

## Progress Report oekom verlag GmbH

2015/2016

### Leadership Declaration of the 'Biodiversity in Good Company' Initiative

All signatory companies acknowledge and support the three objectives of the international "Convention on Biological Diversity":

- Conservation of biological diversity
- Sustainable use of its components
- Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that arise out of the utilization of genetic resources

and commit themselves to:

1. Analyzing corporate activities with regard to their impacts on biological diversity;
2. Including the protection of biological diversity within their environmental management system;
3. Appointing a responsible individual within the company to steer all activities in the biodiversity sector and report to the Management Board;
4. Defining realistic, measurable objectives that are monitored and adjusted every two to three years;
5. Publishing activities and achievements in the biodiversity sector in the company's annual, environmental, and/or corporate social responsibility report;
6. Informing suppliers about the company's biodiversity objectives and integrating suppliers accordingly and step by step;
7. Exploring the potential for cooperation with scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and/ or governmental institutions with the aim of deepening dialogue and continuously improving the corporate management system vis-à-vis the biodiversity domain.

To demonstrate ongoing commitment, member companies will provide the Initiative with a progress report every two years.

## **1. Analyzing corporate activities with regard to their impacts on biological diversity:**

oekom had already carried out substantial analyses in previous years. Thus, further analyses have not been necessary. Consequently, there is no progress at this point to report on. Still communicating environment and sustainability is the core business of oekom verlag. By way of various communication media oekom procures society divers access to global issues like climate change or biodiversity.

As a company that depends on the raw material wood for paper production oekom verlag is aware of the fact that the depletion of tropical forests will destroy irretrievably the habitat of many animal and plant species. Therefore the publishing house's highest priority is to use recycled paper. Recycled paper not only helps to protect the natural environment – its production also requires less water, chemicals and energy. Additionally, most of the paper used in the office as well as for publications is certified with the eco-label Blue Angel. In exceptional cases, if the requested paper quality is not available, paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is used instead.

However, there are also other fields of production and distribution of publications with high ecological relevance. During the printing process climate-damaging emissions emerge, particularly due to its high energy consumption and the use of paints and dissolvent. Printing ink containing mineral oil may cause cancer or may have a mutagenic effect. Distribution as well causes climate-damaging emissions through transportation. In order to minimize the negative effects on biodiversity and climate oekom mainly cooperates with FSC- and ISO-certified printing companies and regional sales partners.

By organizing the daily business life in an eco-friendly way further emissions and polluting substances are reduced. Only two employees rely on the car for their travel to work. Nevertheless, a constant percentage of 95 of the employees use their bikes or public transport. For business trips all staff consistently use trains. Furthermore, oekom verlag exclusively obtains its office supplies, most of them eco-labelled, from a certified ecological mail order firm. By using green electricity and energy-efficient office machines oekom verlag additionally cuts down on emissions. Its electricity provider is awarded with the *Green energy* label. The certification provides electricity from 100 per cent renewable energy. Additionally, new eco-plants are promoted with a fixed amount. The company compensates for unavoidable CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions by investing in a CER-Project with Gold Standard for the protection of biodiversity and the climate in India.

## **2. Including the protection of biological diversity within their environmental management system:**

Protection of the environment and sustainability are not only the focus of oekom's publications but also form the basis of production and management. oekom verlag is committed to contributing to sustainable development not only through its but also in its role as a company. Apart from protection of forest and climate, the safeguard of biodiversity is top priority. It is regarded as iron law in all management decisions.

The employees regularly exchange information e. g. in the weekly Jour Fixe, in the regular meetings of the area managers or during oekom's semi-annual workshops. Amongst other topics processes with regard to the environment are specified and responsibilities are allocated.

According to its goals regarding environmental management oekom continuously records its data of its consumption in order to identify further potentials of reduction and in a next step to carry out measures of conservation. The goals are part of oekom's environment programme.

In October 2016 oekom drew up a Declaration of Conformity with regard to the Sustainability Code developed by the Council for Sustainable Development. oekom reports on 20 non-financial criteria related to sustainability as for example on its use of natural resources, resource management and climate-relevant emissions. Quantifiable performance indicators support these data making oekom's sustainability performance comparable and transparent. The publisher's Declaration of Conformity has been published under <http://datenbank2.deutscher-nachhaltigkeitskodex.de/Profile/CompanyProfile/9023/de/2015/dnk>.

