



EUROPEAN BUSINESS & BIODIVERSITY CAMPAIGN

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Layman's Report

BIODIVERSITY - IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

Biodiversity – It's Your Business – this has been the slogan of the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign. The campaign has offered an excellent platform for decision-making in the private sector to assess corporate risks and opportunities linked to biodiversity. Large, small and medium sized companies operating in the EU have been benefited from Biodiversity Checks, workshops, regional biodiversity forums and a wide range of communication actions to convey a crucial message: businesses can and should help to stop the loss of biodiversity.

This report summarizes the actions implemented through the campaign in the period from January 2010 to April 2013. We address some lessons learned with the aim to stimulate new Business and Biodiversity initiatives and to encourage private sector companies to take actions towards the sustainable use of our natural capital.

Biodiversity – Why is it important for Business?

The loss of biodiversity, alongside climate change is currently one of the largest and most important challenges. It is believed that the current rate of species extinction, due to human influences, is up to 1,000 times higher than the natural extinction rate. Many of the vital resources and services, which are underpinned by biodiversity, are provided to us by ecosystems that are at risk.

Companies, through their use of natural resources in various forms, have a large impact on nature. Therefore, even by just considering economic reasons, companies depend on the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. A steady decline in biodiversity can become a risk for many businesses in the future. At the same time, a proactive approach to conserve biodiversity can create new business opportunities.

What is the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign?

The European Business and Biodiversity Campaign (EBBC), led by the Global Nature Fund (GNF) was initiated by a consortium of European companies and NGOs: the nature conservation organizations Fundacion Global Nature (Spain), Lake Constance Foundation (Germany), IUCN – World Conservation Union (Regional Office for Europe), Triple E (The Netherlands), the consultancy dokeo (Germany) and the publishing house ALTOP (Germany). Starting in January 2010 the objectives of this communication campaign have been on four areas:

- Informing the private sector about the importance of biodiversity and tools available to assess dependence and mitigate impacts on biodiversity
- Protecting regional biodiversity through the information and engagement of SMEs
- Promoting biodiversity partnerships between businesses, NGOs and other stakeholders
- Showcasing business commitments and initiatives such as the national B+B Initiatives and the European B@B platform

The Communication Actions have taken place in the EU with a focus on Germany, Spain and The Netherlands. The LIFE+ Programme of the European Union supported the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign until April 2013. It continues to support the private sector in improving its biodiversity performance.



The Campaign Logo: Bull and Bear – also a symbol for the ups and downs at stock markets.

BIODIVERSITY - IT'S OUR BUSINESS

The Campaign consisted of a wide range of awareness raising and information actions. In total about 200 events and presentations have been realized and more than 500.000 people were reached. In the following section we showcase how private sector and stakeholders were approached:

1. Biodiversity Advocates from the Private Sector Promoting Business and Biodiversity: Taster workshops and in depth information sessions
2. Regional Forums and Landscape Auctions for SMEs
3. Pro-Biodiversity Partnerships between NGOs and Private Sector
4. Business and Biodiversity: Media/Online Sources and intense networking
5. European Biodiversity Summit and Biodiversity Award
6. Auditors – Important multipliers for the Integration of biodiversity into the corporate management

1. Advocates Promoting Biodiversity

In cooperation with biodiversity advocates, companies and business associations already engaged in biodiversity protection and management, the campaign partners promoted information exchange for selected sectors such as food, tourism, construction, extractive, outdoor/textile and energy industry.

These sector specific activities included

- Taster workshops and seminars on biodiversity management for decision makers in the private sector
- Individual Biodiversity Checks for companies
- Biodiversity Fact Sheets for various sectors
- Awareness raising among business partners and suppliers

Results and Lessons Learned

In total 10 advocates joined the campaign. More than 1,200 company representatives and experts attended over 30 seminars of the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign. A target sector of the campaign has been the food retail sector, which depends on healthy ecosystems and biodiversity and has an important role to play to protect biodiversity. This was the message in Lisbon at of the European workshop on natural capital for the food retail sector. The food supply, and specifically the retail sector is one of the most important sectors in Europe. While retailers deal with a vast group of suppliers, they are also at the front line together with



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Role and action by food retail sector

consumer choices. Hence, they wield power in influencing both sustainable production and consumption and potential at preserving natural capital is immense. As a follow up of Lisbon work shop an expert event for the food industry that was organized together with the retail company **REWE Group – a Biodiversity Advocate of the Campaign** - focused on the question how biodiversity aspects can be integrated in the procurement process.

