: 1. Review and presentation of the history of psychiatry with a focus on the involvement of clinics in medical crimes during the Nazi era 2.; Raising awareness of current challenges with a focus on destigmatizing mental illness.

Measures:

- **Lecture series on psychiatry and society:** Examination of the history of psychiatry with a special focus on the involvement of clinics in medical crimes during the Nazi era. The series began in 2025, with further events to follow.
- **Renovation of “House 5” at the LVR Clinic in Düren:** Creating a place to expand existing offerings (readings, lecture series, informational events, etc.) and establish a comprehensive permanent exhibition on history and the present in the long term. House 5 is to become the centre and hub of the “Route of Psychiatry” project.
- **Route of Psychiatric History (working title):** Psychiatric history is to be made accessible to interested parties along a “Route of Psychiatric History” with waypoints in the LVR clinics and other relevant memorial sites in the Rhineland. The project will be accompanied digitally by the establishment and ongoing expansion of a joint website for all LVR clinics and other places of remembrance on the subject of psychiatric history.

Operational goal 3.5.2:

By 2030, we will have realized eight LVR exhibitions and projects with a direct link to sustainability.

Measures

- **A digital journey through time in the Bergisch landscape – rediscovering Oberberg:** The cultural heritage of the region will be made visible to different target groups in an innovative way through augmented reality, and current topics related to the cultural and resource landscape will also be communicated. To address the cultural landscape appropriately, it is crucial to recognize and interpret its traces.

- **2025 conference “Cultural Landscape and Climate Change”:** The interdisciplinary conference will address several aspects related to the Bergisches Land region. Examples from other regions will demonstrate the comparability of corresponding effects and options for future action.
- **Exhibition pavilion “Waste and Waste Disposal in Roman Times”:** The LVR-APX project idea envisages a new permanent exhibition area integrated into the Archaeological Park. The exhibition aims to encourage visitors to reflect on their handling of waste and its disposal, and in a broader sense on the topics of the environment and environmental protection.
- **Permanent exhibition “Schwein gehabt!” (Lucky pig!):** The new permanent exhibition “Schwein gehabt!” at the LVR Open Air Museum in Lindlar explores the value of meat. The communal freezer facility focuses on six themes: animals, agriculture, home slaughtering, freezing, butchery, and consumption. Objects from the open-air museum’s collection and photographs by agricultural journalist Dr. Wolfgang Schiffer from the archive of everyday life at the LVR Institute for Regional History (LVR-ILR) trace the changes over the last 100 years. In addition, contemporary witnesses report on their memories of freezing communities, master sequences, and slaughter festivals. A media station also shows unique photographs by photographer Joachim Gies. He has documented the last remaining freezer houses in the region in their current state— active or repurposed—for the open-air museum.
- **Permanent exhibition “From Cow to Refrigerator”:** This new permanent exhibition at the LVR Open Air Museum in Lindlar focuses on the topic of milk. Dairy farming has shaped the Bergisches Land region for over 150 years. Production methods and sales mechanisms have changed significantly during this time. Self-sufficient farms have become high-performance companies, and dairies have become global corporations. The permanent exhibition traces these developments using selected photos, historical objects, and personal memories, including milking in the barn, buttering in the dairy, shopping in the corner store, and eating at the breakfast table.
- **Contributions to the Rhineland History Portal:** The Rhineland History Portal features articles on energy and environmental history.
- **Digital exhibition “We’ve never seen anything like this before!”:** This digital exhibition focuses on the 2021 flood disaster in Euskirchen on July 14, 2021. This event changed the lives of people in the towns and villages of the Euskirchen district, but also far beyond. The events of the night of the flood and the subsequent weeks and months have shaped the lives, thoughts, and actions of those affected.
- **“Must-Have” exhibition:** With over 400 exhibits, the exhibition at the LVR Industrial Museum Papiermühle Alte Dombach in Bergisch Gladbach takes a look at the development of consumption from pre-industrial times to the present day and raises questions about the future. Visitors are also invited to ask themselves questions and question their own consumer behavior. The exhibition is aimed at anyone who has ever lost their heart to a particularly beautiful object or who wants to take a critical look at the topic of consumption.

Education for sustainable development is also a central concern in the cultural sector. The LVR promotes numerous activities in this regard (see also Section 10.2 “Education for Sustainable Development”).

For example, the **“rheinforUm” series of events** in 2022 included a digital conference titled “Education for Sustainable Development in Museums – From Theory to Practice.” In cooperation with the LVR Open Air Museum Lindlar and the ESD specialist group of the Federal Association of Museum Education (Bundesverband Museumspädagogik e.V.), the opportunities and challenges of museum education and communication in the field of sustainability were discussed (other events dealt with topics such as “Recognizing safety risks, preventing damage scenarios,” “Introduction to working with the Cultural Property Safety Guide,” “Start with a plan, continue in a structured manner: For (even) more inclusion in museums,” and “Museums and right-wing populist interventions”). In 2025, the APXplore magazine of the LVR-APX was presented. This is a building ensemble that combines conservation standards, energy efficiency, and diverse usage requirements in a remarkable way.

As part of the **“[f]ocus auf...” event series**, digital events are offered swiftly address urgent information needs and current issues for museums in the Rhineland. Between December 2022 and March 2023, three events took place, addressing energy conservation, emergency preparedness, and sustainability management in museums.

In 2022, the LVR launched the **digital platform “kultur-klima”** in cooperation with the Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe and the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia. The online platform provides information and networking opportunities for cultural institutions and creative artists amid the energy price crisis. In particular, the platform served as the central digital entry point for information and applications for funding from the federal government’s “Kulturfonds Energie” (Culture Fund for Energy) and additional aid from the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Several consultation and exchange events have been

held since then. In the meantime, a concept for joint continuation and thematic expansion into the field of sustainability has been developed, and the project has been extended until 2027.

The interdisciplinary LVR project **“Communication Strategies in the Structural Change of the Rhenish Lignite Mining Area”** integrates current research questions on how society is dealing with the challenge of climate change in the specific context of the phase-out of lignite mining and coal-fired power generation. Communication offerings such as the bookable traveling exhibition “Living with the Hole” and the participatory collection of memorabilia and stories address sustainability aspects in the use of materials and digital elements. In September 2025, an interim report was published on the development of the LVR initiative for cultural accompaniment of structural change in the Rhenish lignite mining area. The temporary project has been extended until 2026.

The contractual task “Bildungspartner NRW” (Education Partner North Rhine-Westphalia) involves the LVR Centre for Media and Education coordinating collaborations between schools and municipal educational and cultural institutions. The “Nature and School” education partnership, in particular, is fundamentally focused on education for sustainable development.

In 2023, the LVR participated in NRW KULTURsekretariat’s “Kommunale Kultur und Nachhaltigkeit” (Municipal Culture and Sustainability) programme. The initiative was developed in collaboration with the Sustainability Network North Rhine-Westphalia



e. V. (LAG 21 NRW) and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment, and Energy gGmbH. The objectives were to empower knowledge regarding municipal sustainability, promote intra-municipal cooperation, and pool resources through co-creation in projects. In 2023, the programme comprised four workshops and three moderated online consultations. A schedule and action plan were developed for the further development of the projects conceived in the workshops, with a focus on inter-municipal transferability. For the project “Cir-cular.Culture,” which deals with material sharing, a funding application was submitted in 2025 to the ERDF programme Circular Economy – Circular Ci-ties.NRW (see Section 16.1).

The LVR Open Air Museum Lindlar has pursued a holistic ecological approach since its foundation in 1986. Ecology plays a central role to the museum’s core tasks, such as exhibitions and the educational programme. This focus is reflected in popular large-scale events (e.g., Textile Day, Farmers’ Market, Orchard Festival) and Garden Days. In the museum buildings, the museum presents exhibitions such as “Textile Paths,” “Climate-Forest-Wood,” and the photo exhibition “Shadow Worlds.” The ecological education programme includes seminars and educational projects such as “ERNA: Practical Building Blocks for Nutrition and Sustainability,” as well as museum education programmes with an ecological or sustainable focus, publications (e.g., on resource-efficient construction), and specialist symposia.

For several years, the LVR Industrial Museum has increasingly focused on how sustainability can be programmatically and structurally anchored in museum work across all seven locations. For example, ecological issues of the industrial age are to be integrated into the new permanent exhibitions at the Bergisch Gladbach, Engelskirchen, Oberhausen, and Ratingen locations. Numerous special exhibitions and events on the topic have been organised, including the current exhibition “Must-have,” which examines the history and future of consumption and will be on display in Bergisch Gladbach until December 2025.

Since mid-2023, the LVR Industrial Museum has been part of the nationwide BildungKlima-plus-56 network. New concepts for sustainability and climate education in museum pedagogy have been developed as part of this joint project. Educational institutions throughout Germany are collaborating to promote climate protection and a sustainable society. Three locations of the LVR Industrial Museum focused more on the topic of climate education in 2024. To gain an overview of the effectiveness of operational ecological measures (energy consumption, waste disposal) and raise awareness, climate assessments were conducted at the Ratingen site as part of a pilot programme for CO₂ calculators. Structurally, a cross-functional working group was established to develop strategies and guidelines, among other tasks. There are also plans to operate a café and shop selling sustainable products.

The consumption of textiles is being addressed in several museums through upcycling workshops, clothing swaps, and guided tours focused on fast fashion.

Several museums are addressing sustainability through special exhibitions. The Max Ernst Museum of the LVR in Brühl addressed the topic of “sustainability and ecology” in its special exhibition “Surreal Futures” (until January 2024) and in the accompanying programme. For example, the theme “Transforming Landscape” explicitly addressed issues of ecology and the Anthropocene. The exhibition organisation also considered sustainability aspects: instead of costly art transports, the artworks were created on site.

In 2023, the **LVR-Niederrheinmuseum Wesel** presented the **special exhibition “Small Stones – Big Impact.” Gravel Turnaround in the Lower Rhine Region!?** The exhibition looked at the consequences of gravel extraction and considered alternative building materials. In 2025, the LVR-Niederrheinmuseum Wesel opened its new permanent exhibition, “Living with Water.” Components from existing exhibitions were reused for this purpose, including partition walls and fixtures. The aspect of sustainable exhibition realization is playing an increasingly important role, especially for rapidly

changing temporary exhibitions. In the future, special exhibitions will run for up to nine months to improve the cost-benefit ratio for materials and human resources.

At the LVR-Landesmuseum Bonn, the “Museum of the Future” research internship programme has been addressing the topic of sustainability since 2023. A permanent participatory area has been created in the new permanent exhibition for this purpose. Visitors can engage in conversation with museum staff and each other. The “Museum of the Future” is conceived as a think tank, a forum for debate, and a driving force for innovative museum concepts. Here, visitors’ opinions and ideas are solicited and linked to educational elements for sustainable development.



11.3 Promoting sustainability, participation, and democracy in cultural work



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic goal 3.3: Participation and involvement

We enable everyone to access art and culture and offer them the opportunity to actively participate in the artistic process and cultural events.

Operational objective 3.3.1:

By 2030, the LVR will focus on participation and cultural involvement in the design of at least seven educational and cultural programmes.

Measures:

- **LEADER cooperation project “Recording historical cultural landscapes”:** Participatory citizen science project. Funding (LEADER) has been applied for.
- **City, Country, River – Days of the Rhineland Landscape:** Participatory knowledge transfer and teaching of practical methods for sustainable lifestyles. Networking with local actors from the fields of nature conservation and environmental protection, cultural heritage, and regional history. Promotion of regional identity. Special focus on inclusion.
- **Discoveries in ClickRhein:** Low-threshold (barrier-free) discoveries in the context of sustainability and environmental protection on ClickRhein, e.g., nature conservation, nature trails, and Metabolon.
- **Project “Supra-municipal associations and their significance for the history of democracy after 1945”:** Research and education project on the topic of “ Super-municipal associations and their significance for the history of democracy after 1945” with the involvement of LVR staff.
- **Project and exhibition area “ArchaeoLab”:** Design of a participatory project and exhibition area in the new permanent exhibition of the LVR-LMB.
- **Audience development strategy:** The Max Ernst Museum Brühl of the LVR would like to open itself up to new visitor groups and specifically target communities that have not previously been part of the museum’s visitor groups. To this end, a two-year project will include the design and implementation of a comprehensive visitor survey and the development of an audience development strategy to identify barriers that prevent visits.

Strategic goal 3.4: Strengthening democracy

Our cultural offerings actively contribute to a strong democracy and empower people to be aware of their rights and to defend and actively protect them.

Operational goal 3.4.1:

With the sustainability strategy coming into force, all LVR employees will be offered training on how to deal with anti-democratic tendencies by 2030.

Measures:

- **Employee training courses on “The history and significance of local self-government as an essential prerequisite for democracy”:** Training courses for employees on this theme are an essential prerequisite for democracy.
- **Employee training course “Democracy education and anti-Semitism”:** Employee training courses on democracy education and dealing with anti-Semitism.

Operational goal 3.4.2:

By 2030, the LVR will implement at least eight measures to empower people to recognize anti-democratic ideologies and stand up for human rights.

Measures:

- **Discoveries on ClickRhein:** Discoveries and posts on the movements, stories, and spaces of marginalized groups, e.g., LGBTQ history and places of Jewish life.
- **Content on the history and promotion of democracy on LVR-ILR portals:** Expansion of our own portals with content on the history and promotion of democracy.
- **Permanent exhibition “Spielräume Demokratie” (Democracy’s Scope):** In the new permanent exhibition at the LVR Industrial Museum Hendrichs Drop Forge in Solingen, visitors encounter today’s democracy. They learn about how democracy enables us to participate in society, shape it, and live together.
- **Research and exhibition project “Between Dictatorship and Democracy. Clothing Behavior between 1945 and 1968”:** A research and exhibition project at the Cromford Textile Factory in Ratingen.
- **Migration exhibition:** An exhibition at the Solingen Industrial Museum.
- **Democracy and Diversity Workshop:** Workshop for secondary schools, asking, do young people feel they are taken seriously when it comes to social and political issues? What does democracy have to offer?
- **Outreach project “MiQua...op Jöck!”:** The mobile interactive museum “MiQua...op Jöck!” presents insights into, and often first contacts with Jewish history and the current diversity of Jewish life, with its variant “Jewish Life in Germany.” The mobile museum will visit schools and youth facilities. In teams, participants in “MiQua...op Jöck! City in the Middle Ages” explore aspects of coexistence in Cologne’s history. “MiQua...op Jöck! Living Worlds on the Limes” focuses on the Roman province of Lower Germania and the sustainable communication of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lower Germanic Limes in the Rhineland.
- **Education Partner Congress:** “There is another way. Dealing with difference as a topic of extra-curricular learning”: This Education Partner Congress on November 12, 2025, featured a keynote speech followed by a panel discussion and workshops and seminars on topics such as democracy education, anti-discrimination work, anti-Semitism prevention, inclusion, and queerness.

In addition, other specific aspects of sustainable development are being implemented in the LVR’s museums and cultural institutions.

To achieve its sustainability goals, the LVR Department of Culture has been implementing measures to establish a sustainability management system since 2022. These measures include the Sustainability Working Group, founded in 2023 and meeting regularly ever since. In 2023, a department employee participated in the “Transformation Manager for Sustainable Culture” training course offered by the Action Network for Sustainability. Ensuring the transfer of knowledge from training courses such as this one is an important function of the Sustainability Working Group.

“Transformation Manager for Sustainable Culture” training course offered by the Action Network for Sustainability

Year	2021	2022	2023
Number	0	0	1

Number of employees in the Department of Culture and Landscape Conservation who participated in the above-mentioned training course.

