



Strong Signal from Business: 'Biodiversity in Good Company' Initiative Realigned

Companies Establish New Private-Sector Association

The 'Biodiversity in Good Company' Initiative, which was established in 2008 as a project under the auspices of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), has been transformed into a business-run and company-driven independent association. By this realignment, the project, which had proven to be a great success, ensures its long-term future prospects. The business network will continue to expand its activities from its German base. The BMU welcomes the companies' commitment. The dramatic loss of biological diversity is one of the most severe global problems. The United Nations declared the years 2011 – 2020 as UN Decade on Biodiversity. The purpose of the 'Biodiversity in Good Company' Initiative is to contribute to reaching the goals of the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

German Federal Environment Minister Dr. Norbert Röttgen complimented the Initiative: "Nature is our foundation of life. Protecting nature is the joint task of government and society. The German business community has made a vital contribution to this by founding the international network 'Biodiversity in Good Company'. German companies support the federal government in implementing the National Biodiversity Strategy and internationally agreed targets." Germany had held the CBD presidency between 2008 and 2010 and hosted the 9th Conference of the Parties 2008 in Bonn, Germany. On this occasion, the BMU and several private companies had initiated the business initiative and commissioned the GIZ with implementing the project.

Richard Schneider, CEO Werner & Mertz GmbH, explains the company's motivation to become one of the founding members of the association: "Protecting biodiversity and advocating sustainability reflects our conviction that only integrated environmental management makes sense. From an economical perspective it is also a good sign when smaller companies and brands, for example 'Frosch', can sustain their position in the market. Ecologically and economically the same applies: diversity increases the quality of life!"

The new association will take up its work with companies who have already been participating in the project before and seeks to quickly gain more members. A board comprised of seven members assumes strategic leadership of the Initiative. Board members are: Alexander Bartelt, Department Manager Climate Protection and Sustainable Products, Otto Group (Chairman of the Board); Gisbert Braun, Head of Corporate Quality & Sustainability, Faber-Castell Aktiengesellschaft (Deputy Chairman of the Board); Dr.-Ing. Detlef Matz, Head of Sustainability Management, Werner & Mertz GmbH (Treasurer); Edgar Endrukaitis, Head of Environmental Policy Programme, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH; Michael Garvs, Head of Sustainability Management, Bionade GmbH; Heini Lehti, Senior Specialist, Environmental Market Support CE, UPM GmbH; Michael Scholing-Darby, Head of Political Communications, Group External Relations, Volkswagen AG. Mrs Carolin Boßmeyer has been appointed as Managing Director.

The BMU will continue its close cooperation with the 'Biodiversity in Good Company' Initiative, including joint hosting of events as for example this year's dialogue event "Biodiversity and Business" (in German) in Fulda, Germany, on 20 October. GIZ will continue its partnership, as well, hosting the Initiative's offices in the GIZ branch Berlin. „We will conduct an international project with several member companies of the initiative, which aims at improving the protection of biological diversity along the supply chains“, said Edgar Endrukaitis, Head of Environmental Policy Programme at GIZ, who until recently coordinated the Initiative and now has become member of the board.

To date membership of the Initiative mainly comprises companies from Germany, Brazil, and Japan – countries that hosted the Conferences of the Parties to the CBS in recent years. Member companies commit themselves to integrating biodiversity protection measures into their corporate management system by signing the Initiative's Mission Statement and Leadership Declaration. Among various activities the Initiative, in cooperation with the German Leuphana University in Lüneburg, published an influential Corporate Biodiversity Management Handbook as a guide for practical implementation.

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