In the framework of the campaign, the Lake Constance Foundation, a partner of the campaign, started a very successful initiative with the cooperative Obst vom Bodensee, the retailer REWE and 120 fruit producers in the German part of the Lake Constance region. In 2012, 30 fruit producers from the Neckar region joined the initiative. In order to achieve a more biodiversity friendly intensive fruit production, a list of measures was elaborated. All measures contribute to the promoting of bees, wild bees and other insects dependent on flowers. REWE sells the apple with the Pro Planet Label “contributing to the protection of biodiversity”. The initiative was extended in 2012 to three more fruit production regions in Germany



Practice and Theory: The seminar for the Food Industry included a visit to the Botanical Garden of the City of Bonn.
© GNF

It should be noted that companies are not always interested in sharing their experiences in the area of biodiversity, particularly when it is seen as a strategic competitive advantage. But in most cases, sector specific information seminars, which covered specific

issues (e.g. management of biodiversity in the supply chain) attracted a high number of company representatives. The seminars stimulate actions on biodiversity within companies as well as within a sector as the REWE examples shows.

What is a Biodiversity Check?

With the Biodiversity Checks, a tool was developed that helps companies in assessing their impact on biodiversity along the functional units of a company. The Biodiversity Check provides an ideal basis for strategic biodiversity management. 30 companies from various sectors and sizes, such as the automotive manufacturer Daimler, the tour operator TUI, energy company Iberdrola or outdoors outfitter VAUDE, have implemented a Biodiversity Check. Furthermore, a Biodiversity Checklist for companies of the extractive industry in Germany has been developed which serves as a self-check for more than 1,000 small companies of this sector.

Responses from the companies have indicated that the results of the Biodiversity Check allow them to better understand the impacts and relationship of the company regarding biodiversity. Various companies have started to implement recommendations from the Check (e.g. biodiversity guidelines for suppliers, greening of company premises, assessing and reducing natural ingredients from biodiversity hotspots). The proposed biodiversity key data and indicators for monitoring are helpful for the definition of measurable aims and for monitoring. There have been an increasing number of requests for information on the Biodiversity Check by companies, which shows that there might be a market potential for the Biodiversity Check.

Campaign partners will continue to offer the Check and to further develop the tool for specific industry sectors. Based on the experience of the Biodiversity Checks, four sector-specific Biodiversity Fact Sheets have been developed to provide a practical orientation for companies. Furthermore, businesses can make use of the “**Basis Set of Biodiversity Key Data and Indicators**” with process and performance indicators valid for all sectors. All information as well as case studies are available for download in the EBBC knowledge pool at www.business-biodiversity.eu/knowledge.

2. Regional Biodiversity Forum and Landscape Auctions for SMEs

With the establishment of Biodiversity Forums in six European regions, the campaign supported local businesses in understanding the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services in their regions.

These activities targeting mainly SMEs included:

- Regional Forums for local companies and business associations on biodiversity management and continuous improvement of biodiversity performance
- Landscape auctions are held to preserve unique natural regional features

Results and Lessons Learned

The regional forums proved to be a successful instrument to engage SMEs in biodiversity protection (6 events, 295 participants, 174 from companies). The regional focus helps SMEs to understand the abstract issue of biodiversity and to underline, that biodiversity loss is also happening in the region. **SMEs feel responsible for their region**, which is an important argument to engage them in biodiversity protection.

In every forum, outstanding companies from the region presented their numerous activities for protecting biological diversity on-site and along the supply chain. In one of the Netherlands forums, there were contributions from companies that already act in a green way and use green bio-based materials for the production of paints, paper and ecopassages. In the German forums, the



*The regional Forum in Valencia, Spain, aimed at establishing partner ships between NGO's and the private sector to promote biodiversity conservation.
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companies showed great interest in the natural design of business premises as a first step towards biodiversity management. In the Spanish regional forums, local companies, NGOs, and the regional administrations in charge of biodiversity management exchanged information related to core elements in regional biodiversity, such as wetlands in Valencia (Albufera Natural Park) or *Dehesa* ecosystems in the Southwestern Spain. The successful results include the establishment of working groups and creation of new initiatives. For example, the bringing together of the tourism sector of the Valencian coast (Spain) and experts on marine biodiversity in order to create pro-biodiversity tourism products, such as an App for mobile devices used for biodiversity monitoring.