Source: Rhineland Regional Council

Knowledge acquisition forms the basis for structured sustainability management and is therefore at the beginning of the transformation process. This knowledge must be permanently available within the organization and anchored locally. Hence, it is necessary to provide training and continuing education programs tailored to culture-specific issues, enabling employees in the departments to plan and implement measures realistically and effectively. Low participation rates indicate that sustainable culture training has yet to achieve full coverage across Department 9’s 20 museums and cultural institutions.

There is also a need to embed sustainability issues in the departments, with the LVR Industrial Museum, for example, already establishing a working group on the topic, and other field offices interested in doing likewise. The LVR Open Air Museum in Lindlar already has a **staff position dedicated to ecology**. The focus is on “communication, didactics, Agenda 2030, seminars” and “biodiversity, gardens, and agriculture.” The LVR Open Air Museum in Kommern employs a **consultant for ecology and cultural landscape**. Since 2024, the outreach department at the LVR Industrial Museum has included a dedicated consultant responsible for this primary focus area.

The aim is to permanently anchor the necessary expertise in the Department of Culture and Landscape Conservation through further training, peer-to-peer learning, and the employment of specialist staff. To qualify and deploy existing staff for this ongoing task, sufficient time must be made available, and this necessitates a reduction in other tasks (task review). Furthermore, there is a need for skilled personnel for special tasks, which can only be met by hiring new staff.

In addition to energy use in the museum sector, guest mobility is responsible for the largest CO₂ emissions. For this reason, the LVR is interested in creating incentives for the 1.14 million visitors to travel sustainably (see topic area Sustainable Mobility). To promote the use of local public transport, the LVR Open Air Museum in Kommern offers **public transport discount tickets** in a pilot project, involving reduced admission tickets for visitors arriving by public transport. In the future, in addition to greater visibility in the “slow tourism” sector, the aim is to improve connections to public transport (e.g., by aligning bus schedules with museums’ opening hours). However, individual museums are currently reaching their limits in coordinating with transport associations.

In the area of fleet management for LVR cultural institutions, the existing vehicle fleets are gradually being converted to **electric cars** (e.g., at the LVR Archaeological Park Xanten with its Roman Museum).

To conserve resources, many museums are working to significantly increase the **proportion of reusable elements**.

As part of the Digital Agenda, **measures for the sustainable digitization** of the Rhineland's cultural heritage are being implemented. All measures are to be realized and implemented in a resource-efficient manner—the aspect of sustainable digitization is enshrined in the agenda as one of five key objectives.

To reduce energy consumption in cultural institutions, a gradual conversion to energy-saving **LED lighting** and the optimization of lighting control systems have been implemented.

The aim is for LVR cultural institutions to become even more effective in their efforts to conserve resources in the future through the priority implementation of further resource-saving measures in their operations (in particular photovoltaic systems, heat pump technology, e-charging stations for bicycles and cars, LED lighting, and the use of electric vehicles and tools), thereby credibly underlining their programmatic content.

Regarding social sustainability goals, the LVR is committed to cultural participation for all people. To avoid excluding or disadvantaging anyone, low-threshold pricing is always ensured. Since 2007, the LVR has offered **free admission** to its museums to people with disabilities who receive integration assistance, as well as to one accompanying person. With this offer, the LVR aims to promote cultural participation among people with disabilities and thus create a cultural offering with a threshold as low as possible for everyone. At the end of 2024, the time limit on this offer was lifted, and it was extended indefinitely. Children and young people under 18 also generally have free admission to LVR museums. In addition, all LVR museums have one free admission day per month for everyone.

The “LVR Mobility Fund,” implemented in 2021, enables schools, kindergartens, and daycare centres in the LVR association area to apply for reimbursement of travel costs to LVR museums and partner museums in the LVR Cultural Heritage Network.



Almost all LVR museums have been awarded the **“Travel for All” certificate** to promote accessibility, providing people with disabilities with important guidance for a visit that is as self-determined as possible.

The LVR Max Ernst Museum Brühl is increasingly opening up to new visitor groups and specifically targeting communities that have not previously been part of its audience. In addition to developing a comprehensive **audience development** strategy, the museum is working on revising its permanent exhibition to make it more participatory and inclusive.

A programme to cover the costs of sign language interpretation for guided tours or other offerings at LVR museums has been launched to improve cultural participation for people who communicate in sign language.

The LVR Department of Culture is also a member of the **Diversity Round Table NRW**, which sees itself as a learning platform for dialogue, knowledge gathering, and knowledge generation on the subject of diversity and deals with current developments in this area.

Overall, there is great interest within the LVR in strengthening cultural participation opportunities for all people by further improving the accessibility of cultural venues for a diverse audience.

Field of action

12 Health



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Health services	Activities (selection) • Inpatient-equivalent psychiatric treatment • Model project “DynaLIVE” • Recovery support in the LVR hospital network • Language and integration mediation • “Healing Architecture” construction program • Curamenta patient portal • Therapeutic services at special schools • Use of LVR sports facilities by local clubs and sports groups
Employee health	Activities (selection) • Occupational health management • Measures in the area of “health and prevention” Indicator • Absenteeism rate in the LVR

12.1 Health services



In the area of healthcare, the LVR, as a supra-municipal association, provides central services for the health of people in the Rhineland.

Its core tasks include:

- Operation of nine psychiatric clinics and one orthopedic clinic within the LVR clinic network
- Enforcement of forensic commitment on behalf of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia
- Provision of therapeutic services for pupils in LVR special schools.



The LVR Clinic Network currently comprises nine psychiatric clinics and one orthopedic clinic, with around 6,000 inpatient and day-clinic treatment and care places. Approximately 150,000 patients are treated there annually. The treatment services offered by the LVR psychiatric clinics cover a wide range of support for children, adolescents, adults, and elderly people with mental illness. Various mental illnesses are treated, including psychosis, anxiety, depression, addiction, and dementia. In addition to outpatient, day care, and inpatient psychiatric care, the services offered throughout the Rhineland also include neurological and orthopedic care.

To further develop needs-based and person-centred psychiatry, ward-equivalent psychiatric treatment has been established in all LVR clinics. This form of treatment can be used for medically eligible patients who require psychiatric hospitalization but can receive equivalent care within their home environment instead of a traditional inpatient facility. Inpatient-equivalent psychiatric treatment has been available since 2018, following the passing of the “Act on the Further Development of Care and Remuneration for Psychiatric and Psychosomatic Services.” The option will be made permanent as part of the consolidation process starting in 2024, once the necessary financing has been agreed upon with the health insurance companies.

A special model project is currently being tested at the LVR Clinic in Bonn. The “**DynaLIVE**” (Dynamic, Realistic, Integrative Care) **model project** offers improved treatment options tailored to patients’ needs. The central elements of the LVR Clinic Bonn model project are: 1. The expansion of the treatment spectrum to include forms of multi-professional outpatient intensive and complex treatment—so-called ward-independent services; 2. The improvement of transitions between the inpatient and outpatient sectors, ensuring the highest possible level of cross-sector treatment continuity; and 3. Making treatment more flexible and dynamic (“The intensity of treatment follows current needs”). By expanding and intensifying outpatient services, ensuring a high level of continuity of care after patients are discharged from inpatient treatment, and tailoring treatment as closely as possible to patients’ changing treatment needs, the aim is to smooth out gaps in care during the transition between the inpatient and outpatient sectors and avoid short-term, unplanned readmissions.

The LVR focuses on recovery support as a distinctive feature of treatment. Recovery supporters are people who have suffered from mental illness and undergone psychiatric treatment and now support patients in their recovery. This “peer support” in

the sense of recovery support is relatively new in the psychiatric care system in Germany. Recovery coaches can bring realistic, life-oriented, non-stigmatizing support to psychiatric care systems. The overarching goal is to strengthen patients' autonomy and personal responsibility. In LVR clinics, the use of recovery coaches in various treatment contexts has been successfully tested since 2015. To ensure continuity, the experiences were evaluated, and a framework concept was developed. The LVR association headquarters has also anchored the use of recovery coaches in its institutional target agreements. To recruit more people with experience of mental illness, the LVR clinic association plans to establish a curriculum-based training programme.

Many refugees and immigrants are treated in the LVR clinics, and intensive counseling is required as part of their aftercare. The language barriers that arise in this context can be significantly reduced by the support of language mediators. Since 2013, the work of language and integration mediators has been supported by a "Migration" funding programme run by the LVR hospital network. The target group for language and integration mediation is people with a history of immigration—particularly refugees—who suffer from a mental disorder and require accompanying psychosocial support during or after psychiatric-psychotherapeutic treatment or when accessing standard medical-psychiatric care. As this service is not yet a standard service covered by health insurance companies, the LVR's political representation provides budget funds to finance it. These funds are used for treatment in the LVR clinics (psychiatry as talking medicine).

To promote healing and recovery, the LVR Clinic Association has launched a construction programme called "Healing Architecture." Certain spatial conditions are considered conducive to health and positively affect psychiatric patients' experience. Patient-friendly hospital architecture promotes healing and recovery processes, offering orientation, security, and a pleasant atmosphere—for example, through innovative color and lighting concepts, novel materials, and open views. The brochure "Healing Architecture" presents construction



projects from the LVR clinics' building programme. These projects meet high standards in terms of operating costs, economy, and ecology, as well as in regard to buildings' life cycles, energy standards, and the use of renewable energies.

Together with other public institutions, the LVR offers the digital **patient portal Curamenta** – a portal for mental health that, in addition to the classic functionalities of a patient portal, enables secure communication with upstream and downstream service providers, relatives, and self-help groups, among other things. Since 2022, the portal has been making it easier for people with mental illnesses to access the psychiatric care system and helping to optimize the quality of treatment. Curamenta connects users and enables them to take advantage of digital services. Many functions are immediately available (e.g., search, information, and self-test functions).

The LVR also provides **therapeutic services in its special schools**. At its 19 LVR special schools with a "focus on physical and motor development," and at the LVR special schools with a "focus on vision" and a "focus on hearing and communication," the LVR employs therapeutic staff to ensure holistic support for students. The holistic support concept—consisting of education, therapy, and care—has proved effective over many years. Educators, therapists, and nursing staff work hand in hand to provide comprehensive, individualized support for students. Holistic support is established and implemented as a quality standard for the therapeutic services provided by LVR therapists at LVR special schools.

The LVR currently has 46 **sports facilities** at its special schools, which support students' physical

and mental health. The sports facilities include 16 swimming pools, a therapy pool, two gymnastics rooms, 26 gyms, and a sports field. Two gyms are also currently under construction or in the planning stage. In December 2023, the LVR's Policy Committee decided that the LVR schools' sports facilities should be made available again to the respective Rhineland municipalities for **use by local clubs and sports groups**. In particular, people with disabilities or other impairments should be given priority use.



12.2 Employee health



Promoting the health of its own employees is also a key concern for the LVR.

Against the backdrop of demographic change and the associated exacerbation of the shortage of skilled workers, as well as increasing private and professional demands, strategic **occupational health management** is becoming increasingly important for the LVR as an employer

To strengthen its employees' mental and physical health, LVR is implementing various measures in the area of "health and prevention." Motivated and healthy employees are the basis for a successful LVR. Against this backdrop, occupational health management, the company medical service, and social counseling offer health-promoting and preventive services. In providing these services, the

requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Occupational Safety Act are observed, and a wide range of health and counseling services are made available. The measures for employees regarding health protection are diverse (e.g., sports courses, "active breaks," an "employer assistance programme" in the form of a telephone counseling service for employees, flu vaccinations, mental health risk assessments, social counseling/assistance with occupational and personal psychosocial stress, and the provision of occupational and medical rehabilitation). The various structures offer a comprehensive range of measures across the entire association. All statutory and non-statutory measures are continuously developed, offered, evaluated, and adapted to new requirements as necessary.

Absenteeism rate at the LVR



Sickness-related absenteeism among LVR employees
Source: Rhineland Regional Council

To reduce illness-related absenteeism among LVR employees and promote the long-term health and well-being of the workforce, the LVR is continuously expanding its occupational health management measures. One example is the recent introduction of a counseling service for all employees—the LVR EAP (Employee Assistance Program). This program offers comprehensive support for a wide range of problems, whether professional or personal, and promotes mental well-being. The following figure provides an overview of the absenteeism rates at the LVR (calculated as the sum of all days of absence x 100/365 x number of employees). The development from 2013 to 2023 is shown as a percentage for short-term, medium-term, and long-term illnesses.

Field of action

13 Building and housing



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Sustainable and inclusive construction	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “structural sustainability”: • Implementation of the LVR checklist for ecological construction in all construction projects • Use of sustainable and pollutant-free building materials in new buildings and major renovations • Expansion of renewable energies for heating and cooling in new buildings and renovations Activities (selection) • LVR checklist for ecological construction with standards, e.g., for green roofs, timber construction, material ecology of building materials • Implementation of cradle-to-cradle principles in construction projects • Sustainability concept and certification for the new LVR building • Purchase of certified green electricity • Passive house standard for new construction projects • Implementation of energy concepts with the aim of avoiding the use of fossil fuels • Implementation of accessibility concepts • Membership in the German Sustainable Building Council • Membership in the “Cradle to Cradle Regions” network
Support in the area of housing	Activities (selection) • Promotion of “outpatient” support for housing as part of integration assistance • Inventory and needs assessment of residential facilities for children and young people with disabilities in North Rhine-Westphalia • Analysis of real estate in the LVR association for WohnenPlusLeben • Further development of assistance for the homeless • “More inclusive housing for LVR employees” Indicator • Outpatient treatment rate

13.1 Sustainable and inclusive construction



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic goal 4.4: Structural sustainability

We take relevant sustainability aspects into account in the planning, construction, operation, and proactive maintenance of our buildings and infrastructure in order to protect resources.

Operational objective 4.4.1:

The LVR checklist for ecological construction will be consistently implemented across all construction projects with immediate effect.

Measures:

- **Verification of compliance with the requirements of the LVR checklist for ecological construction as part of construction finance controlling:** Verification for all construction projects costing €100,000 or more as part of construction finance controlling.
- **Regular training opportunities for employees in the construction and building maintenance sector:** Organisation of annual training opportunities on topics related to sustainable construction.

Operational objective 4.4.2:

All new LVR buildings and major renovation projects are planned and implemented so that preference is given to building materials that are reusable, separable by type, and free of harmful substances.

Measures:

- **Review of the possible reuse of building materials in school renovation measures by 2035:** For construction measures within the school renovation programme for 2024–2035, a review will be conducted prior to the start of each renovation measure to determine whether materials can be reused.
- **Development of a concept for implementing cradle-to-cradle principles in school renovation projects by 2035:** A project-specific concept will be developed for construction projects within the school renovation programme for the years 2024–2035.
- **Creation of material passports for new construction projects:** These will be created for the materials used in the building with immediate effect.

Operational goal 4.4.3:

For new buildings and renovation projects, heating and cooling with renewable energies will be steadily increased by 2045.

Measures:

- **Time and action plan for the climate-neutral realignment of the clinics' heat supply by the end of 2026:** Development of a time and action plan for the climate-neutral realignment of the clinics' heat supply.
- **Creation of energy concepts for the use of renewable energies in school renovation measures by 2035:** For construction measures within the framework of the school renovation programme for the years 2024-2035, energy and heat supply concepts will be implemented with the aim of “avoiding the use of fossil fuels” (geothermal energy, heat pumps, biogenic liquefied gas).

