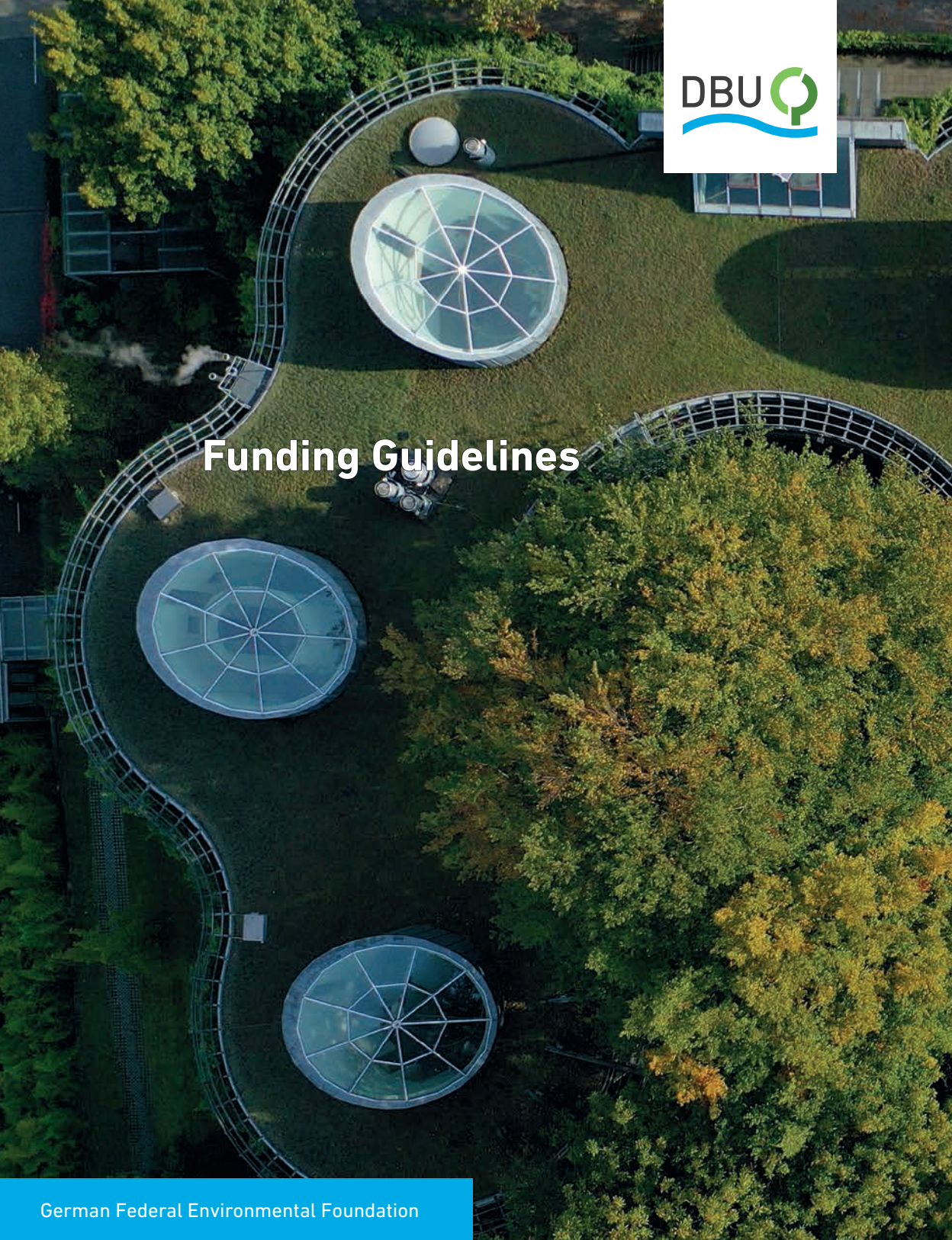

Funding Guidelines

German Federal Environmental Foundation

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Funding Guidelines

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German Federal Environmental Foundation

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Preamble

The German Federal Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, DBU) was established by the federal government in 1990 as a foundation under civil law. The foundation's task is to promote projects for the protection of the environment with special consideration of small and medium-sized enterprises. Upon initiation of DBU funding activity in 1991, the first »Guidelines for Support by the German Federal Environmental Foundation« were published. New editions followed in 1998 and 2004.

Based on a comprehensive evaluation, fundamentally new funding guidelines are now being presented. These address the current challenges of environmental protection while taking into account social transformation. They were formulated based on the principles of the Act to establish the Foundation and the Foundation's Articles of Association. The DBU funding is focussed on interdisciplinary funding topics that are continuously adapted to the changing requirements of environmental protection. At the same time, the DBU's »open topic« project funding offers the possibility of embracing innovative ideas from project partners and promoting innovative environmental protection projects that are particularly relevant and are outside of the predefined funding topics.

The DBU funds innovative, exemplary and solution-oriented projects to protect the environment in accordance with its mission statement. Sustainable development in its ecological, economic, social and cultural aspects as well as small and medium-sized enterprises in their dynamic diversity are considered. In this sense, environmental protection can also be understood as a public health issue.

Funded projects should achieve sustainable effects in practice, give impulses and develop a multiplier effect. The DBU supports the communication and dissemination of the project results and integrates them into the discussion processes on the central challenges of environmental protection.

