

Germany: Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt DBU <German Environmental Foundation >

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Fund overview:

Founding and task

In July 1990, the German Bundestag passed a law stipulating to use the proceeds from privatising the state-owned steel group Salzgitter AG to establish a German environmental foundation named Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt DBU. The amount of € 1,288,007,300 served as foundation capital, its annual interest yield is used for the supporting activities.

The DBU is a foundation with legal capacity according to civil law. The statutes defines structure, tasks of the different functional areas, procedure and capital management. Board of the foundation is the committee. The secretary-general is responsible for the implementation of the foundation's tasks.

With the committee's constituting session in December 1990, the foundation took up the legal task to promote projects for the protection of the environment under particular consideration of small- and medium sized enterprises. These promotional activities are beyond state programmes but can supplement these. The foundation can take donations.

Fields of support

The DBU guidelines are divided into the following nine fields of support:

I. Environmental Technology

Field of support 1: Ecological and health-friendly procedures and products

1. Ecological and health-friendly products
2. Ecological and health-friendly procedures

Field of support 2: Climate protection and energy

1. Climate protection
2. Energy efficiency and renewable energies

Field of support 3: Architecture and building and construction

1. Integral planning and land protection
2. Resource-saving building methods and products

II. Environmental research and nature conservation

Field of support 4: Applied environmental research

1. Scholarship programme
2. Sustainable chemistry - procedures and products
3. Biotechnological procedures and products

Field of support 5: Ecological land use

1. Agricultural procedures and produce
2. Sustainable forest use
3. Re-growing raw materials

Field of support 6: Nature conservation

1. Nature conservation in cultivated landscapes
2. Regeneration of degraded habitats
3. Nature conservation in populated areas
4. Nature conservation in natural landscapes and protectorates

III. Environmental communication and protection of cultural assets

Field of support 7: Communication of environmental information

1. Methods and instruments
2. Testing and use of new media formats
3. Electronic media
4. Eco-management systems for small and medium-sized enterprises

Field of support 8: Environmental education

1. Interdisciplinary exchange and communication of knowledge about environment and nature
2. Education for sustainability
3. Professional environmental education and environmental consulting

Field of support 9: Environment and cultural assets

1. Protection of cultural assets under environmental aspects
2. Protection of historic cultural landscapes and nationally important gardens
3. Co-operation in protection of cultural assets and nature conservation

Application and procedures

Natural persons and legal entities are legitimated to apply for financial backing which is made in form of a purpose-specific non-repayable subsidy. The applicant has to produce his own project share. Due to project and applicant the subsidy can be granted in different heights. In well-founded exceptions, the support can be granted as purpose-specific loan or security.

The formless application must contain the following details:

- Recipient of financial backing
- Subject and objective of the project
- State of knowledge/technology
- Anticipated costs of the project
- Type of financing
- Financial plan
- Type and scope of implementation
- Beginning and term of the project
- Continuation of the project
- Identical or partially identical applications submitted to other institutions

A short project outline is necessary to allow an initial assessment. If it meets the criteria of support, the DBU recommends to submit a detailed application.

The following criteria are of central importance:

- Innovation

The project must clearly exceed the present state-of-art in research and technology.

- Model character

The innovation should be interesting for a wide range of applications and should be able to being implemented under market economy conditions within a brief timescale.

- Environmental relief

With the innovation, new, complementary environmental relief potentials should be opened up.

The DBU departments examine the project outlines and applications. Keeping regular contact with the applicants, they ask for necessary complementary statements and for comments of third parties and expert's reports.

The office summarises application, assessment results and an own statement in form of a presentation on which the committee or the secretary-general decide.

THE COMMITTEE

Head of the DBU is a committee, whose 14 members are appointed by the Federal Government. You find the committee's current members on www.dbu.de.

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE OFFICE

In its current business, the committee is represented by the Secretary General, who is responsible for the implementation of the foundation's tasks. He runs the DBU office in Osnabrück.

Results and impacts in Nature protection and biodiversity

The focus of projects in foreign countries in the range of nature protection and biodiversity lies in the Danube area.

One project aimed to find out what kind of activities already exist in context of nature and environmental protection in the region of Transylvania. On the basis of that survey they want to develop approaches for the conservation of the unique cultural landscape. The historic cultural landscape is endangered by the agrarian structure changes that are accompanied by the accession to the EU. Sustainable strategies of enduring regional development should subserve those circumstances. Several key projects were identified that range from organic farming to sustained tourism right up to extensive concepts for sewerage and peripheral energy supply.

The projects are concretely realised by a close cooperation between the Romanian village Sinca Noua and the village Wulkow, respectively the Ökospeicher e.V Wulkow in Brandenburg. In the year 1994 this incorporated society was awarded the "Deutscher Umweltpreis" for its exemplary, sustainable development based on civil commitment. The purpose of this joint project is the construction and realisation of a concept for a sustainable development that meets also nature protection aspects of the village Sinca Noua. While the Romanian partners in Wulkow focused on the extensive technologies and sustainable land use and nature protection concepts, the partners from Brandenburg were sensitised to the dominating environmental and nature protection problems in Romania. With success: In 2005 Sinca Noua was awarded 'European Village' (SAT European) by the EU. This was able to set standards for the inner European dialogue. Important and new approaches for a sustainable development in Transylvania were identified that have an elementary contribution to the conservation of the historic cultural landscapes as well as to the conservation of the biodiversity in Southeast Europe.

Other project examples:

Together with

- BUND Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland „Landscapes after mining – chances for integration of wilderness areas in the cultural landscape at the example of the Goitzsche“
- Hanover University "Revitalisation of flow waters with deadwood"
- WWF Deutschland "Nature conservation and nature-friendly tourism on the Frische and Curonian Spit"

Success and Challenges:

“This is the core competence of the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt: The foundation helps to break the ground for technological development and is a great prototype for what is needed in the years to come: The rediscovery of ideas of technological improvement. I believe, there is nothing comparable in Germany and Europe.” (Sigmar Gabriel on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the foundation).

Outlook:

With regard to an overall perspective for the years to come, the DBU puts a certain focus on the topics Climate Protection and Water in 2008.

The acceptance of nature protection within the population is of significant importance for the successful realisation of protective activities. Therefore the identity of humans in relation to nature and the different perceptions of nature have to be bared in mind during the development of communication concepts.

The DBU will support projects that develop innovative projects concerned with antagonising nature alienation. Especially children and adolescents with a socially weak background are the ones to be addressed.

On international level, the DBU will further on concentrate on the EU-accession countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Within these countries it sets priorities in regions that are characterised by reliability and commitment. These ‘Isles of success’ will have geographically and time limited priorities.

Content wise it is a special concern of the DBU to back projects that strengthen the construction of a civil society. A main component in the international support programme of the DBU is the connection of the international promotion with the international scholarship programme.

Basic fund information:

Total funding expenditure (in Euro)

2003:	43.4 Mio.
2005:	45.7 Mio.
2006:	47.7 Mio.

Total biodiversity expenditure in 2006 = 20 % of total funding

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