

Progress Report oekom verlag GmbH

2013/2014

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. 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 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 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 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. 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 CO₂-emissions by investing in a Gold Standard project for the protection of biodiversity and the climate.

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.

In the context of its participation in ECOPROFIT (Ecological Project For Integrated Environmental Technic) oekom implemented an environment program, systematically recorded data of its consumption, identified further potentials of reduction and carried out measures of conservation in 2014. Thus, oekom has achieved its aim (see Progress Report 2011/2012, article 4) to implement an environment program even though it wouldn't have been mandatory considering the size of the company and taking into account the fact that the organizational structure guarantees reasonable governance and transparency. The issuance of an environmental guideline for publication has been deferred to 2015 as it seemed more reasonable to implement a systematic environment program in the context of ECOPROFIT first.

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 CO₂-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 the progressive reduction 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 achieved its aim and has selectively used ink that is free of mineral oil for its publications. Although experience has shown that the use of ink purified from mineral oil or ink on the basis of plant oil is on the actual condition a very limited option from an economical as well as practical point of view. However, oekom is going to gradually increase its use because it is a reasonable alternative from an ecological point of view. 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. For checking purposes as well as to easier decide on objectives oekom has listed its share of publications printed on hundred per cent recycling paper (86 per cent of the total volume) and on recycling paper with the Blue Angel eco-label (25 per cent of the total volume) more systematically than before. Within the next two years oekom aims at increasing the proportion of publications printed on recycling paper.

By the end of 2015 oekom is going to submit the Declaration of Conformity of the German Sustainability Code (Deutscher Nachhaltigkeits Kodex) initiated by the German Council for Sustainable Development (Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung) in order to make the company's commitment to sustainability transparent and comparable.

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.

The public relation of the two projects initiated and realized by oekom, "Green Publishing – New Environmental Standards for the publishing sector" and "Development of an eco-label Blue Angel for eco-friendly printed products" respectively (see for example www.nachhaltig-publizieren.de) supplies information about the projects' events and results, and thus, raises awareness about the issue of green publishing within the printing and publishing sector.

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. For example, based on the results of the project "Green Publishing" oekom conducted a survey of its printing houses in 2013 in order to systematically gather data about their environmental performance as well as their capability of eco-friendly

printing. Since then the findings serve as a basis for both decision-making and negotiation for further cooperation.

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 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” in 2011 and finalized it in 2013. It was promoted by the Federal Environment Agency. 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, the Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW) in Berlin and the Frankfurt Book Fair branch-specific standards for a sustainable way of publishing were compiled, evaluated and finally practical criteria were developed, that were discussed in a multistage communication process with the publishing branch. Based on the results oekom has run the follow-up project "Development of an eco-label Blue Angel for eco-friendly printed products" since November 2013. Also this time the IFEU and the Frankfurt Book Fair are project partners as well as reassigned Ökopool – Institute for Environmental Strategies in Hamburg. The project will be finalized in April 2015 after the introduction of the new eco-label Blue Angel for printing products on 1st March, 2015. The Blue Angel, the best known eco-label in Germany, has been developed to certify printing products which use a high percentage of recycling paper in the production process 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 health and to the environment. During the printing process among others the use of energy and emissions harmful to health have to be reduced. On 9th December, 2014, the Environmental Label Jury has ratified the suggested award criteria in the winter session in Berlin and decided the introduction of the eco-label “Blue Angel for printing products” (RAL-UZ 195) on 1st March, 2015.

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:

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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