

# Spa and healing forests, Germany

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## Organisations involved

Eigenbetrieb Kaiserbäder Insel Usedom, Spas Association of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Office of Bäderverband M-V e.V.

## Aim

To raise the competitiveness of the health and tourism sector.

## Target group

Visitors seeking recreation for health promotion in forests (also for people with visual disabilities), and for ill people through therapeutic programmes.

## What happens

The revised version of forest law in the German federal state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania provided the opportunity to classify forests as spa and healing forests (“Kur- und Heilwald”) by law to enhance the competitiveness of the health and tourism sector. The first forest of this classification was established in 2017 on the Island of Usedom in Heringsdorf. A certification for sustainable forest management is a precondition and the prevailing right to enter the forests can be limited for this area to create tranquillity (§22 LWaldG Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania).

## Two types of classifications are existing (Düsterhoft, 2017; Steingrube et al. 2015)

- Spa forests:  
health-promoting with widespread impact (e.g. forest bathing)
- Healing forests:  
specially structured / shaped for therapeutic and supervised use (forest therapy)

Within the area the use of mobile phones was prohibited at first (Welzer, 2017), however, an app corresponding to objects that are posted in the spa and healing forests is now available. The spa and healing forest of Usedom covers 187 hectares of beech and pine forests next to the shore. It offers several healing trails. One of the healing trails is specially adapted for people with visual disabilities using guiding-assistance-systems through kerbstones. All the healing trails have resting points with information desks and instructions for exercises comparable to the Finnish “Restorative Forest Trails”. The investment for development and installation was about 360,000€ and was 90% funded by the state and the European Union (EFRE) (Steingrube et al., 2015). The spa and healing forests in Germany are free of charge (Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Bau und Tourismus Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 2016).

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## Results of the programme/project/intervention

As the project is seen as a success, the planning for three more spa and healing forests in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania has already started.

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## Reference

listed at the end of the chapter

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## Website

[www.kur-und-heilwald.de/?lang=en](http://www.kur-und-heilwald.de/?lang=en)

[www.mv-baederverband.de/en](http://www.mv-baederverband.de/en)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyoIP-nEMM4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyoIP-nEMM4) [German]

