

The Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link's rail connection

The regional planning procedure (RPP)

An RPP is normally carried out when the construction of a new motorway, canal or airport is in planning. Similarly, it is required when planning a new rail line or the substantial modification of an existing line. In 2010, the state of Schleswig-Holstein announced an RPP for the rail connection to the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link.

What does it look at?

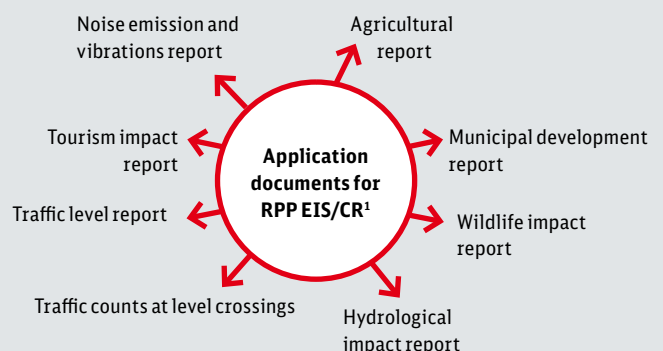
The RPP assesses how closely the construction plans comply with regional requirements, above all with Schleswig-Holstein's state development plan and regional plans. The development plan outlines the state's main objectives regarding zoning and regional development, and it also covers a wide range of issues of relevance to rail line construction, such as the road-to-rail ratio, increased passenger services, and the environmental impact of a specific undertaking.

What does the process entail?

The RPP starts with the definition of the assessment's scope. The government authority responsible, in this case the Schleswig-Holstein Chancellery's state planning board, announced the scope of the assessment in November 2010 and stipulated what assessments the RPP had to cover. The plans as they existed and alternative routes were to be considered, and the assessment was to look at their economic, social and environmental impact on the region in question. In addition to the RPP, the Kiel government also requested eight special reports into noise mitigation, tourism, municipal development, agriculture, transport, and the consequences for aquatic habitats and wildlife.



Additional special reports requested by the state government's brief



¹ RPP Regional planning procedure
EIS Environmental impact study
CR Compatibility report

Steps in a regional planning procedure with an environmental impact assessment

- **Definition of scope**
(Scoping phase: all parties involved discuss the procedure's objective and requirements regarding the documents to be submitted)
- **Formal initiation of procedure**
Performed by the state planning authority once the project sponsors submit their planning documents and they are assessed for completeness
- **Public display of planning documents as announced by public notice**
If required by state planning laws
- **Submission of written statements and objections**
- **Decision, regional planning report**
Decision made regarding the project's compatibility with regional planning objectives
- **Public display of regional planning report**
The decision and associated reasons made public, if required by state planning laws



Source: Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development's handbook for good practice regarding public participation

Area covered by regional planning procedure

On 9 January 2013, once all documents and reports had been submitted, Schleswig-Holstein's state planning authority initiated the next step: the start of the RPP.

The planning proposals and associated documentation will be presented during the next phase. They can be viewed online (www.schleswig-holstein.de/raumordnungsverfahren), and the public has the opportunity to submit written statements and objections between 11 February and 25 March 2013. The Fehmarn Belt project is the first major Deutsche Bahn infrastructure undertaking to give citizens the chance to air their views online. Once the 25 March deadline expires, the state planning authority will review the public's submissions.

The RPP will then entail a regional planning report – this must be made available within six months of the process's starting date, in this case by 9 July. The responsible authority can come to one of the following findings: that the project is or is not in line with its planning objectives and regulations or that compliance is possible only under certain conditions.

The regional planning report is not legally binding – instead, it is treated as a qualified opinion, and the subsequent official planning procedure must take it into account.



Alternative routes **Wanted: the track with maximum compliance**

Experts produce reports, take measurements and compare their findings. There were a number of possible routes, and because their various sections could be connected in different ways, this resulted in a total of 628 variations for consideration. The question that needed to be answered was which one of them meets all of the requirements (economic viability, environmental protection, noise mitigation, boost for tourism)? Ultimately, a "preferred proposal" was identified, the route that offers the best conditions for meeting all targets. The RPP is now assessing its compliance with Schleswig-Holstein's regional development plan.

Further information about the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link's rail connection is available at www.deutschebahn.com/fbq