### **3. Appointing a responsible individual within the company to steer all activities in the biodiversity sector and report to the Management Board:**

This aim had already been achieved. The state of affairs corresponds to that one specified in the last Report of Progress. Already existing since 2011 a specialist department for sustainability works closely with the executive board. It provides professional advice to the company concerning a climate and resource friendly production and counsels the executive board regarding sustainable management with a particular focus on biodiversity. Its duties also include development of further management strategies in cooperation with partners from the branch and with scientific institutions and, finally, to pass on this knowledge as a multiplier.

oekom's Sustainability Representative is responsible for safeguarding the environmental objectives of the company by regularly examining the internal processes with regard to environmental compliance, notably with regard to compatibility concerning biodiversity. Apart from that she is responsible for compensating oekom's CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions. For this purpose she annually collects all relevant data, defining the system boundaries preferably ambitious. Hereby, she also identifies possibilities to avoid or reduce emissions and discusses these with the executive board and the specialist team. Where appropriate she initiates modifications and supervises their operative implementation for example further reductions of electronic equipment and its replacement through one single multifunctional device.

### **4. Defining realistic, measurable objectives that are monitored and adjusted every two to three years:**

oekom has reached its goal to further increase the amount of publications printed with ink free of mineral oil. The use of ink free of mineral oil has become a standard for all journals, advertising media and company's brochures. Most books are printed without mineral-oil containing ink.

In order to avoid ecological damage elsewhere, oekom takes into account that ink based on plant oil is obtained from certified sources to prevent deforestation for one thing and for another thing the utilization of genetically modified crops (GM crops). Thus, oekom supports the claim of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) and Federal Institute for Risk Assessment to use alternative ink.

One reason why oekom has been capable of changing to ink free of mineral oil was the fact that the offer of these inks has significantly increased. Although ink producers had rejected the possibility of a general change to ink free of mineral oil during the discussion forum within the

context of the project "Development of an eco-label Blue Angel for eco-friendly printed products", nevertheless, they were able to manage this change within a very short period of time, when it had become obvious that the new eco-label would increase the demand for ink free of mineral oil substantially. For a certain degree, this success has to do with the above-mentioned project – initiated and organized by oekom – that has established a widely known and approved benchmark for sustainability within the publishing sector, the "Blue Angel for eco-friendly printed products" (RAL-UZ 195). (For more information about the project see <http://greenpublishing.de/index.php?id=1664>.)

For many years, oekom has used exclusively recycling paper for the printing of its nine professional journals and for its business documents. Since the last report all recycling papers used are additionally certified with the eco label Blue Angel. The books are also, where possible, printed domestically and on recycling paper certified with the Blue Angel. The use of recycling paper without this certification is mainly restricted to very few publications and to some book covers. Exceptionally, if the requested paper quality is not available, FSC-certified paper is used instead. But: "A higher proportion of recycling paper means more protection of the environment." (UBA 2000). The goal stated in the last report to increase the proportion of publications printed on recycling paper up to 90 per cent of the total volume had already in 2015 with 94 per cent been exceeded. The data for 2016 have not been recorded yet. For further specified targets these have to be evaluated first.

In 2016 the first oekom book was published certified with the eco-label "Blue Angel for eco-friendly printed products" (RAL-UZ 195). From 2017 onwards at least one book will be certified with this eco-label.

oekom has, as stated in the last report, drawn up a Declaration of Conformity to the Sustainability Code and makes hereby its sustainability performance even more transparent.

#### **5. Publishing activities and achievements in the biodiversity sector in the company's annual, environmental, and/or corporate social responsibility report:**

oekom does not publish an environmental or sustainability report in written form. However, the publisher explicitly informs about its activities regarding the protection of climate and biodiversity on its homepage under the column "Sustainable Publisher".

Internally all the business activities and success with regard to biodiversity as well as to other sections concerning the protection of the environment are presented to the staff in the biennial business workshop.

In every publication there is a QR-code providing information especially referring to the business activities in the field of climate protection.

By publishing the Declaration of Conformity to the Sustainability Code oekom not only makes its sustainability performance more transparent. Indicators of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) make the ecological and social sustainability performance quantifiable and thus comparable.

