TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT DRESDEN

Development Strategy for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences

GSW 2028

As of: 23rd October 2019

1. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences at TU Dresden

Since 1990, TU Dresden (TUD) has developed into a technology-orientated university with a highly respected dynamic. In addition to excellent research in the natural, technical and life sciences, it now also has potential in the humanities and social sciences (*Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften*, GSW) that cannot be found at any other technical university in Germany. Since the late 1990s, humanities and social sciences at TUD have established a practice of joint research that generated a profile, which is highly respected far beyond the region. A first crystallisation point was the Collaborative Research Centre 537 'Institutionality and Historicity' (1997-2008) - the first major research network in the humanities and social sciences in the new *Länder*. Other collaborative projects (IGK 625, CRC 804, currently CRC 1285) could build on this.

Against this background and as early as the mid-2000s, TUD decided - in addition to the already existing ones - to implement a new Research Priority Area in the field of humanities and social sciences. With its focus on 'Culture and Societal Change', it serves to pool and boost cooperative research in this field. In its successful Excellence Strategy 'TUD 2028 - Synergy and beyond'[1], TUD has defined **Societal Change** to be one of two **Emerging Fields**, which, in addition to the existing Clusters of Excellence, will be developed expeditiously and in a targeted manner over the next few years. In the expert review on the Excellence Strategy, TUD's conscious decision to focus on these Emerging Fields was particularly praised.

The present GSW 2028 development strategy keeps in line with this extraordinary opportunity for the humanities and social sciences at TUD. The establishment of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (GSW) has provided the joint institutional basis for the disciplines that are essential to the Emerging Field, and which is crucial to strengthening and expanding ambitious research initiatives and collaborations in line with the Excellence Strategy. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences thus has the necessary trust of the university and the necessary responsibility on the part of the School to ensure that this opportunity is used effectively.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences encompasses the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, the Faculty of Linguistics, Literature and Cultural Studies, as well as the Centre for Integration Studies (ZfI) and the Centre for Methods in the Social Sciences (ZSM). The School comprises approx. 90 Chairs, 7,500 of a total of 32,000 students at TU Dresden (including teacher training),[2] approx. 330 doctoral students, and approx. 570 employees. The School offers 32 degree programmes, including 13 Bachelor's degrees, 18 Master's degrees and 1

---

[1] https://tu-dresden.de/tu-dresden/profil/exzellenz/exzellenzstrategie/exzellenzantrag
[2] According to university statistics, the number is distributed between approx. 3,500 students in the teacher training degree programmes and approx. 4,000 students in the faculties of the School without teacher training.

Diplom degree, as well as a large proportion of the educational and specialist courses for the teacher training degree programmes at TU Dresden.

As of autumn 2019, 10 EU projects and 28 DFG projects are located at the School. Humanities and social sciences at TUD enjoy a remarkably strong position in comparison. The CRC 1285, for example, is the only Collaborative Research Centre in the field of humanities and social sciences at a TU9 university.
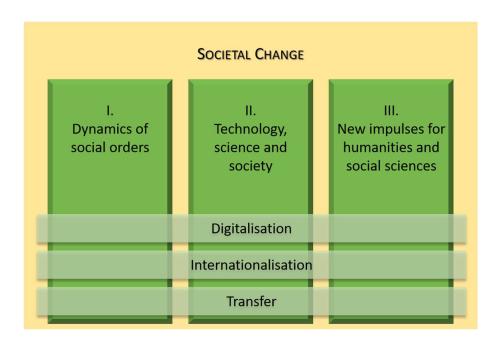
Research at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences is characterised by a great thematic diversity. For creative and innovative research in the humanities and social sciences, individual freedom is a fundamental prerequisite, enabling outstanding **individual academic achievements**. **Collaborative research** is additionally characterised by profiling features such as shared methods, research perspectives, or theories. At the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, these features include:

- orientation towards interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity both within the humanities and social sciences and with the Sciences (STEM, environmental sciences, medicine, etc.)
- bringing together historical-comparative and contemporary perspectives
- an agreement on shared conceptual and comparative heuristics and overarching concepts
- the central role of the medial constructiveness of culture and its forms of expression
- international orientation
- the integration of transfer activities, including their reflection

Academic activities at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences follow these principles e.g. within the research alliance DRESDEN-concept, especially in SAC 4, and in established formats such as the Henry Arnhold Summer School.