The LVR has been actively promoting sustainable construction methods for many years. For the LVR, sustainable construction means integrating social, ecological, and economic factors into all decisions. To network across regions in this area and spread the word beyond the association, the LVR has been **an active member of the German Sustainable Building Council** (Europe's largest network for sustainable construction) since 2010 and **a member of the “Cradle to Cradle Regions” network** since 2021—a network that aims to promote a consistent circular economy as a holistic model.

Regulatory standards for green building have a long tradition at the LVR. As early as 1986, a decision was made to incorporate green building principles into

all LVR construction projects. Self-imposed standards for green and economical building were made mandatory for all LVR construction projects and are continuously updated. In 2022, a revised version of the **LVR checklist for ecological construction** was approved by the government (see Figure 7). The checklist contains self-imposed planning and construction standards that must be considered in all new construction and renovation projects undertaken by the LVR and are part of every building application. The new version incorporates relevant political decisions—for example, on the implementation of the cradle-to-cradle concept (see below), waste prevention, and the expansion of electromobility. The topics of climate protection and climate impact adaptation were also given greater emphasis.

Goal No.	Goal
1	Sustainability criteria in the planning process
	Consideration of sustainability criteria at the beginning of planning and during site selection
2	Climate protection
	Mitigation of climate change: Climate neutrality/positivity in operation
	Mitigation of climate change: Climate neutrality/positivity in construction
3	Adaptation to the consequences of unavoidable climate change
	Consideration of the consequences of unavoidable climate change in planning, e.g., extreme weather events
4	Implementation of Cradle to Cradle principles
	Consideration of planning goals for the implementation of the Cradle to Cradle concept
5	Use of healthy materials
	Pollutant-free, environmentally friendly materials
	Responsible use of resources
	Good indoor and outdoor air quality
6	Material cycle, reuse
	Circular economy
	Recyclability and deconstructability
	Dismantling and reuse
	Use of secondary raw materials
7	Use of renewable energy, energy efficiency
	Use of renewable energy
	Energy efficiency: Structural solutions such as cubature or external sun protection, low tech
	Energy efficiency: Lighting
	Energy efficiency: Ventilation technology
	Energy efficiency: Water / sanitary technology
	Energy efficiency: Heating technology
8	Responsible water use, soil protection
	Closing water cycles: Drinking water, gray water, rainwater
	Water footprint: Reduction of water consumption
9	Promotion of diversity, social responsibility
	High quality of stay/comfort requirements
	Promotion of biodiversity: Outdoor facilities
	Promotion of biodiversity: Buildings
	Promotion of technical diversity (e.g., flexible and resilient systems)
	Future-oriented mobility concept

Figure 7: LVR checklist for ecological construction – overarching goals, © LVR

For example, the feasibility study for timber construction and green roofs includes the standards specified in the LVR checklist for ecological construction.

Wood is becoming an increasingly important raw material because, as a naturally renewable resource, it has a very high CO₂ storage capacity and therefore an optimal ecological balance. Hence, in recent years, the LVR has investigated the possibilities of timber construction in suitable projects and, within the scope of technical and building law possibilities, has implemented various projects using timber construction or timber hybrid construction (the LVR's new construction projects completed using timber construction include, for example, a school building for the LVR David Ludwig Bloch School in Essen, a special needs kindergarten at the LVR Johann Joseph Gronewald School in Cologne, and four boarding school buildings for the LVR Max Ernst School in Euskirchen). The LVR began greening its buildings' roofs in 1995 and has made it mandatory to assess the suitability of green roofs for building renovations and new construction. Since 1995, more than 30 new construction and renovation projects with green roofs have been planned and carried out. For this long-standing commitment and consistent use of green roofs, the LVR was a winner in the "Climate Adaptation in Municipalities" category in the 2017 Climate-Active Municipality competition organised by the Federal Ministry for the Environment and the German Institute for Urban Studies.

In the 2022 update of the LVR checklist for ecological construction, the requirements for the material



health of building and construction materials were further tightened and expanded, as the selection of environmentally friendly, low-emission materials contributes to improving indoor air quality and limits renovation-related pollutant risks. In addition to selecting low-emission materials, indoor air quality is measured after construction is complete.

Regarding the LVR's association-wide construction projects, specific policy decisions have also been adopted in recent years. In 2019, for example, the Rhineland Regional Assembly decided that future LVR construction projects throughout the association should be based on the principles of the **"Cradle to Cradle" concept**. "Cradle to Cradle" aims to ensure that all products are designed according to the principle of a potentially infinite circular economy. Circular construction, which focuses on reuse and recycling, offers potential for reducing waste and CO₂ emissions. In addition to this goal of recurring cycles, the concept encompasses principles such as actively supporting diversity and using renewable energies. The aim is to eliminate the use of fossil fuels or nuclear power and to use only renewable energy to operate buildings or facilities.

Various model projects at the LVR have taken the principles of the circular economy into account and integrated corresponding measures into their planning (this includes the new construction of the LVR building on Ottoplatz—see below for details). The insights from the model projects are to be integrated into an overall strategic concept for all future LVR construction projects. In view of ongoing developments, the LVR administration is continuously expanding its knowledge. Internal guidelines and initial recommendations for implementation were developed within the framework of a working group on circular economy.

In 2008, it was decided to include **solar thermal or photovoltaic systems** as standard in upcoming new buildings and in the renovation of existing buildings. The objective was included in the LVR checklist for ecological construction and has been pursued in LVR construction projects ever since.

Also in 2008, a political decision was made to

reduce CO₂ emissions by purchasing certified green electricity and introducing the passive house standard for new construction projects. Since 2008, four day-clinics, six school buildings, four gymnasiums, a daycare centre, and eight ward buildings have been built to the passive house standard.

For the **construction of the new LVR building** in Cologne-Deutz, the LVR is aiming for building certification in accordance with the German Sustainable Building Council's criteria for the first time. In January 2025, the shell construction work for the LVR building began. The new building is the LVR's largest construction project and a flagship for implementing high sustainability standards. The LVR building is expected to create approximately 1,500 jobs for LVR central administration employees. A key aspect of the design for the high-rise building (by the Aachen-based firm kadawittfeldarchitektur) is the future-oriented sustainability concept, which is set to establish new standards at the LVR. The aim is for the new building to achieve the highest "platinum" rating for office and administrative buildings. The

first milestone, with a pre-certificate at the highest award level, has already been achieved. In addition, materials and construction methods are being examined with respect to their life cycles and, where possible and economically viable, used in accordance with circular construction criteria. In addition to supporting the building certification process, a specialist planner for sustainable construction has developed a comprehensive concept based on "cradle to cradle" principles.

In the context of the "Together in Diversity" action plan (see Social Justice section), the LVR has also set itself the goal of systematically improving its properties' accessibility. The overarching goal is to make the buildings fully accessible and usable for everyone, regardless of their personal situation. An **accessibility concept** has long been an integral part of the planning process for all new construction projects and major renovation projects undertaken by the LVR. A concept and an internal working aid entitled "Barrier-free construction," including a checklist, are also available for this purpose.

13.2 Support in the area of housing



Supporting people with disabilities in the area of housing is one of the LVR's core tasks for the people of the Rhineland:

- As the provider of integration assistance, the LVR finances services to support adults with disabilities.
- As a provider of integration assistance services, the LVR supports children and young people with (impending) disabilities who receive 24-hour support in a facility or in foster families.
- Through the Verbund für WohnenPlusLeben (formerly LVR-Verbund Heilpädagogische Hilfen und Abteilungen für Soziale Rehabilitation in den LVR-Kliniken für Psychiatrie), the LVR provides housing support services. The services range from outpatient assisted living and specialized housing to day structuring and leisure activities.
- The LVR is responsible for providing assistance to homeless people (if the person in need of assistance is under 65).
- “Bauen für Menschen GmbH” is a housing company sponsored by the LVR.

People with disabilities who are entitled to integration assistance should be able to decide how, with whom, and where they want to live, whether alone, as a couple, or in a shared apartment. As part of its integration assistance, the LVR finances appropriate services to support adults who need integration assistance in their homes or special forms of housing. For many years, the LVR has been committed to ensuring that as many people as possible receive at-home support and are not dependent on specialized housing. The 2024 regionalized data report on integration assistance services in the LVR's member organisations shows that the number of people with disabilities living in their own homes outside special

forms of housing continues to rise. As of December 31, 2024, seven out of ten beneficiaries of assistance services in the LVR area were living independently in their own homes outside of specialized housing (see indicator: outpatient rate). In the Rhineland, the proportion of people receiving at-home support is thus more than 10% above the national average.

Outpatient rate

Year	2013	2018	2023
Percent	58,1	64,1	69,7
Number	29.183	37.639	45.659

Proportion of outpatient assisted living arrangements in all assisted living arrangements for people with disabilities

Source: Rhineland Regional Council

The LVR provides assistance services to people with disabilities who live in their own homes. This form of support enables a maximum degree of self-determination. The forms of support can, for example, relate to handling money, planning leisure activities, healthy nutrition, or searching for suitable jobs. The outpatient care rate describes the proportion of outpatient assisted living arrangements among all assisted living arrangements for people with disabilities. In the LVR area, the figure was 69.7% in 2023. The number of people with disabilities who live in their own homes outside of special living arrangements has continued to rise in the LVR area: in 2023, it rose from 44,785 to 45,659 people compared to the previous year. In the period between 2018 and 2023, the number of people eligible for benefits rose by around 21%, or 8,020 people.

In 2023, the LVR published a “Survey of the current situation and needs of residential facilities for children and young people with disabilities in North Rhine-Westphalia.” As the provider of integration assistance, the LVR is obliged to maintain structural planning as part of its mandate to ensure provision. In general, the needs of those entitled to benefits should be met close to their place of residence, and the benefits should be socially oriented. To carry out such planning, a systematically collected database is required. A key finding of the inventory and needs assessment was that regional gaps in provision could not be identified and that the deployment of skilled workers is determined by person-centred needs and the reliability of social work services.

To directly implement the recommendations for action for target groups with special needs, the LVR and the Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe established a regularly meeting advisory working group or expert commission to consider the topic of “challenging behavior and protection against violence in residential facilities for children and young people with disabilities.” The aim is to recommend framework conditions for violence prevention.

The LVR association for WohnenPlusLeben offers numerous support services for adults with intellectual and psychological disabilities (e.g., specialized housing, assisted living in their own homes, assisted shared accommodation, short-term accommodation, curative education centres, and outpatient care). In 2023, all properties used as special forms of housing were reanalysed and reevaluated. In addition to the criterion of accessibility, for the first time, a systematic examination was conducted to determine whether the properties are suitable for people with cognitive impairments and high to very high, complex support needs arising primarily from additional mental and/or physical impairments and highly challenging behaviors. To this end, appropriate evaluation criteria were derived. The recommendations of the so-called “Garbrecht

Commission” were considered. On this basis, target- and property-specific planning geared to the target group is to be developed, taking into account comprehensive accessibility and other requirements.

The LVR not only supports people with disabilities—as part of its homeless assistance programme, it also provides help to people in particularly difficult social circumstances. The number of homeless people has risen significantly in recent years. Benefits under Section 67 of SGB XII (Social Security Code XII) are available to those whose living circumstances are associated with social difficulties, and this includes outpatient and inpatient support services for housing. In recent years, the LVR has focused on how additional preventive measures to prevent homelessness can be designed throughout the Rhineland and on measures to better address the specific situation and needs of women with particular social difficulties.

The LVR has also set a goal of offering **more inclusive housing for its employees**. In 2019, the Rhineland Regional Assembly commissioned the administration to develop concepts for expanding the housing supply for LVR employees. The administration then examined the options with the “Bauen für Menschen GmbH” (Building for People Ltd.) management team and decided the company would offer more inclusive housing for employees with disabilities who work for the LVR. By expanding occupancy rights, the LVR is also strengthening its attractiveness as an employer.



Themenfeld

14 Decent work



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Decent work for people with disabilities	Activities • LVR Inclusion Office • Promotion of inclusive businesses • Services to promote participation in working life as part of integration assistance • “Budget for work” and “budget for training” • Further development of services for participation in working life by the LVR as the provider of integration assistance • Model project “From company-integrated workplace to employment subject to social insurance contributions” • Joint initiative to strengthen inclusion in the labor market of North Rhine-Westphalia Indikatoren • Transition to the general labor market • Company-integrated workplaces • Budget for work • Jobs in inclusive companies
Decent work in the lvr administration	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “Demographic change and digitalization”: • Continuous training and further education for LVR employees to promote lifelong learning • Promotion of digital transformation by strengthening the digital skills of LVR employees Activities • Measures for recruiting, retaining, and developing personnel • Concept “Talented retirees – too young for retirement” • Employment opportunities for people with (severe) disabilities Indikatoren • Compensation levy • Proportion of severely disabled persons at the LVR

14.1 Decent work for people with disabilities



Supporting people with disabilities in participating in working life is one of the core tasks of the LVR for the people of the Rhineland:

- As the provider of integration assistance, the LVR provides services to enable people with disabilities to participate in work (e.g., financing employment in WfbM, “budget for work,” “budget for training,” and “other service providers”).
- As the provider of the Inclusion Office, the LVR is responsible for the participation of severely disabled people and people of equivalent status in the general labour market.

The LVR Inclusion Office offers various support services for employers and people with severe disabilities and works with various partners. The annual reports of the LVR Inclusion Office document data and facts on the employment of people with severe disabilities in the general labour market, particularly in the Rhineland, and describe the Inclusion Office’s diverse activities. The support services offered by the Inclusion Office include, for example, financial assistance for the creation of jobs and training places, disability-friendly workplace design, and exceptional burdens during employment. Various integration services operate in the

Rhineland on behalf of the LVR Inclusion Office. An integration service can provide counseling and psychosocial support in the event of conflicts that could jeopardize the employment relationship. The

integration services are also the point of contact for rehabilitation or reintegration into the work process. Furthermore, they support the placement of students in the general labour market and the transition of employees from a workshop for people with disabilities to the general labour market.

Advice on workplace design issues is also available from the technical advisors at the LVR Inclusion Office. In addition, specialist advisors at the chambers of crafts and chambers of industry and commerce are available as contact persons, for example, the “Uniform Contact Points for Employers (EAA)”. The Inclusion Office supports the areas of prevention, workplace integration management, and negotiations on inclusion agreements by offering training, advice, and mediation services, as well as by awarding bonuses.



Another of the LVR Inclusion Office’s tasks is to promote inclusive companies. These are companies in the general labour market that have taken on a social mission in addition to their economic activities: they employ, qualify, or place severely disabled people who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. At the end of 2023, there were 152 recognized inclusive companies in the Rhineland. Since the end of 2001, 3,761 jobs have been created, 1,943 of which are for employees in the special target group of inclusive companies.

As the largest provider of integration assistance in Germany, the LVR also offers support for participation in working life. The LVR provides services to enable people with disabilities to participate in work, in particular by financing employment in workshops for disabled people as part of integration assistance, but also through new integration assistance services such as the “Budget for Work” and “Other Service Providers,” as well as the state-specific “LVR Budget for Work.” At the end of 2023, the LVR provided funding for 34,403 individuals to work in specialized workshops for people with disabilities. A total of 312 beneficiaries in the LVR area have taken advantage of the support provided under the new statutory budget for work. A further 76 received benefits under the “LVR Budget for Work – Inclusion Campaign” programme.

