

## Leadership Declaration oekom verlag GmbH

2011/2012

### 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 corporatemanagement 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**

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 which depends on the raw material wood 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 purchasing paper from responsible forest management. oekom verlag prints its publications only on paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and on recycled paper. The office exclusively uses recycled paper carrying the eco-label Blue Angel. Recycled paper not only helps to protect the natural environment – its production also requires less water, chemicals and energy.

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 dissolvents. 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 exclusively 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. 95 per cent of the employees travel to work by bike or public transport, for business trips they 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. The company compensates for unavoidable CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions by investing in a Gold Standard project for renewable energies.

## **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, the regular area managers' meetings or during oekom's semi-annual workshops. Amongst other topics processes with regard to the environment are specified and responsibilities are allocated. An environmental management system in written form has not yet been established, due to the size of the company and due to the fact that the organizational structure guarantee reasonable governance and transparency in corporate policy with regard to protection of biodiversity and control mechanisms. For 2013 the issuance and publication of an environmental guideline is planned.

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

At the beginning of 2011 oekom established a specialist department for sustainability working 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.

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

oekom is planning to use for its publications ink that is free of mineral oil in the future. Beginning in 2013 oekom will check if ink purified from mineral oil or ink on the basis of plant oil is a viable economical as well as practical option. 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.

For many years, oekom has used exclusively recycling paper (where possible certified with the Blue Angel) for the printing of its nine professional journals and for its business documents. The books are also, where possible, printed domestically and on recycling paper. 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). Therefore oekom will, as far as technically and economically possible, successively increase the proportion of publications printed on recycling paper.

Even though an environmental management system is not necessarily required in respect of the size of the enterprise as well as its structures regarding information flow, oekom nevertheless has decided to implement one within the next two years.

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

So far, no annual, no environmental and no sustainability report in written form exist. 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.

The public relation of the project “Green Publishing – New Environmental Standards for the publishing sector” supplies information about the project’s events and results.

## **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. Amongst other

things, oekom informs its external suppliers about its aims regarding biodiversity and involves them by adjusting its contracts, respectively.

## **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 loss of biodiversity, climate change and the yet conceivable shortage of natural resources have an effect on the publishing sector. Nevertheless, the publishing companies hardly know the ecological footprint of their own products. Under the label “Green Publishing” the pioneers of the branch more recently seek ways to produce and publish books and periodicals in a more sustainable way.

In order to raise the branch’s awareness for the protection of the environment and sustainability, oekom has initiated the project “Green Publishing – New Environmental Standards for the Publishing Sector” which has been supported by the Federal Environment Agency since 2011. This was done conscious that a modification of all 28.000 German publishing companies as well as all 22.000 German institutions towards an environmentally compatible production and business management would have a significant impact on the preservation of biodiversity.

In cooperation with the ifeu - Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, Heidelberg, Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW) in Berlin and the Frankfurt Book Fair branch-specific standards for a sustainable way of publishing are compiled, evaluated and finally practical criteria are developed. These “Requirements on the Sustainability of Printing Paper and Printing Processes” were discussed in a multistage communication process with the publishing branch and were amongst others presented at the branch’s leading fairs (drupe 2012 and Frankfurt Book Fair 2012). The project’s results were submitted to the Environmental Label Jury that has decided upon generating respective Basic Award Criteria for the Blue Angel eco-label.

oekom has filed a subsequent application for a continuation of the project “Green Publishing”. After the two most relevant phases of the publications’ supply chain, the production of paper and the printing process, have been examined with regard to the environment, now the distribution and the office management are analyzed to achieve a better life cycle assessment of publishing.

Furthermore, oekom has supported the initiative “Plant for the Planet” of Felix Finkbeiner with a tree-donation at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Hereby, oekom has alerted the publishing

companies that there is an easy way of preserving biodiversity and protecting the global climate by planting trees. Children and teenagers taking part in the initiative champion the global climate and have appealed to the publishing sector to plant trees with a so called "Future Fee".

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.

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

### 2012

„Vom Verstummen der Welt. Wie uns der Verlust der Artenvielfalt kulturell verarmen lässt.“ Marcel Robischon.

„global.patrioten. Begegnungen, Positionen und Impulse zu Klimagerechtigkeit, Biologischer und Kultureller Vielfalt.“ Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen (VNB e.V.), der Arbeitsstelle Weltbilder e.V. und dem Institut für angewandte Kulturforschung e.V. (eds.).

„Der halbwilde Wald. Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald: Geschichte und Geschichten.“ Herbert Pöhl.

„Klimaschutz im Kontext. Die Rolle von Bildung und Partizipation auf dem Weg in eine klimafreundliche Gesellschaft.“ Michael Zschiesche.

„Grundkurs Nachhaltigkeit.“ Claus-Peter Hutter, Karin Blessing und Rainer Köthe (eds.).

„Der Baum. Eine Biografie.“ David Suzuki, Wayne Grady.

### 2011

„Das Rätsel der grünen Rose und andere Überraschungen aus dem Leben der Pflanzen und Tiere.“ Josef H. Reichholf.

### 2010

„Fokus Biodiversität. Wie Biodiversität in der Kulturlandschaft erhalten und nachhaltig genutzt werden kann.“ Volkmar Wolters und Stefan Hotes.

oekom further issues the journal:

„Nationalpark: Wo Mensch und Wildnis sich begegnen.“ Verein der Nationalpark-Freunde e.V. (ed.).

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