2. Development goals

In order to develop the Emerging Field 'Societal Change', the School of Humanities and Social Sciences organises its research cooperations into three cross-discipline pillars that are supported by three further cross-sectional topics. While the three pillars generate specific objectives and expansion requirements, the cross-sectional topics are overall binding objectives.

2.1 Dynamics of social orders

This field of research refers primarily to the **constitutional conditions and the crisis-prone state of cultural, social, and political orders**, increasingly from a global perspective. In addition to the questions of social cohesion, the integration capacity, and the integration possibilities of contemporary societies, their potential for conflict has become a central issue in recent years. Many current research efforts are located precisely in the **area of tension between social polarisation and stabilisation**.

The **CRC 1285 'Invectivity. Constellations and Dynamics of Disparagement'[3]**, established in 2017, is working prominently in this field. It aims to establish and expand a new leading category of cultural studies and social science research that will enable the analysis of the social dynamics of the degrading identification of individuals, groups, and larger collectives. It is characterised by an interweaving of historical and systematic contemporary projects. The research network, its concept, and its potential to promote early career researchers are pivotal to the further strategic planning and decision-making of the School.

As one of fourteen collaborative projects funded in Germany by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) to research modern German history in the former GDR, the Faculty of Education at TU Dresden - together with non-university partners - is conducting a project on the topic of **Residential Child Care in Special Homes of the GDR - A pedagogical reconstructive study on the GDR educational system and coping mechanisms**. This collaborative project will investigate not only the logic of these special homes as educational institutions, but also the biographical impact up to the youngest generation of youths who lived in these special homes until the upheaval of 1989. The

---

[3] https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/sfb1285

project thus makes an essential contribution to the understanding of the latest processes of societal change.[4]

The **Mercator Forum Migration and Democracy[5]**, founded in 2017, analyses the challenges of migration for democratic societies and the forms, instruments, and processes of their political handling. At the same time, it aims to formulate recommendations for action that can be used in political practice.

From another side, the constitutional conditions of social and political orders are addressed through the central concept of integration. This concept evokes different, sometimes contradictory ideas about what society is and should be, who belongs to it, where its boundaries run, and what views exist about the relationship between cultural belonging, individual performance, and social participation in the sense of inclusion. The **Centre for Integration Studies[6]**, established in 2016, bundles and coordinates research in this field, which deliberately also includes teacher training and educational processes.

Overall, the recognised research strength of the humanities and social sciences in its interdisciplinary cooperation at TU Dresden is concentrated in this pillar. Its national and international visibility is based on the research strength of the School's disciplines. It is characterised by its conceptual, theoretical, and methodological orientation on the one hand, and by its broad horizon in time and space on the other. Including the historical dimension is essential in order to be able to understand and analyse the manifold manifestations of societal change. Particularly in referring to previous epochs, relevant spaces of experience are opened up in this respect, which help to productively alienate the well-known and to thus better understand it. With regard to location, the School sets regional and territorial priorities.

In this pillar, in addition to fostering established Chairs, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences particularly supports outstanding early career researchers. Within the framework of the **Support the Best Postdocs** funding line, the School's strategy funds will be used to enable exceptionally qualified early career researchers in the postdoctoral qualification phase to place their own research project at one of the faculties of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences within the framework of a highly competitive third-party funding application (preferably DFG, EU, BMBF). In addition, incentives (start-up funding similar to the university-wide research pool) will be created to support the acquisition of third-party funding, especially for first-time applicants. Parallel to this, workshops on the acquisition of third-party funding will be held. Furthermore, formats of **peer counselling** by researchers who are experienced in the acquisition of third-party funding and who are closely involved in the subject will be offered.