Tips for Organizing a Biodiversity Forum for SMEs

The most effective way to approach the SMEs is to **work together with business organizations such as regional Chambers of Commerce**, Chambers of Craft or City Marketing Associations. In all Regional Forums, one of these regional organizations accepted to be the co-host of the event. Furthermore it is useful to have the support and **participation of a known mayor or political head of the district**.

Local NGOs are able to give a good overview on the situation of biodiversity in the region and the challenges, which need to be addressed. After the introduction of the topic by a regionally known keynote speaker, the challenge is to effectively group the companies from the different sectors into **smaller working groups** in order to discuss similar problems and potential solutions.

Last but not least: a **pleasant location and good regional food** and drinks contribute to an open minded atmosphere.

What is a Landscape Auction?

Landscape auctions function like normal auctions, but bids are made for elements of the landscape or local biodiversity. The successful bidder supports the management and preservation costs of the chosen item. The expertise center Triple E has developed the concept. It is an original way for businesses, corporations and other interested parties to actively become a stakeholder of the unique biodiversity we have in the EU.

Make your bid for nature!



As well as the Regional Forums, the **Landscape Auctions underline that biodiversity loss does not only happen in “biodiversity hotspots”, but also in ones own region**. The auctions require a careful preparation. Biodiversity elements such as placing beehives or nesting boxes for insectivore birds or bats to control plague of insects, elimination of alien invasive species and plantation of hedges or sowing of flowering meadows should be identified. Agreements with organizations – mainly NGOs – need to be signed to guarantee the long term management of the auctioned elements. Similar to art auctions, an attractive catalogue is prepared and widely disseminated. A well-known auctioneer increases the success of the auction as well as creating a pleasant ambiance. The auctions are not only an attractive marketing tool, but serve an important purpose. More than 280 biodiversity elements have been auctioned and are now protected with the help of companies and some participating individuals.

3. Pro-Biodiversity Partnerships for Biodiversity

It is obvious that stakeholders need to cooperate more intensely if we want to achieve the main objective of the Convention of Biological Diversity namely the stop of biodiversity loss by 2020. In Europe, numerous examples for philanthropic collaborations between companies and NGOs exist – mainly limited to financial support or sponsorship. But strategic partnerships are getting more important. Stricter environmental regulations and increasing professionalism of NGOs are factors for an openness of the private sector towards collaborations. This has been the basis for constructive dialogue and a transition from confrontation to collaboration. Nevertheless, establishing partnerships between NGOs and the private sector is a complex and sensitive process. Within the campaign, an overview of the current situation was created and the factors for successful partnerships were identified.

Activities on NGO – Business Partnerships included

- Survey on NGO expectations and experiences of partnerships with the private sector.
- Workshops for NGOs in Europe to discuss partnership risks and opportunities with the private sector

Results and Lessons Learned

A survey about awareness and experience in biodiversity partnerships with business was undertaken by EBBC among 150 NGOs in EU. About half of the responders were open to partnerships and 40% found partnerships with companies important. The main reasons for NGOs to collaborate with companies is to benefit from financial support for projects and from know-how of companies as well as from a better involvement of companies in solving problems – often related to business operations - and the achievement of common objectives. On the other side, companies collaborate with NGOs because of image and reputation improvement, as a reaction to criticism or problems which could damage the image or business model of the company, benefit from NGO competences, ethical reasons (CSR) or support for approaching new consumer groups. To address the challenges, risks and opportunities which collaborations can bring, six workshops and plenty of presentations at conferences were implemented in the course of the campaign.



It can be a steep and long journey – real partnership between NGOs and businesses.