It is the DBU's aim to contribute to the solution of current environmental problems, that are, for the most part, the result of lacking sustainability in our economy, our lifestyles and our society. The DBU sees the crucial challenges above all in climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable consumption of resources, and harmful emissions. For this reason, the projects funded by the DBU draw on the latest scientific findings on the planetary boundaries as well as the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the UN. With its funding activities, the DBU simultaneously would like to contribute, in particular, to the implementation of the Federal

Government's sustainability and biodiversity strategies. Education and the active involvement of children and young people are paramount to achieve these ambitious sustainability goals. The DBU takes on this key role as well as the challenges of increased urbanisation.

Complex environmental problems can only be solved by interdisciplinary, systemic and socially inclusive approaches. The DBU funding wants to set accents here and integrates its statutory tasks consequently in its funding regime. The funding topics are equally distributed across research, development and use of new environmentally friendly technologies and products consistent with the principles of preventive, integrated environmental protection; the preservation and restoration of the national cultural heritage; and the encouragement of environmental consciousness and related behaviour amongst the general public through information and environmental education measures.

The digitisation of production, business and information processes is progressing rapidly and offers many approaches to the solution of environmental problems. Using these approaches consequently in all funding topics is an important DBU objective.

Guiding principles

Our mission

We support innovative, exemplary projects with the aim of protecting the environment. We are guided by ecological, economic, social and cultural aspects for the purpose of sustainable development. Small and medium-sized enterprises are a particularly important target group for us.

Our identity

As a foundation governed by private law, we are independent and not associated with any political party. On the basis of our ethical considerations, we advocate for the preservation of natural resources and the environment: for their own sake as well as on behalf of current and future generations.

We aim to achieve a lasting practical impact. Through our work, we generate impetus and serve as a multiplier. We discuss relevant environmental topics with the involved stakeholders and work together to find solutions. We maintain and promote biodiversity at the natural heritage sites whose care we have been entrusted with.

We are open to innovative ideas from our partners, but we also set our own thematic priorities. We offer advice and support in all project phases with our interdisciplinary scientific knowledge. We make the results visible to the public. When it comes to working together with our partners, reliability and the necessary trust are a matter of course.

Our actions

Our dedication is based on the latest scientific findings. We combine conceptual work and operative action. We structure our day-to-day work in harmony with our goals. We see ourselves as an organisation that learns and grows as a whole.

Our cooperation

Mutual respect and appreciation are important to us. We maintain working relationships based on respect and trust and manage criticism and conflicts in a constructive manner. Equal opportunities and the ability to reconcile family and career are matters of particular concern to our organisation and are continually strengthened.

A. Open-topic project funding

In addition to the specifically defined funding topics, the DBU also supports other projects that make a significant contribution to solving environmental problems.

Eligible projects must comply with the statutes of the DBU and make a significant contribution to environmental protection. Support is given to professionally sound project ideas whose successful implementation has not yet been sufficiently secured, as well as to projects aimed at disseminating exemplary and innovative solutions.

Eligible projects include:

- Research, development and innovation in the area of eco-friendly and safe research and products;
- The exchange of knowledge concerning the environment between science, economy and other public or private bodies, as well as the dissemination of environmental knowledge;
- The preservation and restoration of the national cultural heritage.

B. Topic-based project funding

1. Sustainability communication, education and evaluation

The sustainability analysis of processes, products and services is a major challenge. This analysis involves developing and applying decision-making aids for the evaluation of sustainability on the basis of indicators. The dissemination of corresponding competencies and systemic relationships as well as the promotion of awareness and action within the scope of education for sustainable development are the prerequisites for the design of a sustainable future society. Simultaneously, issues of guiding principles and an ethical fundamental approach must be taken into account. To this end, new methods and tools for communication, learning, dialogue and involvement that are particularly aimed at children and young people must be developed.

Eligible projects include:

- Measures to identify and develop practical, real-world sustainability indicators;
- Development, optimisation and research of practical, real-world sustainability analysis methods and concepts;
- Measures to develop and reinforce sustainability competencies, in particular for multipliers;
- New methods and approaches to communicating systematic sustainability connections and targets, in particular in schools, universities and extracurricular educational institutions;
- New methodical approaches to developing and increasing awareness of sustainability, in particular amongst children and young people;
- Development and optimisation of methods for increasing participation in activities that promote sustainability (e.g. citizen science, real-world laboratories);
- Development and testing of digital methods and technologies in sustainability education.

2. Sustainable nutrition and food production

Resource-saving and animal-friendly farming, manufacturing and provision processes together with increased awareness among consumers for the impacts of their diets on the environment and the climate form the basis of sustainable nutrition. Plant cultivation and livestock farming remain connected with negative impacts on, above all, the soil, biodiversity, water quality and air quality.

The projects we fund are aimed at reducing the environmental impacts at every stage of the value chain for food and beverages (e.g. processing, retail), including agricultural production. Another pressing issue is preventable food waste that occurs all along the food value chain, but to the greatest extent amongst consumers. All of the parties involved in this process, but in particular consumers themselves, play a major role in reducing food waste.