Budget for Work

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number	141	152	175	276	312

Number of people with a work budget
Source: Rhineland Regional Council

An important goal of the new Federal Participation Act (BTHG) is to provide better support for people with disabilities in working life and to strengthen their opportunities on the labor market. The “LVR Budget for Work – Inclusion Initiative” provides new and existing statutory benefits to support the transition into work and training in the general labor market, for employers and people with disabilities, from a single source. The indicator provides information on the number of people who have taken advantage of the budget for work. Over time, the corresponding number of people has risen continuously (except for 312 people in 2023).

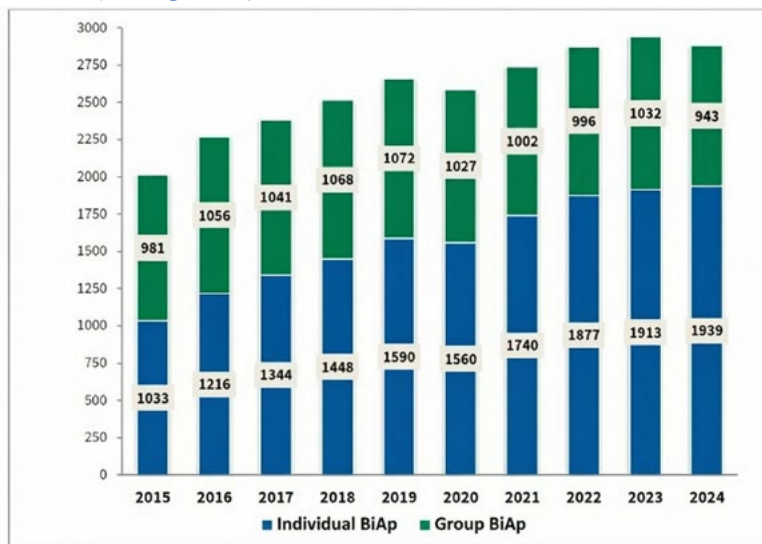
The Federal Participation Act has fundamentally changed the benefits for participation in working life. In addition to the principle of person-centred benefits and the expectation of slowing the rise in costs for integration assistance, new benefits have been standardized: through “other service providers,” benefits can be claimed outside of a workshop for people with disabilities. The “budget for work” and “budget for training” have also introduced two alternatives to workshops. Like the “budget for work” introduced in 2018 (Section 61 SGB IX), the “budget for training” introduced in 2020 (Section 61a SGB IX) provides comparable services within the framework of a training course. These services include instruction and support at the training place and in vocational school, the necessary travel expenses, and reimbursement of training allowances to employers. The “Budget for Training” programme is still under development, and the LVR, as the integration assistance provider, is only responsible in individual cases—the main service provider is the Employment Agency. As of December 31, 2023, a total of 29 beneficiaries in 18 different regions received benefits from the LVR as part of the Budget for Training.

In a 2023 proposal, the LVR addressed the **further development of benefits for participation in working life by the LVR as an integration assistance provider**. The proposal describes how the LVR, as the provider of integration assistance, will fulfill this mandate and further develop services for participation in working life in the Rhineland. It sets out the framework within which various approaches can be taken in the coming years to improve the range of services for participation in working life. To this end, it outlines the need for action, the available options, and ideas for implementation.

Of the approximately 38,000 people with disabilities who work in a workshop for people with disabilities (WfbM) in the Rhineland, around 3,000 do so in an integrated workplace (BiAp). This is an employee-like legal relationship, not an activity subject to social insurance contributions, even though the work is performed within a company on the general labour market. An evaluation of the performance documentation of the Rhineland WfbM has shown that the probability of transitioning from an employee-like employment relationship in a WfbM to an employment relationship subject to social insurance contributions in the general labour market is higher for people with disabilities who work in a BiAp than for those who do not. Against this background, the objective of the model project “From company-integrated workplaces to employment subject to social insurance contributions” is to

use the bridging function of a company-integrated workplace to promote the transition to employment subject to social insurance contributions. In three model workshops in the district of Euskirchen and in the Rhine district of Neuss, BiAp are being reviewed to determine whether and how this can be achieved from a BiAp and what conditions are necessary for this. Employees’ legal status is to be changed, shifting from an employee-like legal relationship within the WfbM to an employment relationship subject to social insurance contributions on the general labour market. The pilot project aims to convert at least 10% of the integrated workplaces examined into jobs or training positions subject to social insurance contributions for people with significant disabilities.

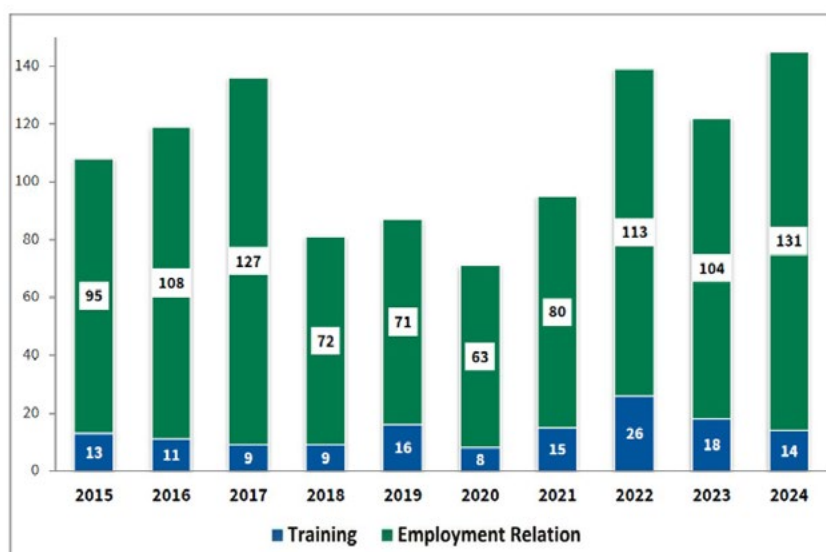
Company-integrated jobs



Number of beneficiaries in WfbM who are employed in an integrated workplace (BiAp)

Company-integrated jobs (BiAp) are a vital tool for promoting inclusion in the world of work and opening up the general labor market to as many people with disabilities as possible. The indicator provides information on the number of people employed in a company-integrated job entitled to benefits from a WfbM. The proportion of integrated employees in the LVR area rose significantly over the period under review. At the end of 2024, there were 2,882 integrated workplaces, including 1,939 integrated individual workplaces (corresponding to 67.3% of all BiAp).

Transition to the general labor market



Number of beneficiaries who transition from workshops for disabled people (WfbM) to the general labor market

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – Performance documentation of the Rhineland WfbM for 2024

The transition for people with disabilities (WfbM) from a workshop to the general labor market means a more inclusive opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in working life. The LVR supports people and companies in successfully managing the transition to the general labor market. In 2024, 145 WfbM employees moved into jobs subject to social insurance contributions in the general labor market. This included 14 people who started vocational training. In general, WfbMs that exclusively employ people with mental disabilities tend to be more successful on average in enabling people to (re)enter the general labor market.

The “Joint Initiative to Strengthen Inclusion in the Labour Market of North Rhine-Westphalia”

aims to better connect employers, people with disabilities, and job vacancies in North Rhine-Westphalia in the future. LVR Director Ulrike Lubek signed a corresponding agreement on April 10, 2024, in Düsseldorf on behalf of the LVR as the provider of integration assistance and the LVR Inclusion Office. The aim of the participating employer and business organisations is to use the initiative to encourage member companies to pay more attention to people with disabilities when filling training and job vacancies. The signatory institutions provide financial and advisory support to companies and people with disabilities to strengthen inclusion in the labour market.

The Rhineland Regional Assembly has set itself the goal of contributing to reducing unemployment among people with disabilities within the scope of

the LVR’s responsibilities and capabilities and of supporting the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in its activities to this end. Accompanying the state of North Rhine-Westphalia’s inclusion initiative, which has been co-signed by the two regional associations of Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe, the departments of social affairs and schools, the inclusion office, and social compensation, together with partners at the state level, have agreed on four specific areas of action to be worked on jointly: 1. Transition from school to work; 2. Placement in the labour market; 3. Reduction of transitions into the special system of workshops and reinforcement of departures from the special system of workshops for people with disabilities; and 4. Strengthening networking and cooperation. Under the leadership of the LVR Integration Assistance, ideas for solutions are to be collected for each area of action and supported by measures. The regional associations play a central role in this endeavour.

Jobs in inclusive companies

Year	2012	2017	2022
Number	1.277	1.704	1.574

Number of jobs for severely disabled people in subsidized inclusive businesses

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – Annual reports of the LVR Inclusion Office

Inclusion companies are companies in the general labor market that have adopted a social mission in addition to their economic activities: they employ, train, or place severely disabled people who are particularly disadvantaged in the labor market. To compensate for the effort involved in creating new jobs and employing a large number of people with disabilities, inclusive companies receive a flat-rate, permanent, and reliable subsidy in the form of investment and personnel cost grants. The indicator provides information on the number of jobs for severely disabled people in subsidized inclusive companies. In 2022, 1,574 severely disabled people were employed in inclusive companies. This is significantly more than in 2012, but fewer than in 2017.

Compensation levy

Allocation of funds from the compensatory levy in accordance with the Social Security Code – Book Nine (SGB IX) to the districts, independent cities and large district cities, and the municipal association StädteRegion Aachen im Rheinland

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – Annual reports of the LVR Inclusion Office

The compensation levy pursuant to Section 160 SGB IX is a means of motivation and compensation. Employers should be motivated to hire severely disabled people, according to the motto: employ instead of pay. At the same time, the compensation levy creates financial compensation between employers who employ severely disabled people and incur additional costs as a result, and employers who do not sufficiently fulfill their employment obligations (note: payment of the compensation levy does not remove the obligation to employ severely disabled people).

The Rhineland Regional Assembly decides annually on the allocation of funds from the compensation levy in accordance with the Social Security Code - Book Nine - (SGB IX) to the specialist agencies for disabled people in working life in the Rhineland (specialist agencies). At the suggestion of the Social Committee, since 2007 the calculation has been based on data provided every two years by the State Office for Data Processing and Statistics of North Rhine-Westphalia on December 31. Of these, the age groups of severely disabled people in working life—those aged 15 to 65—are taken into account.

14.2 Decent work in the LVR administration



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic Goal 2.4: Demographic Change and Digitalization

As an employer, we support vocational training and continuing education as well as knowledge transfer from (experienced) employees in order to meet the requirements of task completion on a long-term basis. We support the use of innovative technologies such as e-learning, artificial intelligence, and learning platforms to enable learning independent of location and time. We are constantly developing our digital skills in order to be able to offer attractive and contemporary services.

Operational goal 2.4.1:

The (new) LVR employees receive continuous training and professional development to foster a culture of lifelong learning.

Measures:

- Needs-based training: We offer the option of responding to specific developments in a needs-based manner and developing special programmes for specific target groups (e.g., BTHG, specialist training for therapists, SER, violence prevention curriculum for case management on Dec. 7, systemic counseling curriculum for Dec. 4, etc.).
- Structured, professional knowledge management: We use transfer processes to pass on acquired knowledge, thereby ensuring that the expertise of departing employees is retained for subsequent staff (including the use of the “knowledge map” method). In addition, continuous knowledge transfer and exchange is supported by appropriate counseling and training opportunities (e.g., seminars on communication, work and management techniques, and knowledge management workshops). This offering is to be further expanded in the future to reach additional target groups (e.g., new employees). The new management circles, which are conducted using the “WOL” (Working Out Loud) method, also contribute to this goal.
- Management curriculum: All managers with personnel responsibility are required to participate flexibly and individually in the continuing education modules of the management curriculum in the spirit of lifelong learning. The programme consists of mandatory and voluntary modules designed to continuously develop leadership skills. In addition, it has been supplemented with offerings for people new to leadership roles and for those interested in a leadership role but unsure whether leadership is right for them.
- Digital learning management system: In addition to providing and using learning content, the Success Factors Learning (SFL) learning platform is used to plan, implement, and evaluate specific learning processes. The complete range of employee training courses is available on the Success-

Factors Learning platform. Managers can assign training courses to employees. Current learning plans and training histories are visible.

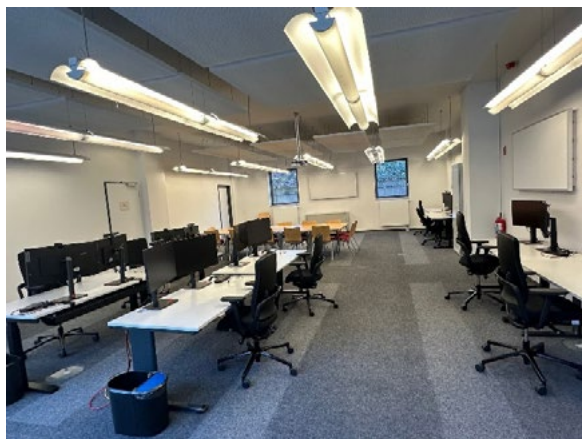
- **Authoring tool:** Since January 1, 2025, LVR employees have had access to the authoring tool (tts performance suite). This tool can be used to create digital tutorials. It enables the creation of a digitization wiki, with all licensees committing to help build it. All LVR employees can access the wiki and get quick, time- and location-independent help for their questions in the form of short digital tutorials.
- **Implementation of Erasmus+ mobility:** Since spring 2024, the LVR has been accredited in the European Union's Erasmus+ programme in the field of vocational training and will therefore be an Erasmus+ member until at least the end of the 2021–2027 programme period. As an accredited institution, the LVR can apply annually for funding through a simplified procedure to support European and international mobility in the field of vocational training. The programme offers opportunities for various formats: Trainees can benefit from group excursions lasting several days or internships and learning units abroad lasting several weeks to several months. Educational staff have the opportunity to participate in job shadowing or courses and training abroad.
- **Talented retirees – too young to retire:** The LVR has long been committed to providing life-stage-oriented support to its employees and offers a wide range of tools. It is essential to approach employees in order to support and advise them in their life planning. Until now, employment beyond the standard retirement age has only been offered in individual cases and at the request of the respective employees. In the future, the option of employment in old age will be offered as standard.

Operational goal 2.4.2:

Digital transformation is being specifically promoted through the digital skills of LVR employees.

Measures:

- **Digital Skills Curriculum:** To develop key digital skills, a key skills model was developed as the basis for a digital skills curriculum. The courses offered will start in 2025 and will be expanded on an ongoing basis.
- **Knowledge to go – Fit in the digital world of work:** With the help of this event schedule, information on key topics related to digitalization is made available to LVR employees in various formats (in-person, hybrid, digital) as part of the digital lab. The events are announced on a quarterly basis.



Versatile, social, fulfilling – the LVR is a modern employer in the public sector. As an employer, the LVR sees itself as a pioneer, supporter, and enabler for its employees. In this regard, the LVR’s goal is to be forward-looking and committed, high-performing and innovative, diverse and inclusive, and effective and efficient. Particular focus is placed on work-life balance, job security, development opportunities, and employee diversity. The “working environments” at the LVR cover many areas: medicine, nursing, therapy, education, administration, media and communication, IT and digital, engineering, architecture and technology, home economics and crafts, and culture and science.

To ensure qualified personnel are recruited, target-group-specific measures for **recruitment, retention, and development** are continuously developed, implemented, evaluated, and, if necessary, adapted to new requirements. Due to its diverse tasks, the LVR is particularly affected by demographic change. A modern website is used to address applicants in a target group-specific manner. Starting with a legally compliant recruitment process, the principle of equal treatment is given special consideration in personnel recruitment. The association is a diverse and varied employer that offers collectively agreed or statutory remuneration and supplementary benefits for employees covered by collective agreements, financial support for employees in crisis situations, and flexible working arrangements to enable individuals to achieve a positive work-life balance, thereby promoting equal opportunities for all. Specific advisory services as part of life-stage-oriented human resources management, corporate benefits, participation in

specialist seminars, coaching and supervision, and team-building measures are available to all employees. Overall, these benefits increase the employer’s attractiveness.