In general, it could be observed that the number of NGO-company partnership is increasing (e.g. Birdlife with HeidelbergCement, Fundacion Global Nature with CEPESA). This is especially true for strategic partnerships that go beyond projects and focus on core business and structural changes inside the company. Appropriate communication about a partnership is seen in many cases as a challenge for NGOs as well as for the companies (green washing criticism). Companies say that they are afraid to communicate their sustainable activities out of fear of being accused of green-washing. On the other hand, NGOs can also come under fire from other NGOs when they work together with companies, especially when the company is active in a “sensitive” sector such as mining or oil & gas.

Key elements for NGO-business partnerships

- Hierarchies and stereotypes: partners must understand that both, the NGO and the company, work at the same level. The NGO should not be perceived as a tool to achieve CSR objectives and should not be considered a supplier. The company should also not be perceived as a tool to get funds or a devil that consumes and destroys nature.
- Flexibility and understanding among partners: someone will have to give in; some concessions will have to be made.
- NGOs are experts on biodiversity so they can offer additional support for business activities not covered by agreements. It will benefit the partnership by raising awareness about biodiversity and ecosystem protection in a wider sense.
- Biodiversity issues require a long-term commitment so the organizational structures require stability. High expectations from short-term results lead to disheartenment.
- Understanding that " media coverage" is not the only success indicator for a partnership.

4. Business and Biodiversity – Media and Online Sources

Campaign communication for Business and Biodiversity included:

- Campaign Web Portal www.business-biodiversity.eu with B&B News, B&B Knowledge pool, Company and Expert profiles as well Case studies. 50,000 visitors per month (by April 2013).
- Bi-monthly, bi-lingual newsletters (about 2000 readers).
- A Twitter “Pro-Biodiversity” account was launched in 2011 (230 followers). Furthermore, biodiversity groups in professional Internet groups (LinkedIn; XING etc.) were established or used for information dissemination.



- Video Campaign trailer to promote the Biodiversity Check "Why is Biodiversity Important for your Business" The English trailer on YouTube got more than 3000 views, the German edition more than 1700 views.
- 99 second video statements were made by high level decision-makers including CEO highlighting the importance of biodiversity for business, e.g. Emanuel Faber, CEO of DANONE.
- Magazines and supplements – Two special editions “Business and Biodiversity” of the forum magazine CSR International were published in German and English in the beginning and at the end of the project periods. The “Forum Nachhaltig Wirtschaften”, a German quarterly magazine for CSR decision-makers, regularly reported about biodiversity for its target group, reaching more than 600.000 readers over the course of the project. The e-magazines can be found on the campaign web portal.



More than 600.000 readers of the English and German edition of the forum magazine were informed about B&B issues

Results and Lessons Learned

The campaign has achieved a high visibility among the target group. The 99 seconds videos with biodiversity statements by business representatives and other experts are an innovative approach to spread the message on biodiversity. The same is true for the **campaign trailer “A Simple Explanation of Business and Biodiversity”**, which won a French film award for its professional production and clear message. While the subscriber numbers to the e-newsletter have been lower than expected, the project team reacted to new developments by installing Twitter news and creating working groups on professional networks (e.g. B&B Group on XING).



The Campaign Video "Why is biodiversity important for your business" wins silver award at the international film festival "Deauville Green Awards" in France.

Photo: Deauville Green Awards

The total coverage of the campaign was good in quantitative terms, but the campaign coverage in business media was rather low. Sector-specific business newspapers and journals covered biodiversity only to a limited extent.

For future activities, the focus should be on editors and journalists of the economic, financial and sector specific media. Specifically to ascertain which kind of information they would be interested in and which formats they need. In the future, another important target group will be the marketing and communication experts/agencies advising companies in CSR and communication issues. Communication experts are “trendsetters” and greatly influence companies in regard to communication priorities and content.

5. Going Where Business Meets: The European Biodiversity Summit

The “**First European Biodiversity Summit**” took place on the April 17th to 18th, 2012 in Stuttgart, Germany, with a pre-meeting on April 16th consisting of 28 delegates from European B&B Initiatives. The Summit was part of the well-established Business Conference German CSR-Forum and was a major instrument to disseminate the message of the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign. With more than 550 participants from 20 countries, interest was very high. The issues discussed ranged from biofuels, biodiversity finance, valuing natural capital, biodiversity assessment tools, and legal compliance to biodiversity offsetting and NGO-Business collaborations. The approach in connecting biodiversity to CSR and to use the well-established and prestigious CSR Forum was very successful.