Increased awareness of sustainable agriculture, manufacturing, marketing, storage and preparation of food is required. When it comes to establishing sustainable nutrition, all stakeholders need to be educated and we need to establish alternative behaviours. Providing consumers with product- and process-related information regarding sustainability that is easy to understand could make a huge difference.

Eligible projects include:

- Resource-saving, animal-friendly concepts for environmentally friendly food production;
- Energy-efficient and waste-reducing processes along the value chain for food (e.g. agriculture, manufacturing, marketing, processing, storage, transport);
- Projects to prevent food loss and food waste in grocery stores as well as among private consumers and restaurants (purchasing, understanding shelf life and sell-by dates, storage and processing);
- Approaches to process and product-specific sustainability analysis in the food industry and communicating sustainability information along the value chain all the way to the consumer;
- Education on how to make decisions and take actions in terms of nutrition and sustainable use and handling of food especially for children and young people;
- Research, development and real-world implementation of processes and products for environmentally-friendly plant protection, particularly for organic farms.

3. Environmentally-friendly products

The development, design and acceptance of environmentally-friendly products is an important tool to reduce resource consumption and negative impacts on the environment. Consumer goods like furniture, electronics, household appliances, textiles, cars and games, are of particular importance. These goods are characterised by their long service lives. Negative impacts on the environment occur during manufacturing as well as in the utilisation and end-of-life phases. The goal of our funding projects is to design consumer goods to be more environmentally friendly, increase acceptance of these goods, and support the shift in values in our society toward these types of products.

Eligible projects include:

- Creation and testing of new methodical product development concepts;
- Development of consumer goods and their components that require fewer resources, taking into account the entire life cycle of a product (e.g. resource minimisation during the utilisation phase, material minimisation, durability, ease of maintenance and repairs, ability to recycle the product and/or its components);
- Incentives for and experimenting with new business models that increase the advantages of consumer goods and/or reduce their negative impacts on the environment, in particular by increasing recyclability and utilisation intensity;
- Measures for digitising production processes (e.g. in the areas of the Internet of Things or decentralised production) that result in the sustainable design of material and energy flows;
- Innovative concepts for recycling and reuse of materials;
- Increasing awareness, establishing measures to increase acceptance and improve education both in terms of the economy and society (in particular educating children and young people) about technical implementation and utilisation of sustainably designed consumer goods;
- Development of decision-making aids for the purchase and use of environmentally-friendly consumer goods.

4. Environmentally friendly, resource-efficient construction

If we are going to reach the goal of implementing energy- and resource-efficient construction methods for a climate-neutral and safe and healthy existing building stock by 2050, we will need a variety of interlinked strategies in the construction industry.

The potential of energy-optimized building stock and environmentally compatible urban densification should be exploited in an exemplary manner. In new construction, as a primary innovation driver, sustainable concepts and technological approaches are to be developed and tested. As wood is a renewable resource and, when used correctly, can also improve efficiency in terms of resource use, it makes sense for us to build even larger timber structures.

We are particularly interested in funding projects aimed at comprehensive optimisation during the integral planning phase along with the dissemination of results to specific target groups. Sustainable construction is made up of a wide range of different aspects, and we are interested in funding projects that comprehensively combine, implement, evaluate and document these aspects and communicate them through innovative educational measures in an exemplary manner while also ensuring top design quality.

Eligible projects include:

- Exemplary concept development, innovative implementation as well as evaluation and documentation of energy- and resource-optimized, healthy old and new buildings, taking into account the entire life cycle;
- Exemplary development and implementation of, for example, concepts for improving indoor air quality, for passive heating and cooling, for »plus energy« and carbon-neutral buildings and districts, for minimising grey energy and emissions, for sufficiency, and for the evaluation and documentation of these concepts;
- Further development and exemplary implementation and documentation of timber construction for larger buildings;
- Optimisation of timber construction concepts, systems and projects, and projects to increase the acceptance of timber buildings;
- Optimisation of closed-loop recycling and recycling possibilities – in building construction and construction materials/products as well as lightweight construction development to improve resource efficiency;

- Further development of planning methods, process quality and tools, including by means of digitisation, as an optimisation strategy for the sustainable and safe and healthy planning, construction and operation of buildings and dissemination of results to target groups;

- Innovative methods and concepts for communication with, as well as education, participation and qualification, in particular of public and private builders, planning agencies, approving authorities, construction-related professions, and users;

- Measures for communicating the connections between construction and the environment to children, young people and trainees;

- Development and testing of new forms of participation in the planning and implementation of sustainable public construction projects (e.g. schools, sports facilities, recreational areas, etc.).

5. Sustainable neighborhood development

As a rule, measures for reducing resource consumption, for the sustainable use of natural resources, for climate protection and for climate adaptation are more efficient when they are localized and networked within a specific district and when the existing physical, technical, physiographical, social, economic and architectural conditions and requirements are considered. In addition to spatially coherent development, focussing on an entire district allows for the exploitation of synergies and the development of effective, well-integrated comprehensive solutions that help us to avoid counter-productive insular solutions. In addition to modernising the infrastructure that is connected to the power grid in a resource-efficient manner and integrating districts into a coherent overall concept that also includes urban green spaces (green infrastructure), we also need to develop and test approaches to introducing renewable energy to districts and making them more energy efficient by means of highly efficient combined heat and power systems, local heat networks, systems for generating, storing and utilising renewable energies that are integrated into the buildings themselves. Citizens must also be involved in this process.

