

# Phoenix Project

DORTMUND,  
GERMANY

Dortmund is the largest city in the Ruhr area and among the ten largest cities in Germany. The city is currently making progress as it transitions from an industrial economy towards a knowledge intensive, service city. The 'New Dortmund' has continued to develop new growth sectors linked to its strong knowledge base, leveraging other key assets including good accessibility, the availability of brownfield sites for new functions and a proactive city government. However, the city continues to face challenges associated with the socio-economic legacy of de-industrialisation, including structural unemployment and social polarisation.

## Project overview

The Phoenix Project is a large brownfield redevelopment programme that has focused on the transformation of two large, connected industrial sites that were previously isolated from the rest of the city. The location now combines modern industries (on Phoenix West) with housing and leisure amenities (on Phoenix East). In addition, the project has focused on the redevelopment of the run-down working class Hörde district and the environmental and ecological works needed to restore the damage created during the industrial period. The project is led by the City of Dortmund which coordinates the numerous stakeholders involved whilst integrating the project into the city's larger economic strategy (the so-called 'Dortmund Project').

## Results and impact

The Phoenix project can be regarded as a best practice example of a complex and integrated brownfield redevelopment project. Overall, the transformation process went smoothly and most of the project's development goals have been met. The project is different from, and therefore complementary to, other major locations in the city, such as the Technology Park Dortmund. The industrial heritage of Phoenix West gives the site a specific character,

although it remains a challenge to find investors needed to convert these historical assets into additional functions. The two competence centres that support technology-orientated firms and start-ups, have already been realised and function well. The initially widely discussed Phoenix See, a large lake on Phoenix East, has turned into a 'pearl for New Dortmund' and contributes positively to a new image of the city and functions as a popular recreational location. Newly created green spaces on both Phoenix West as well as Phoenix East offer additional recreational spaces. The complex water management plan on the Emscher river also appears to be developing according to plan. Finally, new luxury houses, offices and leisure facilities have been constructed, most of which have been sold. Consequently, overall, the Phoenix Project has contributed positively to the sustainable development of the 'New Dortmund', particularly in terms of environmental and economic development. However, the third pillar of sustainability – social development – seems to be harder to realise.

## Enablers

The success of the project to date can be attributed to a number of critical success factors. Firstly, the project was based a clear vision and concrete goals that have been jointly set by the city and other stakeholders. These are not only based on global trends (e.g. new growth sectors), but also on local needs and historical local assets (e.g. the combination of historical heritage with high-tech production on Phoenix West). Moreover, leadership at the top and on the ground reduced conflict among stakeholders and kept the machine running, while effective communication strategies created and maintained societal support. Another success factor was the timing of the project, starting in the deep pain of the de-industrialisation that brought various actors together searching for solutions for realising the 'New Dortmund'. Finally, the site is divided into two different parts, and as such, gives access to various funding sources, enabling the use of different specialised developers and consequently, varied functions. As total control is in hands of the city, the different facets of the project are integrated in one plan that in turn, is integrated in the city's wider economic strategy.