---

[4] https://tu-dresden.de/tu-dresden/newsportal/news/bmbf-unterstuetzt-tud-forschung-zur-erziehung-in-spezialheimen-der-ddr
[5] https://forum-midem.de/
[6] https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/der-bereich/profil/zentren/zfi

2.2 Technology, science and society

In light of the grand challenges of the present, the traditional division of roles between the natural and engineering sciences on the one hand, and the humanities and social sciences on the other, according to which the problem-solving competence can be found here, and the reflection competence there, can hardly be convincing any longer. TUD especially strives to develop new perspectives beyond the communication of factual knowledge through collaborative interdisciplinary dialogue. These perspectives will help to shape knowledge and living spaces of the future and to handle scientific and technical innovations. Therefore, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences actively promotes research cooperations beyond the boundaries of its own subject spectrum. These include:

The **Boysen-TU Dresden-Graduate College**[7] as a cooperation of Technische Universität Dresden with the non-profit Friedrich and Elisabeth Boysen Foundation, which as an interdisciplinary research and doctoral college and through doctoral projects from the engineering, humanities, and social sciences as well as the humanities answers various questions about sustainable energy systems and mobility. It focuses on both the development of new technical solutions and the investigation of societal, political, and economic impacts and framework conditions.

In the **Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden**, researchers and artists will address the interactions between the fields of technology, art, science, and entrepreneurship. Its focus is primarily on the transformation of society and culture, in which technology functions as a resource, as a medium of dissemination, and as an element of discourse. The perspectives on this have primarily a focus on the humanities and social sciences as well as on art, rather than on pure technology assessment. They particularly address the interplay of technological development with social and cultural significance. In the first phase, the Schaufler Lab aims to investigate these interrelations in the current development of artificial intelligence. In the Schaufler Lab, researchers from various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences cooperate with artists and with researchers from the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) at TU Dresden. In the first phase, for example, the joint research centre for artificial intelligence of TU Dresden and Fraunhofer Society will be integrated: the Center for Explainable and Efficient AI Technologies (CEE AI).

The **Centre for Methods in the Social Sciences (ZSM)**[8] was founded in 2004 as a cooperation between Chairs of Sociology, Communication Science, and Political Science. Since 2014 with the participation of Chairs of the Faculty of Education, it was since successful

---

[7] https://tu-dresden.de/ing/maschinenwesen/iet/boysen#intro
[8] https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/zsm/

in establishing itself both as a research centre and as contact point for research methodological teaching and projects at TU Dresden. Specific research topics include populism, polarisation, media, public opinion formation, mediatisation, and human-machine communication. It focuses for example on the structural change of the public sphere and the social implications of the Internet of Things (e.g. Smart Home Lab of the ZSM and interdisciplinary VIVA Summer School).

The **Institute of Intellectual Property, Technology Law and Media Law (IGETeM)**[9] covers the topics of technical didactics, social values, and legal regulations in the face of technological change, intellectual property rights, and respective disruptive technologies. It investigates the social implications of an increasingly technological and automated future, in particular through artificial intelligence, and the resulting need for legal regulation. There is a particular focus on the design of intellectual property protection, the guarantee of individual and state digital sovereignty, and the legal framework for communication processes in a digitalised world.

At TUD, research in the areas of **school, education, and work** is conducted across Schools. The focus is on teacher training, teaching and learning in school, vocational training, and technical contexts, the development and evaluation of educational systems, as well as changes in the labour market and qualification research. The joint objective is to identify educational injustices, to prevent social polarisation through adequate inclusive education, and to thus successfully shape societal change. Lighthouse examples are the project package 'Synergetic teacher training in Excellent Context'[10] (SYLBER and TUD-Sylber BBS), the University School, the 'Cooperative training in the technical teaching profession' (KAtLA+), and the BMBF project 'Digital Diagnostics and Intervention in Automotive Engineering'.

One of the phenomena of societal change that all scientific disciplines are facing is a growing **scepticism and hostility towards science**. Therefore, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, supported by the CRC 1285 and in cooperation with other Schools of TUD, has started a process of reflection on these phenomena, e.g. with the Future Lab 'Fake Science?' held in July 2019. The initiation and implementation of transdisciplinary research projects, for example within the framework of Global Future Studies, is one of the declared goals.