Eligible projects include:

- The exemplary development, introduction and documentation of the implementation of innovative concepts for energy- and resource-efficient district development and renewal, taking social impacts into account;
- Concepts for upgrading the consumption and supply infrastructure in a way that conserves resources while using mutual synergies from different infrastructural segments;
- Documentation and evaluation of relevant implemented concepts and measures;
- Concepts and strategies to further develop administrative, institutional and social requirements for creating innovative concepts for district renewal that is energy-efficient and also conserves resources;
- Further development of planning methods, process quality and tools, including using digitisation, for energy-efficient district development that also conserves resources;
- New ways to include the citizens and local population in the energy- and resource-efficient development of their district;
- Innovative methods and concepts for education, communication and qualification.

6. Renewable energy, energy conservation and energy efficiency

The energy transition is a major project that will involve all of German society with the goal of fully transitioning from fossil fuels and nuclear power to sustainable, climate-neutral energy sources and energy usage by 2050. Germany will only be able to achieve its climate goals through a combination of measures. These include:

- the expansion of renewable energies, including the necessary distribution and storage infrastructure;
- improving energy efficiency and implementing energy-saving measures;
- the optimization of the overall energy system in terms of the increasing integration of fluctuating renewable energy, the flexibilisation of demand and the coupling of the consumption sectors electricity, heat and mobility;
- the consideration of environmental and social compatibility as well as aspects of participation and acceptance.

This requires novel, exemplary ideas and interdisciplinary approaches from applied research, practice-oriented technology development and testing as well as target group-specific environmental communication and education, taking into account

digitisation in all areas.

To this end, the DBU supports projects with a special focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Eligible projects include:

- Development, optimisation and exemplary (both in terms of its exemplary nature and ability to be used as a template) application of renewable energies. In the case of projects for the energetic use of biomass, funding focuses on the optimisation of existing plants and the use of waste and residual materials;

- Development, optimisation and exemplary applications of innovative technologies for efficient electricity conversion and energy storage (e.g. for heating and cooling, Power-to-X);

- Development, optimisation and exemplary adaptation of operational processes on the basis of new energy sources (e.g. sector coupling) and a fluctuating energy supply (e.g. through demand-side management); this also includes new operator and business models for cross-plant coupling of energy flows (e.g. waste heat);

- Development, optimisation and exemplary application of innovative solutions for reducing energy consumption in manufacturing and handling processes in industrial applications, retail and the service industry; this also includes supply and interface technologies (e.g. steam, pressure, etc.) as well as operational logistics and transport processes, taking into account possible rebound effects;

- Development, optimisation and exemplary application of comprehensive, systematic aspects of data transmission (e.g. for decentralised energy supply, smart grids);

- Development of energy-efficient and zero-emission systems for mobility transition;

- Development, optimisation and testing of new approaches to dissemination of information, transfer of knowledge and qualification as well as education and professional training, especially for children, young people, trainees and university students; this also includes new approaches to solutions, methods, and formats in the areas of participation, increasing acceptance and conflict resolution;

- Development of new concepts and technical solutions that are environmentally friendly and promote human health and nature conservation as well as the use of renewables.

7. Resource-efficient methods, production processes and materials

Some of the greatest challenges we face in terms of establishing a sustainable economy are reducing consumption of natural resources and materials and minimising harmful emissions. Innovative manufacturing processes, materials and surface technologies are becoming increasingly important in terms of improving efficiency. We support innovative approaches to reducing resource consumption across the entire life cycle of a product.

Project objectives could be measures that are integrated into the manufacturing process, the use of new materials or surface functionalities, further development of the recycling economy, for example by considering more efficient traceability during product development or new waste separation processes for composite materials. Furthermore, resource efficiency should be increasingly integrated into education projects to promote awareness of sustainability and skills in the area of sustainability as well as to increase the number of qualified young professionals entering the job market in the future.

We are looking for pre-competitive development projects in SMEs that offer innovative ways to reduce resource consumption as well as practical projects for education or research with a holistic perspective and exemplary approaches to problem-solving.

Eligible projects include:

- New processes and production methods that increase resource efficiency across the entire value chain for processes and applications requiring a great deal of raw materials;
- Projects for developing new material and surface technologies that significantly decrease resource consumption;
- Innovative ideas for closing material cycles with the greatest possible added value;
- Developments to prevent the use of or find substitutes for toxic materials or toxic emissions;
- Projects that replace particularly scarce or problematic materials with non-problematic materials;
- Educational concepts to promote skills in the area of sustainability as well as in systematic and problem-solving thinking and action.

8. Recycling and efficient utilisation of large and environmentally relevant material flows

Around half of global greenhouse gas emissions and more than 90% of biodiversity loss and water scarcity are caused by the extraction of raw materials and the production and processing of materials, fuels and food. The global demand for raw materials is currently increasing rapidly - also due to technological trends such as digitalisation and miniaturisation as well as important future fields such as the energy and transport transition. As a result, the elements and materials in products (e.g. in composite materials) are becoming increasingly diverse, which makes them more difficult to recover and reuse.