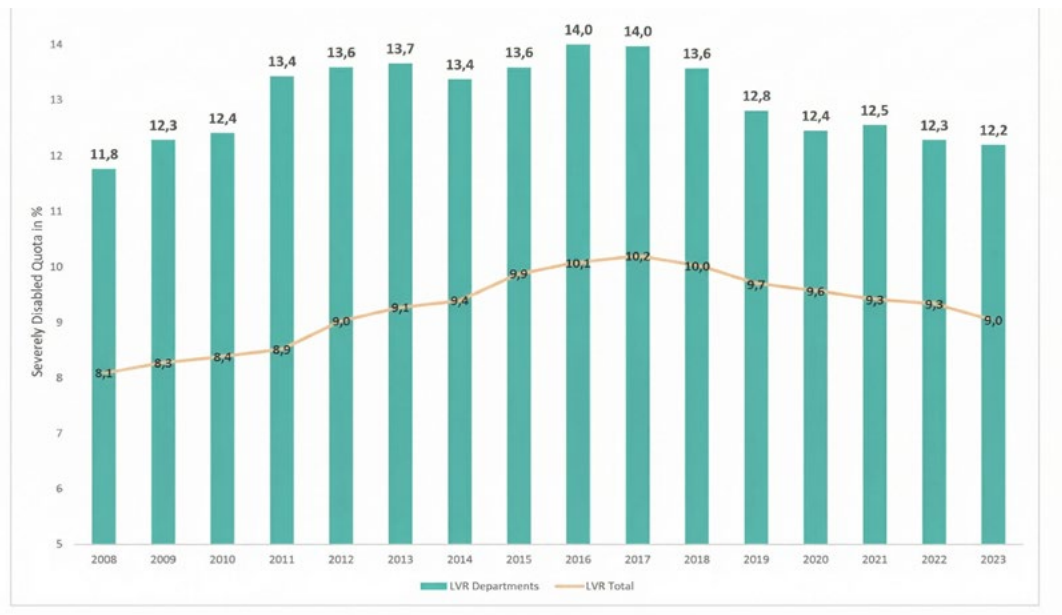
The LVR clinics and the LVR association headquarters are also developing and implementing numerous measures to recruit staff, provide them with training and further education, develop managers, and shape working conditions. As part of staff recruitment and retention, a qualification programme is being established to help nursing assistants become nursing professionals. Further career changers are to be recruited through a scholarship programme.

When it comes to working in old age, demographic change plays a decisive role for employers and employees. Life expectancy is rising, and many people remain healthy and productive after retirement age. This realization is accompanied by a growing desire to continue participating in professional and public life. From the perspective of the LVR as an employer, this is a positive trend, as the flexible and mutually desirable deployment of well-trained and experienced employees provides the opportunity to draw on a larger workforce in times of skilled labour shortages and to make a further strategic contribution to personnel recruitment and retention. Against this backdrop, the concept “Talents in Retirement – Too Young for Retirement,” presented in 2025, highlights LVR employees’ employment opportunities after reaching retirement age or upon retirement. It presents the legal framework for salaried employees and civil servants, along with the strategic options available to the LVR. The concept provides for the flexible option of postponing retirement for civil servants or postponing retirement for interested employees, both in their current position and in a needs-based deployment pool. If the focus is on social engagement rather than additional income, the LVR also offers numerous opportunities for honorary work.

The LVR also offers many specific **employment opportunities for people with (severe) disabilities**. In the current LVR personnel report for 2023, the rate of severely disabled employees is reported as

9% overall (see indicator “Rate of severely disabled employees” for details). This rate is well above the statutory target of 5%. Every LVR job advertisement states that people with severe disabilities will be given preferential consideration if they are equally qualified.

Percentage of severely disabled persons at the LVR



Development of the percentage of severely disabled persons as of December 31

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – Personnel Report

The following figure provides an overview of the development of the percentage of severely disabled persons at the LVR from 2008 to 2023 (in percent, as of December 31). The overall rate at the LVR rose from 8.1% in 2008 to 10.2% in 2017. Although the rate had fallen to 9.0% by 2023, it was still well above the statutory target of 5%.

Field of action

15 Climate protection and energy



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Awareness-raising measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Activities • “The LVR’s path to greenhouse gas neutrality” • Integrated climate protection concept • LVR Climate Table • Climate booklet in simple language • Seminar “New at the LVR: Sustainable Action” • Reporting on the annual United Nations Climate Change Conference • Participation in “Earth Hour” Indicator • Greenhouse gas emissions in 2019
Reducing energy consumption	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “Monitoring and data collection”: • Ensuring the digital and central availability of key energy consumption data from the LVR Activities (selection) • Energy report • Introduction of an energy data management system • Testing and use of the latest technologies (such as biogenic liquefied petroleum gas) • Renovation measures in the area of special schools Indikatoren • Total energy consumption • Electricity consumption • Heat energy consumption

15.1 Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions



With the Paris Climate Agreement, the international community agreed in 2015 to limit global warming to well below 2°C and, if possible, to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

The Paris Climate Agreement also calls for global greenhouse gas neutrality to be achieved in the second half of this century.

For the LVR, climate protection has been a core policy for many years, and it has set itself the goal of achieving greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045 in its strategy **“The LVR’s path to greenhouse gas neutrality,”** published in 2023. The starting point for this commitment was a materiality analysis and a comprehensive inventory of the association’s greenhouse gas emissions for the base year 2019. Total emissions in 2019 amounted to 90,207 tons of CO₂ equivalents. The largest share of emissions comes from buildings (more specifically, heat energy consumption; the main energy source is natural gas), while 31% were attributable to employee commuting. By 2045, the LVR aims to reduce its emissions by 90% compared to the 2019 balance sheet year, representing approximately 81,500 tons (see Figure 8). The strategy outlines the steps to achieve the reduction targets. The focus is on switching to renewable energies and efficiency measures, as well

as the use of new technologies. The strategy applies to the entire LVR, and association-wide measures are being considered to implement the steps toward greenhouse gas neutrality (e.g., the mobility strategy, measures in the construction sector, and sustainable procurement). Overall, the LVR plans to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality as realistically as possible, with emissions to be avoided and minimized locally, and only residual emissions that cannot be avoided by 2045 being offset.



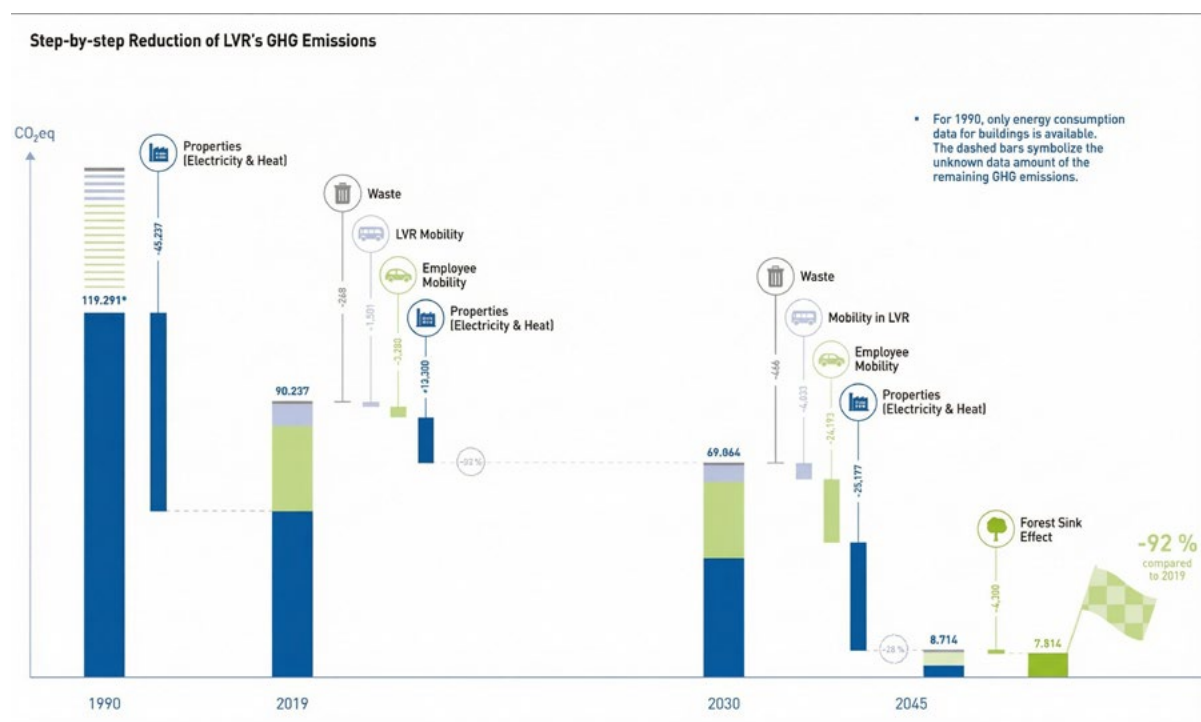


Figure 8: Development of LVR greenhouse gas emissions in the forecast from 2019 to 2045, © LVR

Treibgasemissionen 2019

Area	CO ₂ equivalents	Percentage
Clinics	38,518	42.7
Employee mobility	28,325	31.4
Schools	8,299	9.2
Cultural institutions	3,067	3.4
Vehicle fleet	3,067	3.4
Other*	8,931	9.9
Total tons of CO₂ equivalents	90,207	100

Greenhouse gas emissions for the entire LVR by area in tons of CO₂ equivalents (2019 financial year)

* Student transportation (2.8%), special education assistance (2.5%), youth welfare (2.0%), business travel (1.4%), waste (1.1%), central administration (<1.0%), InfoKom (<1.0%)

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – Publication “The LVR’s path to greenhouse

Greenhouse gas emissions contribute significantly to global warming. One of the most important goals on the path to sustainable development is to minimize or eliminate the burning of fossil fuels and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The LVR is committed to reducing greenhouse gases as quickly as possible within its own areas of responsibility and to reducing them to almost zero by 2045. To this end, it is focusing on ambitious ecological building standards, reducing energy consumption, and expanding renewable energies and electromobility. The indicator provides information on greenhouse gas emissions by sector in tons of CO₂ equivalents. The largest share of emissions from the generation of heating energy and the purchase of fossil fuels and electricity, at 42.7%, is attributable to hospitals. The next largest share in the building sector is attributable to schools, at 9.2%. In the area of mobility, employee mobility accounts for the largest share of total emissions at 31.4%, followed by the vehicle fleet at 3.4%. Cultural institutions also account for 3.4% of emissions. “Other” areas have significantly lower shares (see above *). The LVR has developed an ambitious forecast for the long-term net-zero target, which outlines a path to greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045.



The LVR has already implemented several concrete climate protection measures and adopted an overarching action programme. The 2016 Integrated Climate Protection Concept included an analysis of all climate-relevant areas in the LVR and identified potential measures and strategies for continuing climate protection efforts. The core element of the climate protection concept was a package of 49 measures in the fields of action “Cross-structural measures,” “Energy,” “Mobility,” and “Education.” A wide range of climate protection activities were implemented with a view to sustainable construction, the use of renewable energies and energy-efficient technology, and the promotion of climate-friendly mobility. Concrete examples include the use of combined heat and power plants, photovoltaic systems, and heat pumps; the construction of buildings to passive house standards; and the purchase of exclusively 100% certified green electricity from energy suppliers.

At the end of 2024, the LVR presented a status report on the Integrated Climate Protection Concept (IKSK). The report notes that the measures of the Integrated Climate Protection Concept have been further developed with a particular focus on raising awareness of energy savings, which has been incorporated into the areas of action of cross-structural measures (Climate Table, see below), energy (energy-saving measures), and education/user awareness (information for employees). The measures implemented under the IKSK also include the continuation of the 2020–2022 energy report, the start of the implementation of an LVR-wide energy meter and measuring point system for energy data management, and a roadmap to greenhouse gas neutrality with a starting balance for the entire LVR.

Climate protection is a cross-cutting issue at the LVR and affects all LVR departments. The **LVR Climate Table** is an internal administrative exchange format and is also the implementation committee for the Integrated Climate Protection Concept. The aim is to discuss municipal climate protection issues relevant to operational climate protection in a workshop format with sustainability officers delegated by the individual departments. In 2022, the virtual Climate Table focused on necessary energy-saving measures (see below). Against the backdrop of the LVR’s goal of reducing energy consumption by 20%, the measures implemented to date were discussed and evaluated across the association. The areas of administration, cultural institutions, clinics, and special schools also provided feedback on the opportunities and limitations of energy-saving practices. The Climate Table meets at least once a year, with each meeting focusing on a different topic.

The climate booklet in simple language is one example of a measure to raise public awareness. Published in 2021, the booklet is available for download and is aimed primarily at schools. It is used in LVR institutions and by external educational providers and can be distributed free of charge for project weeks as part of lessons or as general educational material. The climate booklet covers climate protection, energy, mobility, nutrition, consumption, and waste. Elaborate illustrations accompany the various topics, and care is taken to ensure these represent a diverse, inclusive society. The climate booklet meets the requirements for simple language, and a Braille version is also available.

The **seminar “New to the LVR: Sustainable Action”** is offered to all new employees at the LVR. It teaches them about the role of sustainability and climate protection at the LVR, where the LVR’s efforts in this regard already lie, and how everyone can contribute.

As part of the Environment Committee, the LVR also reports annually on the United Nations Climate Change Conference. The most important topics and decisions of the conference are highlighted and analysed, along with their relevance to the LVR and the measures already being implemented by the LVR.

The LVR also participates in the annual “Earth Hour,” a global symbolic climate protection campaign organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The aim of this campaign is to encourage as many people, cities, and companies as possible to switch off the lights in high-profile buildings and private homes for 60 minutes. The purpose is to draw attention to the energy waste and environmental pollution caused by permanent lighting in cities and to raise awareness of the desire for a climate-friendly society and politics. In 2024, the LVR participated in the campaign for the sixth time.

15.2 Reduction of energy consumption



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic goal 4.6: Monitoring and data collection

We are establishing a digital system for recording and organizing energy data to create an accessible, continuously updated database. This enables us to efficiently analyse and monitor energy flows, which are incorporated into the decision-making process for energy efficiency measures.

Operational goal 4.6.1:

By 2030, the LVR's key energy consumption data will be digitally available and centrally accessible.

Measures:

- **Establishment of a central energy data collection system for central administration, culture, and schools:** Rollout of the measuring point and meter concept in the properties of the General Real Estate Department (AGV) in cooperation with a competitive measuring point operator. Data is collected using intelligent measuring systems for electricity, natural gas, drinking water, and heat.
- **Analysis of the collected energy data with energy management software by 2030:** The amount of energy data collected requires evaluation with a specialist application. In addition to metering point operation, energy management software is a fundamental component of the energy management system, which aims to increase energy efficiency through operational and investment measures.

Since energy consumption is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, efficient energy use is essential for reducing emissions. The LVR is working on this issue at various levels, including use of technical measures to optimize consumption control and the implementation of renovation projects that lead to energy savings (e.g., facade and roof renovations).

The LVR has produced **energy reports** since 1989, showing the use of various energy sources. The report was last produced every three years. The energy report presents total energy consumption by organisational unit and shows its development through key figures. As part of the analysis, the measures initiated and implemented during the reporting period are described qualitatively and quantitatively, and an outlook for future measures is provided.