For the time being, the preferred funding format in this pillar as well is the support of outstanding early career researchers within the framework of the **Support the Best Post-docs** funding line.

---

[9] https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/jura/igetem
[10] https://tu-dresden.de/zlsb/forschung-und-projekte/tud-sylber

2.3 New impulses for humanities and social sciences

At the School of Humanities and Social Sciences there are a number of cooperative, interdisciplinary research constellations which clearly point beyond individual projects, but which have not yet reached the necessary degree of condensation to strengthen the above-mentioned pillars in a central aspect or to even constitute a new research pillar. The School remains explicitly open for further approaches to strengthen the overall strategy through such impulses and potentials. Some examples are provided in the following.

The **GenderConceptGroup** is dedicated to an essential dimension of past and present societies. It is an interdisciplinary network of researchers at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences who in their respective disciplines integrate a focus on gender studies. The research is guided by the conviction that the category of gender is of complex importance in all areas of life.

With a view to the mediality of contemporary societies, the group **WeiterSehen** explores television series as seismographs of cultural and societal change. With this, the group has established an independent and interdisciplinary *series research* in Dresden since 2014. Twice a year the group organises conferences (e.g. together with the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the DRESDEN-concept partner Deutsches Hygiene-Museum), which are documented in publications.

It is aimed to maintain and systematically expand research into the relevance of **education** in a process of societal change, and to conduct this research in a more evidence-based approach together with (international) cooperation partners with a strong focus on research. The University School Dresden, the structured doctoral programme Education & Technology SPET, as well as the current large-scale projects on inclusion, teacher professionalisation, and digitalisation in vocational education and training, some of which are taking place with international participation, provide an excellent basis for this.

In the long run, the existing viable and extensive national and international networks will be expanded and utilised for application-orientated and fundamental (DFG) research that addresses current challenges in society and education policy such as educational injustice, skilled labour shortage, and migration.

For targeted evaluation, profile-forming, and opportunity improvement, the School provides, among other things, the possibility of obtaining funding for **international workshops**. Specialist Critical Friends can accompany the focusing of appropriate funding application strategies and strengthen the competitiveness of the concepts.

Strengthening the interdisciplinary interrelation between innovation and societal change is fostered through **interdisciplinary dialogue** beyond the humanities and social sciences by generating formats for a vivid exchange. The IDEA STUDIOs and Future Labs,

which were carried out in the past with great success, will be directly built on. In addition, School-specific SANs will be conducted.

2.4 Digitalisation

Digitalisation is shaping societal change at all levels and thereby outweighs any other factor. The sciences themselves, humanities and social sciences as well as the natural and technical sciences, are not excluded from this process either. Therefore, digitality is a cross-sectional topic for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences as well as for TUD as a whole, which is being investigated on several levels and by different actors. First, analogous to other disciplines, digitality is increasingly becoming an integral part of research in the humanities and social sciences. The challenges arising from the technical possibilities of digitalisation require an intensive cooperation of new quality even within the humanities and social sciences. Secondly, this will hardly be possible without using the interfaces with the disciplines of other Schools, whose digital competences are of great importance for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, but which, in turn, also depend on the competences and reflexive potentials of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Thirdly, this is not only about expanding the spectrum of methods and possible findings, but also about reflecting on the impacts of digitalisation on all areas of society, not least on the sciences themselves.

There are already a variety of components at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences to achieve the outlined goals. These include research within the research pillars I) and II) such as the relevant sub-projects of the CRC 1285, the accompanying research on the University School, and the focal points in the Schaufler Lab.

The Emerging Field 'Societal Change' with its focus on the impacts of the digitalisation and mediatisation of all areas of life is consciously orientated towards one of the major societal challenges of the present. Targeted **appointments** in the Emerging Field will ensure that in all faculties of the School cultural manifestations and socio-political impacts of change processes will be both researched from multiple perspectives and represented in teaching. These include:

- *Practical Philosophy with a research focus on the evaluative and ethical questions of technological innovation and the digitalisation of all areas of life*
- *Micro-Sociology and techno-social interaction*
- *Visual Culture in a global context*
- *Digital Media and the methods to research digital media*
- *North American Literature with a focus on Future Studies*

The **Master's degree programme** in **Digital Humanities** (DH), which is currently being developed, will be the first to be run by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. In contrast to most other university locations, DH in Dresden will be anchored at the School

of Humanities and Social Sciences and geared to its specific needs. This provides the opportunity to enable those who are to boost primarily the digitalisation in the humanities both in research and teaching to formulate and shape the needs of the humanities in cooperation with technology-related subjects such as media informatics.