One reason for the waste of valuable resources is the currently prevailing linear economic system (take, make, waste), which still pays too little attention to circular approaches. The efficient utilisation and recycling (circular economy) of large and environmentally relevant primary and secondary raw material flows, e.g. in the chemical industry, the agricultural and food industry or in the building materials sector, is essential for a sustainable economy. The circular economy encompasses the entire life cycle of a product, from design to efficient production, the utilisation phase through to the end of use and the recovery of recyclable materials.

One hundred per cent recycling is not possible due to losses, impurities and contaminants, and rebound effects weaken efficiency gains. Technical innovations alone are not sufficient for an effective transformation towards a circular economy and society. In addition to technological innovations, economic and social innovations are also required. The reorganisation of the linear economy must be flanked by socio-cultural change. Conflicting goals and diverging interests must be recognised and practical solutions for a circular economy (e.g. extended use, sharing models, secondary use of materials, repair of products) must be anchored in society.

Eligible projects are characterised by high practical relevance and effectiveness after the end of the project.

Eligible projects include:

- Technology and process developments to increase the utilisation efficiency of materials along production and supply chains;

- Development and realisation of innovative, economically viable business models for a circular economy in the B2B and B2C sectors (e.g. platform models, digitalisation, virtualisation, sharing concepts);

- Development and realisation of model, cross-stage collaborations and cross-sector networks to create resource-efficient, resilient value chains, including in the agricultural and food industry

- Sorting, processing, efficient utilisation and valorisation of residual material streams (e.g. from industry, agriculture, wastewater treatment, construction);

- Technical and digital developments for resource-saving plant cultivation methods (e.g. smart farming; precision farming);

- Model cultivation concepts for the environmentally friendly cultivation of agricultural and forestry land;

- Development and valorisation of the utilisation potential of sustainable, preferably domestic protein sources;

- Technological and process developments for recycling nutrients and reducing emissions in animal welfare-orientated livestock farming;

- Educational concepts to promote systemic thinking using the example of defined material flows and to communicate new findings to specific target groups.

9. Nature and water protection

Water and biodiversity are an important basis for life on earth. They provide clean air and water, fertile soil, crops and timber as well as natural recreation and quality of life through a wide range of ecosystem services and functioning cycles.

The intensification and standardisation of land and water use have led to an unabated loss of biodiversity. Substance inputs and changes to soil and water structures are degrading the quality of ecosystems and leading to the loss of valuable habitats in inland and coastal areas. Ongoing climate change, for example due to droughts and heavy rainfall events, is also having a negative impact.

Food security, energy and raw material supply, recreation, biodiversity and climate protection are often in competition with each other and place different demands on terrestrial habitats and water bodies. In order to overcome these complex conflicts of use and sustainably develop and protect habitats in compliance with planetary guard rails and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), multifunctionality and interdependencies between individual sectors (nexus phenomena) must be recognised. These conflicting goals can be addressed in a solution-orientated manner with the help of targeted innovations in agriculture,

forestry and water management. In doing so, it is important to involve relevant stakeholders, pursue multi-benefit strategies and at the same time strengthen the resilience of ecosystems.

Projects are characterised by practical relevance and effectiveness after the end of the project. Inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, including the involvement of committed citizens (e.g. citizen science) and the use of digital tools can make significant contributions to solutions.

Eligible projects include:

- Development of multiple-benefit strategies at landscape level, including the valorisation of ecosystem services;
- Development of innovative methods, forms of utilisation and management approaches for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services from the farm to the landscape level;
- Cross-sectoral regional development concepts, ideally orientated towards functional territorial units such as water catchment areas;
- Development and testing of transformative governance processes for integrative landscape management, taking into account NEXUS phenomena and promoting community responsibility (stewardship) through »caretakers« and »pioneers of change«;
- Preparation and realisation of real world experiments and living labs in landscape areas and regions;
- Projects with a particular focus on digitalisation in the form of AI methods, interoperability, simulation and big data (e.g. sustainable design of supply chains in agriculture and forestry, development of satellite and sensor-based technologies or species, population and ecosystem management);
- Approaches to reduce environmentally relevant substance inputs into water bodies, agricultural landscapes and protected areas (e.g. pesticides and fertilisers);
- Increasing the resilience of the water balance, including innovative technologies for efficient water use (e.g. grey water, drip irrigation) and dynamic protection against flooding and extreme weather events;
- Development of measures for education, further education and training as well as for sustainability communication with a special focus on children, young people, voluntary work and civil society.

10. Environment and cultural heritage

Anthropogenic influences on the environment negatively impact not only nature, but also valuable components of our cultural heritage. The scope and type of damage inflicted by these influences have shifted in recent years. This is due, among others, to the change in anthropogenic emissions and the effects of climate change as well as the handling of chemicals formerly used as fertilizers or pesticides. In the interest of sustainable cultural heritage conservation, we need to develop new strategies, methods, procedures or products and apply and/or communicate them in an exemplary fashion.

Model projects in this area generally pursue an interdisciplinary approach, in particular involving the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises and application-oriented research.