The metering point operation for the digital recording of energy data in the properties of the central administration, schools, and cultural institutions of the LVR is currently being set up.

The implementation of the metering point operation in the clinics is being carried out independently. Digital consumption data collection through the metering point operations provides the basis for holistic energy management, which aims to increase energy efficiency. With the introduction of energy management based on the accordance with DIN ISO 50001, a working point from the Integrated Climate Protection Concept (see above) is being implemented. The “Status Report on Metering Point Operation in the General Real Estate (AGV) of the LVR” presented in spring 2025 states that structured metering point operation will contribute in the long term to improving the energy efficiency of the LVR’s properties, reducing operating costs, and supporting the association’s climate protection strategy.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the current energy report lists, among other things, the heat supply for the extension of the LVR Gerd Jansen School in Krefeld, which uses a new gas condensing boiler powered exclusively by 100% biogenic liquid gas.



Many of the LVR's special schools date back to the 1970s, indicating a significant need for investment. On the one hand, the building fabric (building envelope and building services) in many schools needs to be brought up to current state-of-the-art standards, and on the other hand, the room layouts also need to be adapted to current requirements (see topic area Lifelong learning). Following on from the "Gute Schule 2020" (Good School 2020) support programme, the LVR will implement further renovation measures in the area of special schools.

When prioritizing the identified needs for action, aspects of energy consumption at the individual schools are also considered (e.g., above-average energy consumption, heat generation exclusively through the combustion of fossil fuels, and outdated heat generation systems).

Total energy consumption

Year	2017	2019	2022
kWh/m ²	200,5	201,6	180,9

Specific electricity and heat consumption (total energy consumption) per square meter of gross floor area of all buildings managed by the LVR (kWh/m²)

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – LVR energy reports

In the wake of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the energy policy and economic situation have changed dramatically due to the continuous reduction in gas supplies from Russia and the associated sharp rise in gas prices. In response, the LVR has implemented a series of energy-saving measures. The effect of these measures is clearly reflected in the specific electricity and heat consumption shown in this indicator: Compared to 2019, consumption in 2022 has been reduced by around 20 kWh/m² gross floor area.

Electricity consumption

Year	2017	2019	2022
kWh/m ²	39,8	38,9	34,8

Specific electricity consumption per square meter of gross floor area of all buildings managed by the LVR (kWh/m²)

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – LVR energy reports

Since 2014, the LVR has committed to purchasing only CO₂-neutral electricity. Specific electricity consumption is an indicator of electricity consumption per square meter of gross floor area. Electricity consumption is calculated from the sums of green electricity purchased, electricity generated by CHP (combined heat and power) plants, and electricity generated by PV systems and used for own consumption. Over time, electricity consumption has fallen steadily, most recently (2022) to 34.8 kWh/m² of gross floor area. This can be attributed, among other things, to the various energy-saving measures: in the Landeshaus and Horion-Haus alone, the measures implemented have reduced electricity consumption by 23.7%.

Heat energy consumption

Year	2017	2019	2022
kWh/m ²	160,9	162,8	150,5
kWh/m ² (weather-adjusted)	174,8	182,0	162,3

Specific heat energy consumption and heat consumption under identical climatic conditions (weather-adjusted) per square meter of gross floor area of all buildings managed by the LVR (kWh/m²)

Source: Rhineland Regional Council – LVR energy reports

Heat accounts for more than 50% of total final energy consumption in Germany and is used in a variety of ways. Weather conditions have a significant impact on the LVR's heat energy consumption. Weather adjustment is therefore necessary for a multi-year comparison of the heat consumption values of a building or group of buildings. After a brief increase in 2019, weather-adjusted heat demand in 2022 fell by 7.2% below the 2017 level*. In the Landeshaus and Horion-Haus alone, the measures implemented have reduced the weather-adjusted heating energy demand by 33.4%. This reduction in heat demand is a direct result of ongoing measures to reduce energy consumption in the LVR's properties and will continue in the future with further building renovations.

*A concrete statement about the development is misleading if it does not account for climate data. However, the trend is downward.

Field of action

16 Resource conservation and climate impact adaptation



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Environmental protection and protection of natural resources	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “biodiversity”: • Development of a responsibility plan for biodiversity with defined work resources and tasks • Protecting and strengthening biodiversity in the management of green spaces at clinics Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “resource conservation”: • Development of a responsibility plan for waste management in the departments • Avoidance of waste and reduction of unavoidable total waste generation • Reduction of total energy consumption in the LVR central administration Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on the topic of “Operational environmental management”: • Introduction of the EMAS environmental management system in all LVR clinics • Development of a training concept for employees on the sustainable use of resources in LVR clinics • Establishment of systematic environmental management in other environmentally relevant departments Activities (selection) • Introduction of the EMAS environmental management system • Expansion of EMAS to other departments • Brochure “EMAS for everyone – everyone for EMAS” • LVR perspective workshop • Expansion of LVR hazardous substance management • Projects to promote biodiversity in cultural institutions
Waste management	Activities (selection) • Waste prevention • Central “Waste Manager” office • Status report on LVR waste management

Climate impact adaptation	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy for “protection against climate change impacts”: • Conducting site-specific risk assessments for new buildings and renovations and implementing protective measures against environmental risks • Development and implementation of flood protection concepts to adapt to climate impacts • Implementation of heat protection measures during heat waves • Consideration of vulnerable groups in climate impact adaptation measures Activities (selection) • E-learning module for emergency preparedness, action in the event of damage, and follow-up care • Emergency networks • Facility-specific heat protection in North Rhine-Westphalia
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16.1 Environmental protection and conservation of natural resources



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic objective 4.1: Biodiversity

We protect and strengthen biodiversity on our land through targeted measures and sustainable management to preserve and promote natural habitats.

Operational objective 4.1.1:

By 2026, a responsibility plan for biodiversity will be in place at the interdepartmental level, including a fixed number of weekly working hours for cross-departmental biodiversity tasks.

Measures:

- **Clarification of the tasks, responsibilities, and location of a central biodiversity office:** Coordination regarding these areas within the departments.
- **Final determination of the location of the office:** Internal review of personnel capacities, creation of a job description, and, if necessary, application for a new staff position.

Operational goal 4.1.2:

Biodiversity is protected and strengthened through location-specific measures in the management of green spaces at the clinics.

Measures:

- **Adapted planting concept for hospital green spaces:** Planting of orchards, Benjes hedges, bee colonies, wild meadows, flowering areas, building greening, and perennial planting.

Strategic goal 4.2: Resource conservation

We rely on the hierarchy of avoidance, reuse, and recycling to protect our environmental resources. We consume more consciously.

Operational goal 4.2.1:

Operational objective 4.2.1: Optimizing the implementation of waste legislation, in particular the Commercial Waste Ordinance, in all departments to expand waste prevention.

Measures:

- **Establishment of a waste management organisation:**

This will apply across all departments and designations of responsibility as a basis for the field of action for waste prevention and operational safety in the handling of waste.

Operational objective 4.2.2:

Waste is avoided as far as possible, and the total amount of unavoidable waste is continuously reduced.

Measures:

- **Introduction of an internal exchange/lending platform for LVR furniture:** Products that are no longer used should be passed on, shared, lent, or exchanged within the LVR. This will reduce monetary expenditure, conserve resources, and avoid waste. A pilot project will be launched within Department 9 by 2027.
- **Project application “Circular.Culture”:** ERDF project application in the programme “Circular Economy – CircularCities.NRW.” The aim of the “Circular.Culture” project is to establish a central and digital material exchange for the purpose of material sharing in North Rhine-Westphalia. The project application was submitted in January 2025.
- **Development of a modular base system:** The LVR-LMB is developing a modular base system for display cases with the aim of creating a pool for permanent reuse.
- **Creation of a media pool:** The LVR-Landesmuseum Bonn LMB is creating a media pool within the museum network (Bonn, Brühl, Zülpich) with the aim of sharing standardized media equipment and reducing administrative and procurement costs.

Operational goal 4.2.3:

By 2026, the LVR central administration will save at least 2.5% of its total energy consumption annually and develop strategies for further savings.

Measures:

- **Renewal of building automation in the central administration (Horion-Haus):** The measurement, control, and regulation technology, including electrical wiring, will be renewed in the Horion-Haus and Landeshaus properties of the central administration.
- **Conversion to LED lighting:** In the Horion House and State House properties of the central administration: renovation of the lighting and conversion to LED lighting.

Strategic goal 4.3: Operational environmental management

We implement sustainable practices in all departments to pursue our environmental policy and reduce our negative environmental impact.

Operational goal 4.3.1:

The EMAS environmental management system will be established in all LVR clinics by 2030.

Measures:

- **Establishment of sustainability management:** The clinics create (staff) positions for climate and environmental management (climate protection, energy management, mobility, waste, EMAS, sustainability, heat protection concept).
- **Creation of a decarbonization roadmap for LVR clinics:** A clinic-specific roadmap with concrete action plans until 2035 and prospective planning until 2045. Areas of action: Building technology, mobility & transport, procurement of materials & services (including sustainable food procurement).

Operational goal 4.3.2:

By 2027, the LVR clinics will develop a training concept for employees on the sustainable use of resources.

Measures:

- **Employee training:** Planning and implementation of regular training courses for LVR Clinic employees on the sustainable use of resources.

Operational goal 4.3.3:

A systematic operational environmental management system will be established in four additional departments selected on the basis of their environmental relevance by 2030.

Measures:

- **Development of an expansion plan for an operational environmental management system by 2026. The expansion plan includes:**
 - o Specification of the resources required for the implementation and distribution of tasks between Department 33.30 and the facilities
 - o The implementation obligations for the institutions
 - o A concrete timeline
- **Development and creation of working aids for an environmental management system by 2026:** Checklists and templates for setting up an environmental management system for all EMAS-relevant documents will be created and made available on a central platform.
- **Training materials and implementation of information events, training courses, and workshops on EMAS by 2027:** training materials and documents will be developed and created by 2026, with preparation and implementation of training events by 2027.



The LVR is committed to preserving and protecting the environment in the Rhineland in a responsible manner. Future generations should have equal opportunities for a good quality of life. In the context of intergenerational justice, the LVR therefore considers it its duty to implement environmental protection measures and use available resources so that future generations are not less able to satisfy their needs.

Against this background, the LVR introduced the **EMAS** (Eco Management and Audit Scheme) **environmental management system** in its offices at the end of the 1990s. EMAS is an instrument developed by the European Union to continuously and systematically improve environmental performance and thus save resources. For EMAS certification, individual LVR departments are comprehensively examined and evaluated with respect to their environmentally relevant factors in their work processes, the condition of their properties, and their technical equipment. The first facility to be successfully validated was the LVR Clinic in Bedburg-Hau, which has been listed in the European register of EMAS sites since 2001. Thirteen LVR facilities now benefit from the annual audit. In addition to the positive external reporting of the facility, EMAS provides a considerable degree of legal and liability security. The clear focus on environmental performance also enables systematic, permanent reductions in resource requirements. Significant savings have been achieved, particularly in terms of waste, energy, and water, and resource efficiency has been continuously improved. Numerous measures have been taken to consolidate EMAS in the LVR, including the establishment of a hazardous substances and waste management system, plans to expand EMAS, and

the advertising of corresponding positions. The environmental goals and measures already successfully implemented by the EMAS departments show that implementation in all LVR facilities is a win for the environment and the organisation, enabling the LVR to fulfill its role as a model for the public sector. Based on the decisions of the Administrative Board in November 2022 and March 2025, a concept for expanding the EMAS environmental management system was developed. By 2030, four more LVR institutions are to introduce EMAS:

- LVR-InfoKom data centres
- LVR Open-Air Museum Kommern
- LVR Open-Air Museum Lindlar
- LVR Regional Museum Bonn.

To raise awareness of EMAS within the LVR, six LVR trainees wrote their 2020 project work under the title **“EMAS for Everyone – Everyone for EMAS.”**

The brochure is also available in easy-to-read language and provides a helpful introduction to the environmental management system and its specific requirements. The guide is aimed at all employees, as everyone can make an active contribution to environmental protection at the LVR.



Since the 1980s, the LVR has been addressing the need for environmentally conscious action and integrating this into its day-to-day administration. However, this endeavor can only be mastered as a joint task. Against this background, the LVR Perspectives Workshop event format was created. The **LVR Perspectives Workshop** has been held for many years at LVR's Environmental Committee and usually takes place annually with a constantly changing focus. It is primarily for members of LVR's Environmental Committee, but also for other interested

parties from politics, science, and administration, including interested parties from the LVR member cities, districts, and the Aachen city region.

In 2025, the LVR Perspectives Workshop focused on the topic of “Food in transition – challenges and impetus for a climate-friendly future” and highlighted the key challenges and opportunities of a sustainable food system. Experts provided insights into necessary transformations, demonstrated practical ways to achieve sustainable communal catering, and presented innovative solutions such as agri-photovoltaics for dual land use. Using Cologne as an example, they also showed how regional initiatives can actively contribute to the food transition. In 2024, the focus was on “Sustainable water management – between water scarcity and heavy rainfall.”

In the meantime, the first standardized foundations for **LVR hazardous substance management** have been established. A key objective here is to achieve legal compliance along the entire chain of use of hazardous substances (from procurement and handling to disposal). After the newly created position was filled for the first time, the hazardous substances manager conducted an inventory at the LVR central administration and other LVR facilities belonging to the General Real Estate Department. This work identified opportunities for optimizing the safe handling of hazardous substances. Working groups were therefore formed to jointly develop the necessary corrective measures. The results were implemented as a “hazardous substance management pilot” in the LVR central administration. The

standards developed in the pilot group are to be rolled out to other facilities of the LVR’s general real estate portfolio.

The promotion of biological diversity is another environmental protection concern at the LVR. Various projects are currently being implemented, primarily in the LVR’s cultural institutions, including through the creation and maintenance of green spaces. For example, the LVR Open Air Museum in Lindlar manages its grounds without pesticides, and the protection of insect fauna is supported by the establishment of bee colonies in the museum garden. In the summer of 2022, bee colonies were also established at the LVR State Museum in Bonn. Since 2024, the old monastic culture has been reinterpreted in the new monastery garden of the LVR Cultural Centre Abbey Brauweiler, creating a modern, sustainable garden based on historical models.

The LVR Archaeological Park Xanten uses its land for wild meadows and to create special sage meadows. Sheep graze on the site to maintain the green spaces.

In May 2025, the LVR Open Air Museum Lindlar opened an outdoor exhibition on the topic of nesting aids, focusing on the biological diversity of insects and breeding birds in the Bergisches Land region. Since August 2025, the photo exhibition “Insects – little wonders on six legs” has also been on display.

There is potential to develop an overarching strategy to promote biodiversity.

16.2 Waste management



The LVR is also committed to sustainable waste management. In 2019, the 14th Rhineland Regional Assembly passed a resolution introducing waste prevention measures and allocating the necessary funds to establish a central “waste manager” position in the budget. The “waste manager” position was filled in 2021. One of the goals is to reduce the use of plastic, especially single-use plastic (e.g., packaging, disposable cups, promotional items, and food portioning, etc.) in the administration. Also in 2021, a status report on LVR waste management was published as an interim report on activities in waste management following the filling of the “waste

manager” position. Since then, measures to identify, raise awareness, provide support, and further initiate a holistic LVR waste management system have been addressed, implemented, and planned, or are in the start-up phase. These measures include advising and supporting procurement, collaborating on EMAS certification, optimizing waste disposal in various LVR departments, selectively reviewing the local implementation of the Commercial Waste Ordinance, and the early introduction of reusable containers in the central administration canteen as part of the amendment to the Packaging Act (see topic area “Sustainable consumption”).