Exhibition venue at the Biodiversity

A new category “**Biodiversity**” was included in the **CSR Awards** – the European tour operator TUI won the award in 2012 and the Swiss wine producer Delinat in 2013. Since businesses and media notice awards, the CSR-Award is another valuable communication instrument. Biodiversity is now a fixed thematic component of the CSR Forum. In 2013, EBBC presented the results of the campaign and organized sessions on credible communication versus green washing and strategic partnerships between companies and NGOs.

The EBBC was not only present at CSR events, but also at more than 150 conventions and fairs targeting at the private sector in Europe. Outside Europe, an outstanding event was the IUCN World Conservation Congress in October 2012 in Korea with more than 8.000 participants from NGOs, administrations and companies. The B+B Pavilion of IUCN and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development was very well attended and hosted numerous sessions dedicated to B+B aspects. One of them on “Valuing ecosystems – Can it help business to make better decisions?” organized with the EBBC.

Also in the future, it will be important to be present with B+B where the companies are and to put a special focus on sector specific business conferences and fairs.

6. Integration of Biodiversity into the Corporate Management

Better biodiversity performance can only be achieved in a structured and continuous way. Therefore, our primary recommendation to the companies is to integrate this “significant” aspect into the (environmental) management system of the company. However, the majority of contacted auditors and **EMS-certified companies** have expressed difficulties in understanding the “environmental aspect” biodiversity. Confusion has arisen around the terminology and meaning of biodiversity, ecosystem services and nature capital. Biodiversity and, in particular, ecosystems are perceived to be very complex and difficult to measure while indirect impacts more important than direct impacts are among the most important comments we received. The **EMAS performance indicator “land use”** is considered problematic as it covers only a part of biodiversity and, for many companies, it is not relevant regarding their impacts on biodiversity.

Within the EBBC, we maintained continuous exchange of information with the EMAS competent bodies, auditor associations and certified companies and provided input to the EMAS Reference Documents for Tourism, Construction and Public Administrations. The **Biodiversity Fact Sheets are a useful starting tool** not only for companies but also for auditors.

Results and lessons Learned

Environmental auditors and financial auditors certifying sustainability reports are key target groups, because they assess companies and certify environmental statements and/or sustainability reports. Biodiversity is a new aspect for them and the six workshops organized during the project were very much appreciated in order to get information regarding the direct and indirect impacts of the different economic sectors, meaningful aims and

measures and key data and indicators for monitoring. The efforts of the EBBC to work on indicators for biodiversity and to facilitate the exchange between the existing indicator initiatives are considered very useful. One of the outcomes, a set of base indicators is applicable to all business sectors and a good starting point. Auditors and B+B initiatives agreed to our “step by step” approach, looking at the **impact** of the different functional departments of the company (e.g. procurement, site premises management/human resources) on biodiversity and focusing on the main drivers of biodiversity loss. At present, it is easier to address and look at the impact on ecosystems than to measure the “consumption” of ecosystem services. Auditors, as well as companies, understand that the ecosystem variety is part of biodiversity and only healthy ecosystems can provide ecosystem services.

Labels and standards play an important role to increase the (environmental) performance of products and services. Even voluntary labels or standards are today “state of the art” because they are requested within tenders, quality control etc. Currently, biodiversity is not even considered in relevant labels and standards such as the Blauer Engel, Organic Cotton, Öko-Tex-Standard, ISEAL Code of Good Practice etc. Even certifications for organic production should incorporate criteria for biodiversity protection. During the project, we were only able to start the work on standard organizations (e.g. EU Ecolabel, Österreichisches Umweltzeichen) as an important target group. The integration of biodiversity criteria into the most relevant sector specific labels and standards would promote biodiversity protection enormously and should be a priority for the next years. The EU Ecolabel and the GPP Criteria should be fore runners! One important follow-up to the EBBC is the elaboration of a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) on “Integration of Biodiversity into ISO Management Systems” – expected to be published in German and English by February 2014. This publication will raise the interest of companies with a certified EMS.