Eligible projects include:

- Development and exemplary application of new methods, procedures and products for the protection of valuable national cultural assets against the impact of anthropogenic emissions;
- Development of strategies and concepts for preventive conservation, safeguarding and preservation as well as maintenance and care of valuable national cultural assets and historical cultural landscapes;
- Development and testing of procedures, methods and products for handling previous conservation methods that are harmful or even toxic;
- Continuing education programmes in the area of sustainable protection of cultural assets and historical cultural landscapes;
- Innovative measures for solving conflicts at the intersection of historic preservation, nature conservation and cultural landscape preservation, in particular with regards to urban spaces and energy-related land-use requirements;
- Projects for protecting cultural assets, in particular projects aimed at children and young people that focus on aspects of involvement and volunteer work or innovative conservation methods.

11. Marine conservation fund

The valuable ecosystems of the German North and Baltic Seas and their coastal regions are threatened by the expansion of offshore wind energy, pollution and other anthropogenic influences. The aim of the Marine Nature Conservation Fund is to improve the state of the seas and coasts, to regenerate damaged ecosystems and to strengthen their resilience in the long term, as well as to make the necessary expansion of offshore wind energy environmentally friendly. The focus is on developing practical and innovative measures to minimise negative impacts on the North Sea and Baltic Sea ecosystems.

In particular, projects in the following areas are eligible for funding:

- Protection and conservation of endangered marine species such as sturgeon, salmon, eel, shark and ray, the strengthening and restoration of habitats such as reefs and seagrass meadows as well as the promotion of the consistency of corresponding catchment areas;
- innovative nature-compatible measures and developments for the construction, operation and dismantling of facilities for offshore wind utilisation including the necessary connecting pipelines and facilities for the transmission of other energy sources from offshore wind energy plants. Funding is available for R&D projects to further develop the state of the art, as well as for practical testing and implementation (e.g. pilot plants) to minimise negative impacts on the ecosystem. This also includes the reduction of cumulative impacts of other existing and future uses;
- Development of innovative methods for monitoring, participation and communication in marine nature conservation.

Grounds for exclusion

To avoid applications that cannot achieve the objectives required for DBU funding, the DBU has created a catalogue of exclusionary criteria for potential applicants:

In principle, the following projects are not eligible for funding:

- Projects that serve to fulfil mondatory statutory duties;
- Non-project-related applications from institutions (institutional funding);
- Projects without implementation prospects;
- Investment projects;
- Projects that have already begun;
- Projects to launch developed products on the market;
- Projects that are solely concerned with basic research;
- Monitoring of environmental impacts;
- Studies without concrete plans for implementation;
- Accumulation of funds from other sponsors;
- Grants solely intended to cover printing or travel costs;
- Projects that do not comply with EU state aid law.

Procedural provisions

I. Principle

In order to fund projects with the purpose of protecting the environment, the independent, non-profit German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU) must ensure that the funds granted for this purpose are utilised in an economic, appropriate way. By accepting the funding, the funding recipient recognizes the procedural provisions.

II. Purpose of funding

(1) Industrial development is growing around the globe. In recent years, this has resulted in greater risks to the environment and human health, which have become increasingly apparent. Preserving the health of the environment has become one of our primary socio-political responsibilities. For this reason, we must support efforts to research and develop eco-friendly and safe processes and products as much as possible. Subject to the applicable regulations on state funding laid out by the European Commission, the goal is to help small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, to make a greater impact as a key element of the social market economy to solve environmental challenges. The DBU wants to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

(2) The DBU can fund projects in neighbouring European countries with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe. Additional funding can be provided in individual cases. The funding recipient's offices must be located in the Federal Republic of Germany.

(3) The DBU generally funds projects outside of government programmes; it can also supplement this government funding. Basic research is generally not funded.

III. Object of funding

(1) In accordance with the Act to establish the Federal Foundation »German Federal Environmental Foundation« from 18 July 1990 and the statutes from 10 August 1990 in the version from 8 September 2010, the DBU supports mainly SMEs, focussing in particular on:

- Research, development and innovation in the areas of eco-friendly and safe processes and products, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises;

- The exchange of knowledge concerning the environment between science, economy and other public or private bodies, as well as project for dissemination of environmental knowledge;

- Conservation and protection of nationally valuable cultural assets from harmful environmental effects (pilot projects);

- Conservation and restoration of the national cultural heritage (projects of outstanding national significance).

To concretely state the purpose of the Foundation, the DBU has defined funding topics.

(2) The law establishing a foundation »Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt«, the statutes as well as the guidelines for funding in the respective applicable version form the basis for the project assessment.

IV. Funding recipients

(1) Natural persons and legal entities under private and public law are eligible to apply for funding, whereby small and medium-sized enterprises are given priority in terms of companies receiving funding (SME priority). The currently valid recommendation of the European Commission serves as the definition of small and medium-sized enterprises.

(2) The funding recipient must fulfil the necessary prerequisites and have the required skills and capabilities to complete the project.

(3) Applicants are not entitled to be granted funding.

(4) If such entitlement arises once approval has been granted, this entitlement is non-transferable and unseizable.

V. Type and scope of funding

1. Type

(1) Funding is generally granted in the form of an earmarked, non-refundable grant.

(2) The grant can be issued as project funding in the form of partial, fixed-sum or match funding.

(3) In justified cases, the funding can be issued as a loan or guarantee.

(4) The funding is generally determined on the basis of the overall project costs by granting a flat-rate overhead surcharge (project-related indirect costs). The funding recipient generally has to provide an own contribution as well.