16.3 Climate impact adaptation



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic goal 4.5: Protection against climate impacts

We adapt the construction and operation of our properties to withstand the effects of climate change within the scope of legal, technical, and financial possibilities. We protect vulnerable groups in particular from the harmful effects of climate change.

Operational objective 4.5.1:

Location-specific risk assessments are conducted as standard for new construction and major renovation projects. Based on these assessments, protective measures against environmental risks such as heat, heavy rain, and flooding are planned and implemented.

Measures:

- **Conducting site-specific risk analyses:** With immediate effect, hazard maps will be evaluated for all new construction and major renovation projects, expert opinions will be obtained where necessary, and appropriate measures will be derived, planned, and implemented.

Operational objective 4.5.2:

The LVR considers location-specific environmental risks resulting from climate change and plans to develop flood protection concepts, with measures to be implemented gradually to adapt the operations of these existing properties to the consequences of climate change.

Measures:

- **Creation of flood protection concepts for existing LVR properties:** In the first step, location-specific flood protection concepts are to be created for up to four pilot locations, including schools and cultural institutions, which are particularly vulnerable to flooding, in order to initiate the resulting structural, technical, and organisational measures depending on feasibility (budget). The corresponding risks must be analysed, preventive measures defined, and the financial and personnel requirements for implementation taken into account.

Operational objective 4.5.3:

Heat waves: Heat protection measures will be taken as part of health prevention.

Measures:

- **Adaptation of food and beverage offerings for patients, employees, and visitors:** Especially during heat waves, food and beverage offerings will be adapted to people's changing needs.

Operational goal 4.5.4:

In the spirit of inclusive sustainability, climate impact adaptation measures in the LVR will take into account the special needs of people with disabilities and chronic illnesses as a vulnerable target group by 2030.

Measures:

- **Participation in planning processes:** Development of a concept for participatory processes for the development of appropriate precautions, for example, in the event of a disaster.
- **Awareness-raising measures on climate change adaptation:** climate communication, environmental education, and prevention.



The effects of climate change are already being felt in Germany in many ways. Examples include extreme weather events such as droughts, heavy rainfall, and flooding. Against this backdrop, the LVR is addressing adaptations to the consequences of climate change.

For example, the ecological construction checklist (see topic area Construction and Housing) also includes aspects of heat protection in many places (such as extensive green roofs, surface unsealing, light-colored surfaces, orientation and compactness of the building structure, sun protection, and natural ventilation).

The LVR Archive and Training Centre (LVR-AFZ), together with partner institutions from Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, has developed an e-learning module for emergency preparedness, action in the event of damage, and follow-up care (this was presented at the International Archive Symposium “Archives and Spatial Development” in Luxembourg in 2022, among other places). The module addresses topics such as protecting archival material from flooding.

In September 2025, the LVR-AFZ invited representatives of the Rhineland emergency networks. Experts from archives and restoration exchanged information on current developments and strategies for rescuing cultural property in the event of a disaster. The emergency networks are associations of several archives and other memory institutions that support one another in emergencies and thus

help ensure the preservation of damaged archive material.

The increasing number, duration, and intensity of heat waves are among the most serious consequences of climate change. Heat already causes several thousand premature deaths per year in Germany. The challenges posed by heatwaves for the healthcare system will continue to increase in the foreseeable future. It is therefore necessary for healthcare and nursing facilities to consistently prepare for heat events and, ideally, develop a concrete plan for heat protection.

In 2023, the North Rhine-Westphalia State Health Centre developed the working aids for facility-related heat protection in North Rhine-Westphalia. The LVR collaborated on the creation of the working aids. They are intended to serve as guidance for health and care facilities in North Rhine-Westphalia in the development and implementation of facility-specific heat protection measures. The guidelines cover nursing and medical aspects, along with recommendations for structural measures. The guidelines are primarily aimed at the management and staff of healthcare and nursing facilities (the guidelines do not constitute binding guidelines). The LVR Clinic Association is continuously working on this issue. At the end of 2023, heat protection in clinic buildings, especially in forensic hospitals, was also discussed as part of the consultations on accessibility at LVR clinics.



Field of action

17 Sustainable mobility



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Promoting sustainable mobility	Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy on “Sustainable Mobility”: • Promotion of resource-efficient and barrier-free mobility for employees and visitors, as well as in the LVR vehicle fleet • Regular collection of mobility data to estimate emissions from greenhouse gas-relevant commuter behavior and to derive measures for sustainable mobility for LVR employees
	Activities (selection) • LVR framework mobility concept

17.1 Förderung einer nachhaltigen Mobilität



Goals and measures from the LVR sustainability strategy

Strategic objective 5.1: Sustainable mobility

We are committed to implementing digitally supported, demand-oriented mobility measures to promote sustainable mobility in the LVR and, in the long term, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the mobility sector.

Operational goal 5.1.1:

By 2030, the LVR will promote resource-efficient and barrier-free mobility for employees, visitors, and its own vehicle fleet through at least seven targeted individual measures.

Measures:

- **Regular sustainable mobility offers for employees:**
Secure bicycle parking facilities at workplace locations. Depending on the property, this would result in several parking facilities on one LVR site.
Parking space management: Evaluate best practices at the LVR Clinic in Bonn and share experiences with newly introduced parking space management, and expand it if necessary. Strengthen resource-saving mobility through targeted management of parking permits.
- **Increasing the proportion of electric vehicles in the fleet:**
 - o Regular exchange on converting to clean vehicles in the LVR fleets
 - o Support services for the expansion of the (internal) charging infrastructure
- **Digital mobility:** Consideration of hybrid formats when holding meetings and events. Where possible, digital media should be used to hold online or hybrid events and meetings. This approach serves to reduce physical mobility and break down barriers to participation.
- **Review of incentive systems for museum visitors to choose environmentally friendly modes of transport:** Review of the introduction of incentive systems for environmentally friendly modes of transport for museum visitors, e.g., extension of the public transport discount ticket (pilot project from the LVR Open Air Museum in Kommern) to other LVR museums.
- **EFRE project Sustainability Workshop NRW:** Under the heading of “slow tourism,” the project aims, among other things, to create and promote sustainable travel destinations in North Rhine-Westphalia.
- **Publication series (hiking guide):** Rhineland cultural landscapes: Support for gentle mobility (hiking) and promotion of sustainable forms of tourism. Raising awareness and sensitization to the topics of cultural landscape, cultural heritage, environmental protection, and nature conservation. Documentation of cultural heritage.
- **Re-certification “Travel for All”:** To increase guest comfort in North Rhine-Westphalia and support booking decisions and travel planning, a “Travel for All” labeling system was developed that

provides all essential information on the accessibility of businesses. Almost all LVR museums are certified.

Operational goal 5.1.2:

The LVR will collect mobility data regularly until 2030 to estimate emissions from greenhouse gas-relevant commuter behavior more accurately and to derive targeted measures for more sustainable mobility for employees.

Measures:

- **Surveys for commuting employees:** Regular surveys for commuting employees.
- **Fleet management:** Introduction of suitable software for the LVR fleet to generate mobility data.

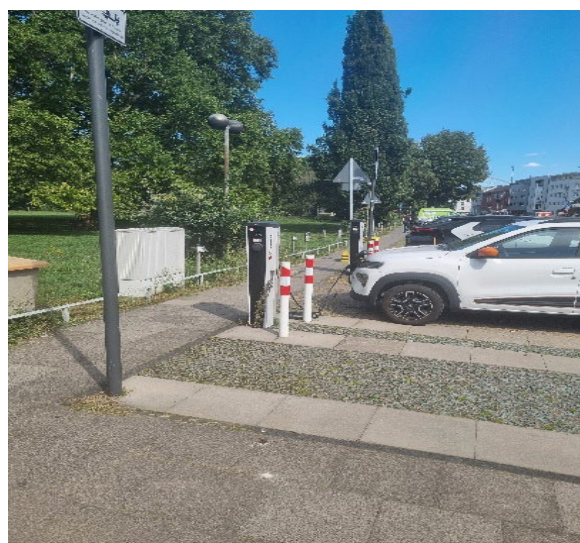
The LVR is caught between the conflicting forces of advancing climate change and other global challenges, innovations, and trends, on the one hand, and the accompanying political rethinking and changing legal framework, on the other. Thanks to its position as a large local government association in Germany, the association can exert social and political influence on mobility issues and raise awareness of social, economic, and ecological sustainability. Against this backdrop, the LVR administration was commissioned by a resolution of the Rhineland Regional Assembly in 2019 to develop a comprehensive mobility concept for the entire LVR. A mobility working group was formed for this purpose. In a participatory process involving all (specialist) departments and offices, this working group recorded the previous decentralized activities (selection) relating to sustainable mobility. It became clear that the LVR has already implemented numerous activities in the field of sustainable mobility in recent years. The aim was to integrate these activities to create a holistic, association-wide strategy for implementing mobility measures in the LVR.

This approach led to the creation of the **LVR framework mobility concept** in 2024—an association-wide concept for implementing mobility activities, which forms the framework for the current and future design of LVR-wide mobility. The framework is intended as a guide for all employees. It covers all mobility activities in the LVR departments and LVR field offices. The concept provides a basis for implementing greenhouse gas neutrality (see Climate Protection and Energy). However, the LVR wants to take a comprehensive view of mobility and address overarching topics. The LVR framework mobility concept, therefore, does not exclusively follow the mandate to reduce CO₂ emissions but also focuses on the strategic goals of greater sustainability, climate protection, inclusion, diversity, economic efficiency, and standardization in the LVR through appropriate measures. In view of these aspects, four overarching goals have been defined that apply equally to all areas of action in the LVR's mobility

management and interact to set the framework:

- Goal 1: CO₂ emissions caused by mobility are to be reduced by approximately 3% to 5% annually on the basis of a database that has been created.
- Goal 2: The binding minimum quotas for the procurement of clean and emission-free road vehicles and the commissioning of certain transport services will be complied with in accordance with the “Clean Vehicle Procurement Act.”
- Goal 3: The attractiveness of company mobility will be improved by considering the different needs of LVR employees.
- Goal 4: Effective, economical, and data-based mobility management will be ensured throughout the LVR.

Against the backdrop of these objectives, the LVR framework mobility concept bundles the mobility measures developed across the association into seven fields of action.



Field of action Fleet management	The management of the vehicle fleet, in the form of centrally coordinated technical cooperation and regular networking of all those responsible for the vehicle fleet, enables association-wide goals and regulations to be achieved and simplifies the coordination of vehicle stocks and requirements. The selection of a solution for digital fleet management is intended to ensure process optimization through the most complete data possible and the efficient use and procurement of vehicles for the LVR's own fleets. This provides the basis for overarching data collection and the legally compliant implementation of the Clean Vehicle Procurement Act.
Field of action Electric mobility	In 2023, a needs assessment was carried out among fleet managers for the gradual electrification of the LVR's fleets. The data collected from the 22 fleets forms the basis for the timely implementation of the establishment and expansion of the internal charging infrastructure and the procurement of electric vehicles. In addition to the internal charging infrastructure, this field of action also focuses on the establishment and expansion of the external charging infrastructure. After determining the requirements, this is intended to improve the availability of charging infrastructure for employees, guests, and other third parties, also with a view to reducing emissions from employee mobility.
Area of action Parking space and infrastructure	The design of a digital parking space management system for the central administration and the departments involves examining access restrictions and monitoring options, as well as visualizing parking space availability on a digital platform. The design is being developed for the central administration and the departments based on previously determined needs. The aim is to make parking space utilization as efficient as possible and reduce traffic searching for parking spaces.
Field of action Connected mobility/	Die Etablierung von regelhaften Umfragen in der Zentralverwaltung zur Pendler*innenmobilität wird aktuell erarbeitet. Diese soll eine verbesserte Datengrundlage für CO ₂ -Einsparungspotenziale liefern. Des Weiteren stellt die Förderung der Nutzung von (E-)Fahrrädern eine Maßnahme zur Steigerung der Attraktivität dieser Mobilitätsoption für die Mitarbeitenden dar, indem die Infrastruktur für Radfahrende (z. B. sichere Abstellanlagen) verbessert wird.
Digitalization	The use of a central, digital mobility platform for networking digital mobility solutions (e.g., for vehicle and parking space booking) is being examined and will be gradually developed as needed. Needs-oriented, low-emission mobility will also be explored through an expansion of offerings via external mobility services (e.g., sharing services). Networking with science and industry will be continued through regular exchanges with external actors and the promotion of innovative collaborations.
Field of action Commuter mobility	The establishment of regular surveys in the central administration on commuter mobility is currently being developed. This should provide improved data on CO ₂ savings potential. Furthermore, promoting the use of (e-)bicycles will increase the attractiveness of this mobility option for employees by improving the infrastructure for cyclists (e.g., secure parking facilities).

Field of action Mobile working	Mobile working is being rolled out across the association and is reflected in the comprehensive provision of the necessary software and hardware for workplaces and employees. The digital working environment is also being upgraded. This upgrade ranges from digital files and digital learning and knowledge management to modern collaboration solutions. All these measures enable employees to reduce travel, both business trips and traditional commuting.
Field of action Business travel management	This area of action focuses on the business trips undertaken and invoiced by employees in all departments and offices. The focus is on synergy effects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which can be achieved, for example, by expanding the use of electric vehicles in internal fleets.

Together, the areas of action form a comprehensive action plan comprising 20 packages of measures, implemented as projects or currently underway. The figure on the following page summarizes the measures. The status of implementation is reported regularly within the administration, and current developments are communicated to political representatives in existing reporting formats. In addition, the contents of the framework mobility concept are continually developed to adapt to the dynamically changing requirements and opportunities in the mobility sector.