Digital literacy is understood **as a research and teaching assignment**. An orientation towards the principles of digitalisation allows for a data-based, personalised, adaptive, cross-linguistic teaching adapted to the needs of learners according to the situation. Due to digital and blended learning/flipped classroom concepts it enables the scalability as well as place and time independence of learning. It thus provides for both inclusive teaching and the improvement of the teaching quality with the same use of resources. The University School and other current relevant projects offer an appropriate interface for this. With regard to computer-based teaching and learning, the focus is not on the mere use of digital tools, but on how and under what conditions these tools make teaching and learning more efficient and effective. In addition to focusing on methodological approaches, current impacts of the digital colonisation of the lifeworld will be examined as a cross-sectional topic of teaching. Topics such as informational self-determination, social media, ethics, but also intellectual property, data protection, and originality constitute central connecting lines, e.g. to the CRC 1285 Invectivity, to the SIDI, to the initiative Science Scepticism, and to the IGETeM.

A key measure to boost the Emerging Field 'Societal Change' in the context of the Excellence Strategy is the appointment of a **Chair of Digital Cultures**. This will substantially strengthen the culture and media studies expertise existing at the location, both thematically and across disciplines. The Chair is orientated towards the expansion of collaborative research and focuses on the dimensions of the affective, the popular, and the aesthetic, with a perspective on the social and political implications of the fundamentals, practices, and impacts of digital cultures. The Chair is distinguished not only by its transdisciplinary connectivity, but also by taking into account media convergence and transmediality.

Another important measure from the Excellence Strategy that is directly reflected in the School's development strategy is the establishment of a Centre for Societal Impact of Disruptive Innovations (SIDI), with the School having the technical responsibility for its conceptualisation, design, and objectives. The SIDI will use the reflection potentials of the participating disciplines to investigate the ethical, normative, and cultural conditions of scientific developments, the evaluation of social consequences, the risk management, and the risk communication of a society at the interfaces with the other disciplines and with the involvement of DRESDEN-concept partners. Four new and independent junior research groups will be established at the Centre. The School emphasises its claim to leadership competence in establishing this Centre, which will operate across Schools.

2.5 Internationalisation

Internationalisation is seen as a cross-sectional task both in research and teaching. Therefore, there is a particular focus on research activities with an international scope. With regard to international networking, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences has a long tradition of institutional support and cooperation. This includes the international graduate training in the IGK 625 (together with École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris), funded by the DFG until 2009, which since 2016 has been continued in the Franco-German Doctoral College entitled 'Unterschiede denken/Construire les différences' (together with École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris and Humboldt-Universität Berlin), funded by the Franco-German University.

The International Relations degree programme (B.A. and M.A.), established in 1998 and run by the **School of International Studies** (ZIS) since 2002, is regarded as a best practice example of successful cross-institutional cooperation, bringing together law, international politics, and economics in equal shares.

Internationalisation at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences is also reflected in the wide range of activities in international development cooperation. Established as early as 1996, the Master's Programme in Vocational Education and Personnel Capacity Building for the training of experts in vocational education and training in developing countries, which has since been continuously funded by the DAAD, has just been re-approved funding for the next eight years as a development-related postgraduate course (EPOS). The graduates trained in this course offer promising potential for projects in international development cooperation. Current specialist partnerships with universities in developing countries in Chile and Burkina Faso, a BMBF project in Vietnam, development projects in cooperation with the GIZ (e.g. in Central Asia), and worldwide alumni activities are just a few examples. Additional projects have already been applied for. It would be desirable for the university to improve the interdisciplinary networking of the four EPOS degree programmes in vocational education, tropical forestry, water management, and textile technology in order to achieve excellence in international development work as well, as had already been envisaged in 2008.