(5) Expenditure-based funding is possible for universities and public bodies that receive government funding. In this case, the project costs will be determined on the basis of the project-related expenses that are not already covered by the base funding. The funding can cover up to 100 % of the project costs.

2. Scope

(1) The size of the grant is determined based on the project and the applicant. For collaborative projects, each project partner is considered individually in terms of the type of funding and the funding amount. For the amount of funding for companies, the respective applicable regulations on state funding laid out by the European Commission serve as the upper limits.

(2) The type and maximum amount of funding is specified in the letter of approval. As a rule, the funding amount and own contribution of co-financed projects are reduced proportionally if the eligible project costs are reduced over the course of the project.

(3) The final funding is generally limited by the actual financing needs, which must be demonstrated as part of the project accounting. The actual financing needs are determined by subtracting the project-related revenue obtained (e.g. third-party funding, sponsorships, income from conferences) from the costs that were actually incurred over the course of the project and the purchased non-cash services (e.g. volunteer work). The amount of the grant must correspond to the additional net costs (funding gap) required to achieve the objective of the grant, as incurred in comparison with the counterfactual scenario in which no grant is awarded.

(4) For funding in the form of a loan or guarantee, the conditions are determined on a case-by-case basis and laid out in the letter of approval.

(5) If loans are granted, the DBU can waive restitution for cause (e.g. if one of the goals of the project is not met).

3. Earlier start date

As a rule, the DBU will not provide funding to projects that are already underway. An earlier start date may be approved upon request in exceptional cases. The request must be justified.

4. Institutional funding or funding from multiple sources

(1) The DBU does not offer institutional funding.

(2) Projects that are subsidised with public funding will generally not receive DBU funding. In justified cases, cumulative funding may be approved.

VI. German Environmental Award

(1) Every year, the DBU awards an environmental prize. It can be distributed among multiple recipients.

(2) The DBU Board of Trustees decides who will receive the German Environmental Award.

VII. Application procedure

1. Project outline

(1) Applicants have the opportunity to submit a short description of the project (project outline) to the DBU Branch Office before submitting their application.

(2) If the project outline receives a favourable review, the DBU Branch Office will ask the applicant to submit a concrete proposal.

2. Project application

(1) Applications for funding must be addressed to the DBU Branch Office.

At a minimum, they must include information about:

- funding recipient;
- subject matter and objective of the project;
- the status of the related knowledge/ technology;
- estimated cost of the project;
- budget broken down by cost type;
- type of financing;
- finance plan;
- type and scope of measures;
- start and duration of the project;
- continuation of the project;
- financial aid from other funding programmes.

(2) The DBU can also hire external reviewers to evaluate project proposals. The reviewers are obliged to keep the project proposals confidential. Applicants who do not wish for certain reviewers to be used must inform the DBU accordingly. Project proposals and all additional required information can also be transferred to the reviewers electronically.

(3) Project proposals and outlines along with all information subject to data protection laws will be kept confidential by the DBU.

(4) You can find more detailed information about the application process on the DBU website at **www.dbu.de/en**.

VIII. Decision on the awarding of funding

The DBU Board of Trustees decides who will receive funding. It can also delegate decisions to the Secretary General.

IX. Funding withdrawal, general information on management

1. Funding withdrawal

(1) The approved total funding amount is generally disbursed in instalments, whereby the payment date and amount depend on the project progression. To avoid interest losses, the DBU generally only transfers funds at the point when they are required for the purpose of the grant.

(2) Funding may only be used in accordance with the current stage of the project. Failure to observe this rule will result in the recipient having to reimburse the DBU for funds lost due to interest losses resulting from premature utilisation. The DBU may demand that recipients return any funds utilised prematurely.

(3) As a rule, once the first instalment payment has been disbursed, every additional funding instalment will only be made available when the utilisation of the funds that have already been disbursed as well as the corresponding proportional own contribution has been demonstrated.

(4) The funding recipient shall inform the DBU Branch Office in writing as to the desired amount of the respective funding instalment as well as the desired payment date in advance.

(5) In general, funds will only be disbursed to the funding recipient. For collaborative projects, the grant recipient shall receive the funding intended for their project partners and is responsible for transferring the funds accordingly.

(6) As a rule, the DBU will only transfer requested amounts to a German bank account specified by the funding recipient.

(7) The funding recipient is responsible for ensuring that the funds are used for the stated purposes.

(8) The approved funding is not tied to a financial year and does not expire at the end of the calendar year.

2. Efficiency and economy

(1) The funding recipient is obligated to complete the project on schedule.

(2) The funds may only be used to achieve the objectives laid out in the letter of approval. The funds must be used efficiently and economically.

(3) In cases of unforeseeable or overlooked increases in the cost of the project, the DBU can, in exceptional cases, increase the available funding upon request (supplementary funds). The request must be justified.

(4) Any funding that is not required to complete the project or that is not utilised over the course of the project must be returned no later than with the final proof of use.

3. Duty of disclosure

(1) The funding recipient is obligated to disclose the current status of the project to the DBU at any time upon request.

(2) The funding recipient is obligated to allow the DBU or its representatives to inspect the project.