Conclusions and Outlook

Replication Potential

All activities and tools of the campaign can be transferred to other European countries and on an international level. In particular, the regional forums and landscape auctions, auditors workshops, biodiversity checks and technical input on issues such as corporate biodiversity assessments as well as communication tools (e.g. campaign trailer) are of interest to the other initiatives and have in some cases been replicated (Biodiversity Checks in Portugal, more regional forums in Spain, NGO – Business partnership project in Visegrad countries). In Spain and Germany, the EBBC partners have been selected by the governments to become official partners of the newly installed national B&B initiatives and projects.

New Business and Biodiversity Initiatives

The EBBC was instrumental in the establishment of new B&B initiatives and in providing information and network platforms to them. In May 2013, 15 companies were signatories of the so-called **Spanish Biodiversity Pact** (ABB, BSH Electrodomésticos España, CEMEX España, CEPSA, Endesa, FCC, Ferrovial, Grupo Mahou San Miguel, Heineken España, Holcim España, ISS Facility Services, REE, Gas Natural Fenosa, Grupo Zeltia and Iberdrola). Fundación Biodiversidad - Biodiversity Foundation, a public foundation of Spain’s Ministry of Environment leads the consortium; our Spanish EBBC partner Fundación Global Nature is one of the organizations to carry out the initiative. EBBC contributed to the creation of new **German initiative “Unternehmen Biologische Vielfalt 2020”** (UBI 2020). GNF and LCF are substantially involved in spearheading this initiative and concrete actions.

Furthermore, the Campaign partners provided advice to existing and new B& B initiatives:

- Nordic Countries (SW, DEN, NOR) for Nordic Countries B&B Platform
- Belgium: Belgian B&B Initiative
- Austria: Planned National B+B Initiative
- Lower Austria: Regional B&B Initiative
- Portugal: Enterprise and Biodiversity Initiative
- South African B&B Network
- Visegrad States: New Green NGO-Business collaboration project

The EBBC partners welcome the decision of the European Commission to maintain and further develop the European B@B Platform. While the EU B@B Platform will facilitate the work on the European political level, the

B+B initiatives of the member states will focus on a practical approach towards the companies. Communication campaigns, such as the EBBC, can support the two levels – EU B@B Platform and national initiatives – and can prepare the way for an initiative in countries, which have not yet implemented a B&B initiative.

Surveys such as the **Biodiversity Barometer 2012 and 2013 confirm that the consumer awareness of biodiversity** is increasing slowly but consistently. Does this also happen in the companies? Yes, because businesses observe the market and consumers very carefully. Does this mean that we achieved the objective to position biodiversity among the top priorities for business and on the same level as climate change? This is unlikely! There is still a long way to go and future communication campaigns targeting businesses as well as consumers will be needed.

Communication and voluntary measures will not be enough to stop the on-going loss of biodiversity. It is also necessary to further develop legislation and standards in order to “motivate” the majority of businesses, which still do “business as usual”. There is significant progress being made regarding the valuation of biodiversity /ecosystem services. Valuation is instrumental and should be part of a process that ultimately leads to the internalisation of external costs. One important step towards this final aim would be mandatory “Integrated Reporting” including the consumption of natural resources and other environmental impacts. The European Commission should support the elaboration of an Integrated Reporting Directive as well as the elaboration of legislation to support the EU No-Net-Loss Initiative.

Together with other initiatives, the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign contributed significant “added value” regarding biodiversity information and awareness of businesses. After more than three years focusing on spreading vital information, EBBC partners continue their work in order to offer support for any company committed to its own sustainability. The message is clear: There are good reasons to make biodiversity your business!



JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!

www.business-biodiversity.eu



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PARTNERS FOR BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY



Global Nature Fund

An international foundation for the protection of nature and the environment (Co-ordinator).



IUCN Regional Office for Pan Europe

The largest global environmental network dedicated to nature conservation.



Triple E

A centre of expertise specialising in the relationship between economy and ecology.



Fundación Global Nature

A non-profit organisation committed to nature conservation in Spain.



Dokeo

A consultancy that advises companies on CSR communications, strategy and reporting.



Bodensee-Stiftung

An international NGO that fosters sustainable economy in the wider Lake Constance region.



ALTOP

A publishing and media company that promotes sustainable solutions.