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**German Federal Environmental Foundation  
(Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, DBU): A Short Portrait | December 2024**

**Founding**

The law on the establishment of this public foundation with legal capacity under civil law was passed with a broad political consensus on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1990. The office in Osnabrück has been in operation since 1<sup>st</sup> March 1991.

**Financing**

The endowment capital (from the German government) stems from the proceeds of the privatization of the steel company Salzgitter AG: 2.9 billion euros today. The yield from the capital can be used for development and support programs. The DBU is one of the biggest foundations in Germany.

**Legal representative**

The Board of Advisors, made up of 16 members appointed by the German government, is the DBU's legal representative. It is comprised of German federal and state politicians and representatives of other socially relevant groups. Chair: Prof. Dr Kai Niebert; DBU Secretary General: Alexander Bonde

**Thematic focuses**

Open-topic funding

1. Tools and expertise for the evaluation of sustainability, and the promotion of the awareness of sustainability and sustainable action;
2. sustainable food sources and sustainable approaches to producing and handling foodstuffs;
3. the development, design and promotion of environmentally friendly mobile consumer goods;
4. climate-friendly and resource-saving construction methods;
5. development and renewal of urban areas with an economic use of energy and resources;
6. Renewable energy, energy saving and efficiency;
7. efficient use of resources based on innovative materials technology;
8. recycling and efficient utilisation of large and environmentally relevant material flows;
9. nature and water protection;
10. preservation and securing of valuable national cultural assets in the face of harmful environmental factors.

Due to the DBU's wide range of focuses, all projects with a big environmental impact that meet the requirements laid down in the DBU statutes are in the running to receive subsidies.

Annual presentation of the German Environmental Prize, one of the most lucrative environmental awards in Europe (500,000 euros).

**Activities**

The DBU supports the creativity of small and medium-sized companies in practically solving environmental problems, and gives incentives for ecological innovations in these companies (exemplary, environmentally friendly, innovative). By promoting products and production methods that are environmentally friendly and healthy, it focuses on a preventive and integrated form of environmental protection and reduces the risks for companies embarking on more sustainable production techniques. It fosters measures that practically and directly protect the environment. It supports the exchange of environmental knowledge between the scientific and business communities and other public or private institutions. It also preserves and secures valuable national assets in exemplary fashion. The DBU backs nature-conservation projects that protect habitats or wild species and that serve to promote a natural, location-specific diversity and a sustainable usage of species and ecosystems.

**Statistics**

Since the DBU's foundation, more than 11.100 projects were supported with around 2.08 billion euros.

**Subsidiaries**

The DBU has two non-profit-making subsidiary companies: the DBU Centre for Environmental Communication (*DBU Zentrum für Umweltkommunikation, ZUK*) and the DBU Natural Heritage (*DBU Naturerbe*). The ZUK, founded in 1999, supports the DBU by communicating its themes, projects and focuses to the professional public, addressing a wide range of target groups. The subsidiary DBU Naturerbe, founded in 2007, secures 66 nature areas (woods, open countryside, moors) for nature conservation in the long term – amounting to some 70,000 hectares in ten German states. Its main objectives are promoting and preserving the wealth of animal and plant species in different habitats and increasing the awareness of nature and sustainability issues in the general population.