The expansion of **coordinated partnership activities** within TU Dresden will be facilitated by increased networking of the Erasmus/study-abroad coordinators in the faculties (Network International GSW). A viable communication system, consisting of both information transfer channels and exchange formats, is intended to be established for this purpose. This networking process is supported by the School Administration. Coordinated partnership activities outside TU Dresden will be achieved by expanding the network of regional ambassadors. For international student marketing, information material on the research profile and the degree programmes offered by the School of Humanities

and Social Sciences will be produced. In order to boost the international mobility of students, teaching staff, and support staff, targeted counselling and support formats as well as materials will be developed, which will be shared via the School's internal network.

Support can be provided both for the international expansion of existing activities and for the establishment of new projects with an international focus, e.g. in the form of travel grants, material resources for international workshops, or the (pro rata) reimbursement of membership fees for institutional specialist societies.

2.6 Transfer

Taking on social responsibility both as researchers and as citizens, as well as imparting knowledge and stimulating thought processes among a broader public is part of the self-conception of all disciplines involved in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. All of the aforementioned collaborations and research groups are thus assuming this cross-sectional task. In addition to the range of topics related to the **global futures approach**, the **Societal Change Forum (SCF)** is playing an important role in this context. The series of events, scheduled to take place roughly twice a year and with the participation of external guests, will focus on topics that are perceived as a threat to society because of the range of their transformation potential. The SCF is primarily a discussion format that aims to 1) explore the potential for opportunities and risks, 2) form competence groups within TUD, and 3) increase the visibility of this initiative launched by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The priority here is the regular and visible positioning of the initiative to demonstrate commitment and reach. The SCFs are organised in cooperation with other Schools or DDc partners.

It is aimed to maintain and systematically expand research into the relevance of **education** in a process of societal change, and to conduct this research in a more evidence-based approach together with (international) cooperation partners with a strong focus on research. The University School Dresden, the structured doctoral programme Education & Technology SPET, as well as the current large-scale projects on inclusion, teacher professionalisation, and digitisation in vocational education and training, some of which are taking place with international participation, provide an excellent basis for this. In the long run, the existing viable and extensive national and international networks will be expanded and utilised for application-orientated and fundamental (DFG) research that addresses current challenges in society and education policy such as educational injustice, skilled labour shortage, and migration.

The extent to which **teaching and transfer processes** on the one hand and scientific analysis and reflection on the other are integrally linked is demonstrated by the example of the University School, which became operational in summer 2019. At the same time, it

is an important component of the cross-sectional field of digitalisation, as due to its conceptual structure and the IT support of all processes it is a supplier of digital research data. Students and teachers at the University School generate data on the educational support and assistance process and on their individual learning and development paths on a daily basis.

3. Measures for the implementation of the development goals

In order to achieve the development goals set out in both the three research pillars and in the three cross-sectional fields, a number of measures have been initiated to strengthen existing activities and to initiate planned projects (seed funding). These are cross-pillar and cross-sectional measures. They will be financed from the School's strategy budget and from TUD 2028 Excellence Strategy funds.

Requests for support that thematically fit into the present development strategy can be submitted informally to the School Council at any time. The agreed management rules of the School apply.

Measures for the implementation of the development goals
Seed Funding
Support the Best Postdocs (3 FTE)
Critical Friends: Peer counselling on the acquisition of third-party funds
Formats of interdisciplinary dialogue IDEA STUDIOs, Future Labs, SANs, etc.
Assignments in the Emerging Field
Establishment of a Chair of Digital Cultures
Establishment of the Master's degree programme Digital Humanities
Leading role in the Centre for Societal Impact of Disruptive Innovations (SIDI)
Strengthening of coordinated international partnership activities
Network of regional ambassadors
Travel Grants, material resources for international workshops, (pro rata) reimbursement of membership fees for institutional specialist societies

4. Outlook

Science is living, dynamic, and characterised by agility. Hence, the present development strategy GSW 2028 will be updated and extended on an annual basis.