Fleet Management	
Establishment of a central steering of fleet management	-Establishment of data-based steering by Department 6 -Ongoing networking of the involved OEs and actors within the LVR
Selection of a solution for digital fleet management	-Requirements gathering for all fleets -Creation of the necessary prerequisites for the introduction of the digital solution
Electromobility	
Needs assessment for the gradual electrification of internal fleets	-Survey of all fleets on the implementation of the Clean Vehicles Procurement Act (SaubFahrzeugBeschG)
Needs assessment for the establish- and expansion of external charging infrastructure	-Survey of all offices on the ramp-up of e-mobility for employees, visitors, and other third parties
Establishment or expansion of internal charging	-Expansion of internal charging infrastructure according to identified need
Establishment or expansion of external charging	-Expansion of external charging infrastructure according to identified need
Parking Space and Infrastructure	
Needs assessment for parking space management in the Central Adminis-	-Conducting a survey among employees regarding the needs and nature of the parking spaces in the Central Administration
Needs assessment for parking space management at the Offices	-Conducting a survey among employees regarding the needs and nature of the parking spaces at the Offices
Conception of a digital parking space management for the Central Administration	-Equipping suitable LVR-owned parking areas in the CA with appropriate technology for digital integration, if necessary with external advice
Conception of a digital parking space management for the Offices	-Equipping suitable parking areas at the offices with appropriate technology for digital integration, if necessary with external advice
Networked Mobility/Digitalization	
Development of a Mobility Platform	-Overall solution for bundling mobility solutions via a central platform
Integration of External Mobility Offers	-Integration of modern, attractive, and climate-friendly mobility offers
Ongoing Networking with Science and Economy	-Regular exchange with actors from science and economy -Evaluation and testing of technical innovations and modern mobility solutions
Commuter Mobility	
Establishing a Regular Survey on Commuter Mobility in the Central Administration	-Creation and implementation of a regular commuter survey for the Central Administration -Targeted measure development and implementation based on identified needs in the Central Administration
Establishing a Regular Survey on Commuter Mobility in the Offices	-Creation and implementation of a regular commuter survey for the Offices -Targeted measure development and implementation based on identified needs for the Offices
Promotion of the Use of (E-) Bicycles	-Needs-based establishment and expansion of secure (e-)bicycle parking and charging facilities in all offices
Mobile Work	
Roll-Out of Mobile Work	-Comprehensive hard- and software equipment for workplaces and employees for mobile work -Development and implementation of desk sharing and co-working concepts in the Central Administration and the offices
Digital Work World	-Strengthening of digital learning and knowledge management within the LVR -Further development of a digital communication and collaboration solution -Replacement of analog filing with a digital solution through the comprehensive introduction of the E-file
Business Travel Management	
Business Travel Needs Assessment	-Impact of business travel management on the electrification of the internal vehicle fleet

Figure 9: Action plan in the LVR framework mobility concept, © LVR

Field of action

18 Sustainable consumption



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
Promotion of sustainable consumption	Activities (selection) • “Eat well – all is well!?” Criteria and standards in school catering • Perspective workshop on the topic of “sustainable and climate-friendly nutrition” • Reusable containers in the central administration canteen
Sustainable tourism	Activities (selection) • Project “Nachhaltigkeitswerkstatt.NRW – Experiencing North Rhine-Westphalia’s natural, cultural, and urban landscapes sustainably: A sustainability agenda for North Rhine-Westphalia as a travel destination” • “TourCert” certificate

18.1 Promotion of sustainable consumption



The LVR supports sustainable consumption patterns through various activities (selection). These include, in particular, measures in sustainable procurement and contracting (see the chapter on Sustainable Administration, Contracting, and Procurement).

As part of its school catering programme, the LVR promotes sustainable consumption by setting its criteria and standards under the slogan “Eat well – all is well!?” Healthy eating is vital for the development of children and young people. Since many children and young people attend the LVR’s all-day school programmes—which means the school day ends in the afternoon— the school meals offered also play an important role in the context of healthy, holistic nutrition and nutrition education. Cooking with unprocessed products from regional, sus-

tainable agriculture will be promoted. The circular issued by the Ministry of Education does not specify requirements regarding the type or quality of food. The LVR has established the following supplementary principles for itself: no use of low-fat products, no use of genetically modified foods, clear and simple wording on the menu, identification of additives subject to labeling requirements, guarantee of a 15% organic quota, and use of seasonal products two days per week.

In 2025, the LVR administration was commissioned to hold a **perspective workshop on the topic of “sustainable and climate-friendly nutrition,”** with a focus on sustainable and climate-friendly nutrition and agriculture in inner-city and suburban areas.

Since 2021, the LVR has been offering its employees **reusable containers in its central administration’s canteen**, i.e., practical reusable containers in a deposit system. Under the amended Packaging Act, the federal government has made it a legal requirement for cafés and restaurants to offer reusable alternatives for takeaway food and drinks since 2023 (see also “Waste management”).

18.2 Sustainable tourism



The issue of sustainability is becoming increasingly important in the tourism sector. Against this backdrop, the LVR is implementing various activities in this regard. Since 2024, the LVR Department of Culture has been participating as an associated partner in **the project “Nachhaltigkeitswerkstatt. NRW – Experience North Rhine-Westphalia’s natural, cultural, and urban landscapes sustainably: A sustainability agenda for North Rhine-Westphalia as a travel destination.”** The aim is to develop North Rhine-Westphalia into a sustainable

tourism destination. The Sustainability Workshop. NRW project will contribute to making sustainability an operational priority for tourism in North Rhine-Westphalia and, on this basis, to define future strategic guidelines.

The LVR Open Air Museum in Kommern, in particular, is increasingly focusing on sustainable travel in the tourism sector and has been represented in the TourCert Qualified programme as a partner company of Nordeifel Tourismus GmbH since 2022.



Field of action

19 Global responsibility



Overview

Aspect	Activities and indicators
European engagement and international partnerships	Activities • Strategic orientation of the LVR’s European engagement • Award for “Europe-active municipality” • Cooperation between the LVR and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, including work program • Partnership agreement with the self-governing district of Košice in eastern Slovakia • Program “Youth Shapes the Future – International Youth Work at Places of Remembrance” • Eastern Europe concept and LVR European project funding • Project “Intercultural Exchange with Toulouse (Rheinisch-Westfälisches Berufskolleg)” • European project funding “Hellas” • Cooperation at the clinic level between the LVR Clinic Langenfeld and the Kulparkov Clinic in Lviv (Lemberg) in Ukraine • International contacts between museums and cultural services

19.1 European engagement and international partnerships



Partnerships are a key lever for promoting sustainability. International cooperation, in particular, is central to addressing the global challenge of sustainable development as a “joint task,” enabling cross-border learning and collaboration. The 2030 Agenda reinforces this with Global Sustainability Goal 17, “Partnerships for the Goals.”

The LVR has been in dialogue with numerous European and global partners for decades. The origins, objectives, and nature of the collaborations have varied greatly. A central motivation for the LVR and its partners is the commitment to mutual learning, bridging the gap between their diverse social and developmental backgrounds (for example, improving the local situation of people with disabilities and/or mental illnesses, who are key LVR target groups). The agreed objectives of the European and international engagement serve as an association-wide guideline for these activities.

In 2013, the **strategic orientation of the LVR’s European engagement** was presented. The following goals were agreed upon:

- Learning from each other through regular exchange of experience and information
- Better use of EU funding opportunities
- Increased awareness of the LVR at EU level as a relevant player and expert
- actively influencing EU decision-making processes,
- Generating added value for the LVR through sustainable European engagement and
- living the European idea.

European and international funding programmes and initiatives have a direct impact on local communities. For its part, the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia has created a corresponding flagship programme to further strengthen the European and international activities of local communities,

with the **“Europe-Active Municipality”** award at its heart. The award highlights active partnerships, international projects, and encounters that bring Europe closer to everyone. The award honors diverse and intensive European engagement and is intended to motivate further innovative and best-practice activities. LVR’s Policy Committee decided to submit an LVR application in 2019 and 2021. The application highlights the importance of the association’s involvement in the European idea, based on the numerous collaborations and international projects undertaken by the LVR over the decades, and refers in particular to the LVR’s approach of a more strategically oriented European and international commitment, which it has been pursuing for almost ten years. At the end of 2021, the LVR received the “Europa-aktiver Kommunalverband” (Europe-active local Municipality) award from the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, honoring its exemplary commitment to Europe.

The LVR’s commitment to Europe is based on long-standing partnerships. These include, for instance, a cooperation between the LVR and the German-speaking Community of Belgium. The German-speaking Community of Belgium and the LVR have maintained friendly relations and collegial exchanges in numerous areas for several decades. This partnership was further institutionalized by a formal declaration of cooperation in 2006. In view of the 15th anniversary of the signing and against the backdrop of further areas of responsibility and cooperation added over the years, a renewal of the joint declaration, including an update of its content, was signed in 2022. The current agreement reaffirms cooperation and further develops it. Among other things, the following topics are addressed jointly: social affairs and health, youth and education, culture, European affairs, environmental and climate protection, and digitalization. Within the framework of the cooperation, a **work programme** agreed upon between the two administrations de-



finishes the respective current priorities and projects (for a regular period of two years). To this end, a Joint Working Committee, in which employees responsible for the specialist topics on both sides are represented, meets alternately between the German-speaking Community of Belgium and the LVR.

Another long-standing partnership agreement exists with the self-governing district of Košice in eastern Slovakia. In 2006, an LVR delegation of local politicians and administrators visited the district, preceded by a letter from the president of the self-governing district expressing an interest in cooperation. The concrete result of this first formal exchange was the conclusion of a partnership agreement in 2007 (immediately after the second round of EU enlargement to the east), which has since enabled cooperation in the fields of social affairs and health, schools and youth, culture, and administration and organisation.

With its programme **“Youth Shapes the Future – International Youth Work at Places of Remembrance”** the LVR has been supporting international encounters for many years. The programme is primarily aimed at young people in youth social work programmes (i.e., young people who are disadvantaged in various ways and would otherwise not have the opportunity to participate in international youth encounters and/or trips to memorial sites). The programme consists of three pillars: to encounter each other, to remember, and to shape the future. By creating an Instagram account and further developing the concept, youth encounters and educational content relating to human rights and Europe are to be made more visible to a broader public beyond the target group of young people.

Further examples of the LVR’s commitment in (Eastern) Europe are the Eastern Europe Concept and the LVR Europe Project Fund. In 2018, a concept for future support of psychiatric clinics and facilities for people with disabilities in Eastern Europe was presented. Since it was not possible at that time to reliably quantify the financial support required for known or potential future collaborations (and in order to be able to take action at short notice if necessary), it was proposed as a budgetary precautionary measure to set up a budget of €25,000 for each of the 2020–2023 budget years to support such foreign partnerships with LVR relevance within the framework of a so-called “LVR European project funding” programme.

The project **“Intercultural Exchange with Toulouse” (Rheinisch-Westfälisches Berufskolleg)** carried out in 2019 and 2023 was part of this LVR European project funding. This project involved an intercultural exchange between deaf and hearing-impaired young people and the ROUDEL association from Toulouse (France). The focus of the trip for the students was on learning about country-specific differences in hearing impairment and developing a long-term partnership between the deaf communities in Essen and Toulouse. The hearing-impaired young people on both the German and French sides were able to expand their linguistic, social, and intercultural skills through the project. This experience increased their chances of participation in an increasingly internationalized labour and training market in Europe.

The LVR has been pursuing further cooperation since 2021 as part of the **European project funding application “Hellas.”** The project promotes professional and intercultural exchange and aims to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities in northern Greece. It builds on the LVR’s long-standing tradition of fostering exchanges with European partners in the field of disability support, learning from one another, and improving the living conditions of people with disabilities in Europe and worldwide. This project enables professional exchange between the LVR and its project partners in northern Greece. The Hellas project also participated in the LVR campaign “Experience digital

inclusion” in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, it was decided to continue the professional exchange and technical dialogue to improve disability work in Northern Greece-Thessaloniki (LVR Europe project funding application “Hellas II – Continuation of professional exchange and technical dialogue to improve disability work in Northern Greece/Thessaloniki”). In 2025, the LVR administration was tasked with preparations for further formalization of LVR cooperation with Greek partner organisations.

Since 1997, there has also been cooperation between the LVR Clinic in Langenfeld and the Kulparkov Clinic in Lviv (Lemberg) in Ukraine. Since 2000, delegations from the clinics have been visiting each other regularly, and in 2002 and 2015, aid shipments were organised for the clinics in the Lviv Oblast. This cooperation was intensified as part of the “Partnership for Mental Health” project (2009 to 2015) funded by the German Federal Ministry of Health. In 2017, the cooperation was extended to the LVR Clinic Association with the signing of a corresponding cooperation agreement. This includes, among other things, the mutual exchange of experience on decentralization processes in the care of people with mental illness and mutual participation in programmes related to psychiatric illnesses and disorders through workshops, seminars, observation visits, and training events. The agreement also



stipulates the coordination of humanitarian aid by the LVR hospital network for mentally ill people in hospitals in Lviv.

The LVR’s **museums and cultural services** have an extensive network of international contacts. Establishing, maintaining, and shaping international contacts and projects are a typical part of the institutions’ work. International cooperation ranges from participation in committees and involvement in networks to scientific exchange, the content design of conferences, and the development and implementation of multi-year projects (both analog and digital), some of which are funded by the EU, and permanent institutional cooperation. New contacts and projects are added on a regular basis and the LVR Department of Culture reports on this in policy documents, the most recent one published in 2025.

Outlook



This sustainability report provides a comprehensive overview of the LVR's current contributions to sustainable development, both qualitatively (presentation of key sustainability activities) and quantitatively (analysis of selected indicators). The individual activities and indicators relating to the fields of action and steering criteria illustrate that sustainability is a high priority for the LVR and that the LVR is making an important contribution to the implementation of sustainable development at the regional level in line with the 17 Global Sustainability Goals.

The sustainability report fulfills three core functions. Firstly, it serves to reflect on the progress made in implementing sustainable development. The LVR's key activities (action strategies and concepts, current proposals and political decisions, key objectives, measures, projects, ongoing tasks and programmes, as well as collaborations, networks, and organisational structures) were presented in a consolidated manner, developments were made measurable using key figures, and areas where action is needed were identified.

Secondly, the reporting fulfills a communication function vis-à-vis various target groups (such as political decision-makers, the various departments of the administration, citizens and civil society institutions, the business community, and the municipalities in the Rhineland) to provide information about sustainability in the LVR, create transparency in this regard, and raise awareness.

Thirdly, the report serves as a central control element in the continuous cycle of systematic sustainability management. This allows for reflection on goal achievement, triggering mechanisms in the event of missed targets, and setting new priorities in the spirit of continuous improvement.

With this sustainability report based on the BNK, the LVR joins the list of around 50 German municipalities that have so far applied the Local Sustainability Reporting Framework. The BNK served as a helpful basis for structuring the content of this sustainability report. The areas of action covered reflect the key areas of sustainable development. The steering criteria can also be used to analyse strategic and structural anchoring as well as overarching aspects



and cross-cutting issues. By listing references to the Global Sustainability Goals, the report is embedded in a compatible manner and serves as a basis for international reporting within the framework of a “Voluntary Regional Review,” which reports on the implementation status of the 17 Global Sustainability Goals.

The process of preparing the sustainability report and the “Inclusive Sustainability” project as a whole has strengthened interdisciplinary exchange within the LVR. The process highlighted the breadth of relevant topics and the importance of cooperation in advancing the “joint effort of sustainability.” With this sustainability report, the LVR contributes to mutual learning with the municipalities in the Rhineland.

This first comprehensive LVR sustainability report is intended as the starting point for ongoing sustainability reporting, serving as the basis for future sustainability reports. If reporting continues, trends can be identified and targeted adjustments made. At the same time, this report is intended to encourage local authorities in the Rhineland to report on their sustainability activities and indicators. The latest United Nations progress reports on achieving the Global Sustainability Goals highlight the urgent need for action if the 17 goals are to be met by 2030. With implementation at the local level, regional and municipal authorities have a responsibility to further promote sustainable development during the “Decade of Action” (2020–2030) proclaimed by the United Nations.

Against this backdrop, the LVR will continue to promote sustainability at the local level in the coming years, building on the activities presented in this report.

With its first sustainability strategy, the LVR established a firm foundation for systematic management at the close of the 15th Rhineland Regional Assembly. This strategic framework is designed to extend beyond the 16th legislative period (2025–2030).

For the first time, projects for sustainable development are being identified as such across departments and throughout the association, made visible in a coherent manner, and thus made available for discussion. Following recommendations from local government associations, the LVR is dedicating more attention and resources to sustainable development. This approach strengthens the LVR’s strategic position at the local and global levels, ensuring it is prepared for future challenges.

This sustainability report highlights the LVR’s commitment to the goals of the global Agenda 2030. The LVR is the first supra-municipal association in Germany to present such a report. It sees itself as a partner to its member bodies, supporting them in their activities for sustainable development. The Regional Council is therefore willing to continue participating in further municipal work processes of this kind in the future (within the limits of its available personnel capacity).

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