## **6. Informing suppliers about the company's biodiversity objectives and integrating suppliers accordingly and step by step:**

oekom is constantly aiming to optimize the publication's production and distribution considering all possible aspects relevant to the environment. Therefore, oekom communicates actively with its printing companies and its distributors in order to stimulate their offer for ecological alternatives and improve the terms of use. This includes ink free of mineral oil as well as water-saving and low-emission printing processes. Since the implementation of the eco-label "Blue Angel for eco-friendly printed products" (RAL-UZ 195) oekom explicitly and repeatedly encourages printing companies to become certified with this label.

## **7. Exploring the potential for cooperation with scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and/ or governmental institutions with the aim of deepening dialogue and continuously improving the corporate management system vis-à-vis the biodiversity domain:**

The project "Development of an eco-label Blue Angel for eco-friendly printed products" (Funding Code 3712 95 338 3) led by oekom and promoted by the Federal Environment Agency since November 2013 came to an end in April 2015. The scientific institutes IFEU and Ökopol were project partners. Since the introduction of the new eco-label "Blue Angel for printing products" (RAL-UZ 195) on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2015, more than 140 printing companies have been certified and obtained permissions for various printing products. Printing products with this eco-label save resources due to the use of a high percentage of recycling paper as well as inks, varnish and adhesives, that do not interfere with high-quality recycling of the paper on behalf of conservation. Furthermore, these products have to avoid substances and materials that are harmful to the health and the environment. During the printing process among others the use of energy and emissions harmful to health have to be reduced. With this new eco-label oekom has established a high ecological standard in the publishing sector and has made an important contribution to the protection of the environment and the preservation of biodiversity.

oekom's reputation as a pioneer for sustainable publishing has already become known among scientific institutions. Thus, the publisher continually receives inquiries on this topic for scientific dissertations. oekom uses these inquiries as a possibility of exchange in order to spread its knowledge and experience.

As from 2017 oekom will also participate in the mentor program of the German Council for Sustainable Development in order to make the German Sustainability Code even more established, and thus, stimulating the competition on the market.

In cooperation with scientific, political or non-governmental key players oekom edits substantially complex causalities in a competent and coherent way and, thus, conveys the public issues concerning the environment and sustainability. A study about "Non-academic communication of research" by the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin published in December 2016 has just demonstrated how important non-academic publication organs as for example journals and non-fiction books are to communicate complex issues.

Among others, oekom has published the following list of books regarding biodiversity:

### 2013

Ugo Bardi: Der geplünderte Planet. Die Zukunft des Menschen im Zeitalter schwindender Ressourcen.

Ute Scheub, Haiko Pieplow, Hans-Peter Schmidt: Terra Preta. Die schwarze Revolution aus dem Regenwald.

*politische ökologie* Bd.132: Wald. Politische Spielräume zwischen Baum und Borke.

Roderich von Detten (Hrsg.): Das Waldsterben. Rückblick auf einen Ausnahmezustand.

Berlin 21 (Hrsg.): Vielfältig nachhaltig für Berlin. Auf dem Weg in eine zukunftsfähige Hauptstadt.

Hans Carl von Carlowitz, Joachim Hamberger (Hrsg.): Sylvicultura oeconomica oder Haußwirthliche Nachricht und Naturmäßige Anweisung zur Wilden Baum-Zucht

### 2014

Jes Weigelt, Alexander Müller, Klaus Töpfer, Charlotte Beckh (Hrsg.): Soils in the Nexus. A Crucial Resource for Water, Energy and Food Security.

Karin Reuter: Ökologische Tugenden und gutes Leben. Der Schutz der Biodiversität im Zeitalter von ökologischer Krise und nachhaltiger Entwicklung.

Jens Mecklenburg: Raritäten von der Weide. 66 Nutztiere, die Sie kennenlernen sollten, bevor sie aussterben.

Berthold Langenhorst, Armin Lude, Alexander Bittner (Hrsg.): Wildnisbildung. Neue Perspektiven für Großschutzgebiete.

Bettina Matzdorf, Carolin Biedermann, Claas Meyer, Kristin Nicolaus, Claudia Sattler, Sarah Schomers: Was kostet die Welt? Payments for Ecosystem Services in der Praxis.

Dieter Steiner: Rachel Carson. Pionierin der Ökologiebewegung. Eine Biographie.

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