X. Project costs

1. Cost plan for approval

The project must be carried out in accordance with the framework of the approved cost plan (appendix to the letter of approval). For collaborative projects, each project partner is generally assigned an own cost plan in the letter of approval.

2. Cost types

(1) In general, the cost plan is divided into the following cost types:

a) Cost-based funding:

- Personnel costs (gross salary)
- Overhead costs (project-related indirect costs)
- Material costs
- Third-party services
- Travel expenses

b) Expenditure-based funding:

- Personnel costs
- Material costs
- Third-party services
- Travel expenses

Additional project-specific cost types are also possible.

(2) More detailed information and notes on the individual cost types are available on the DBU website at **www.dbu.de/en**.

3. Cost budgets

In the cost plan, every cost type is assigned to a budget (target costs). The budgets represent upper limits. In total, they represent the approved overall costs.

4. Deviations from the approved budget

(1) If the cost plan contains budgets for multiple cost types, the individual cost budgets can be increased by up to 20% as needed in order to achieve the approved project aims. The increased costs must be balanced out by reducing other costs, or must be covered by the funding recipient as an additional own contribution. The DBU Branch Office may approve additional changes upon substantiated request (reallocation).

(2) Reallocation of costs and funding between project partners is only possible in exceptional cases. Requests must be submitted with justification and must be approved by the DBU. The framework of state aid law must be observed.

XI. Rules regarding ownership

1. Rules regarding ownership for movable objects

(1) Movable objects that are purchased with the approved funds shall become the property of the funding recipient. With good reason (e.g. transfer to a different project), the DBU reserves the right to request a transfer of ownership to a body specified by the DBU or to the DBU itself.

(2) The objects are to be recorded in inventory lists as long as they are not consumables or mobile devices that are classified as low-value assets under the corresponding tax guidelines.

(3) Pending prior approval from the DBU, the funding recipient may sell off the objects once they are no longer required for the project.

(4) The share of sales proceeds commensurate with the funding amount must be repaid to the DBU, or otherwise used to benefit the Foundation in agreement with the DBU.

2. Rules regarding ownership for land parcels and buildings

(1) The funding recipient becomes the owner of parcels of land and buildings that he or she purchases or has built using the approved funds. In the event of misappropriation (deviation from the purpose(s) specified in the letter of approval), the funding recipient must reimburse the DBU for the full amount of the grant plus appropriate interest.

(2) In the event that the land and buildings are sold by the funding recipient, the rules implemented for movable objects [Section XI, 1, (3), (4)] apply accordingly.

(3) Upon request by the DBU, the aforementioned claim must be secured by means of entry of an encumbrance at the highest available position in the land registry.

XII. Proof of use, reports, publications

1. Proof of use

(1) The utilisation of disbursed funds and the provision of the recipient's corresponding own contribution must generally be substantiated in the form of cost statements (expenditure of use) before further funds can be made available (intermediate reports). Proof must be provided separately for each cost type by submitting verifiable documentation (generally copies of documents). The DBU Branch Office determines the preliminary state of evidence on the basis of the documents submitted.

(2) The final report must be submitted to the DBU Branch Office as soon as possible, at the latest three months after finishing the funding project. The final documentation must contain proof of all project costs that were not yet approved in the intermediate reports.

(3) All project-related revenues must also be included in the proof of use.

(4) The DBU reserves the right to inspect the proof of use in situ or to have them inspected by an auditor. The inspection can include the technical status and the economic/financial state of the project as well as of the funding recipient.

(5) The funding recipient must keep original copies for the proof of use for review by the DBU for a period of five years after completion of the project.

(6) The project is technically and financially completed upon payment of the final instalment. In the event of divergent circumstances discovered during on-location inspections, changes may still be made.

(7) The funding recipient will receive detailed information on the proof of use together with the letter of approval. This information is also available on the DBU website at **www.dbu.de/en**.

2. Documentation, reports

(1) The DBU can request that the funding recipient documents the progress of the project in accordance with the specifications of the DBU Branch Office. Costs incurred in this context are to be included in the cost plan submitted with the project proposal.

(2) A final report must be submitted to the DBU Branch Office at the latest 3 months after completion of the project. The DBU retains the right to withhold funding in the amount of up to 10% of the approved project costs that are eligible for funding until it has completed its inspection of the final report.

(3) The DBU determines the format of the report. The funding recipient must request an information sheet with more information on this topic from the DBU Branch Office in good time before the end of the project.

(4) Depending on the nature of the project, the report must

- present the project's progression as well as any particularly challenging or difficult circumstances;
- describe and evaluate the results – also in comparison with the original objectives and, if necessary, with references to follow-on questions and possibilities for implementation or application;
- inform the reader of any other circumstances that are important for assessment of the funding measures.

(5) As a rule, the report must be submitted in bound form. Moreover, the funding recipient must submit the report and the project data sheet to the DBU Branch Office as separate files in editable electronic form.

(6) In addition to these reporting duties, the funding recipient is obligated to inform the DBU Branch Office unsolicitedly of any events that could seriously impact the project. This applies, in particular, in the event that the prerequisites for completion of the project or achievement of its goals appear to be in jeopardy.

(7) Plots of land and buildings as well as larger objects [see Section XI. 1. (2)] must be labelled at a suitable location with the DBU logo (word/picture mark) and the words »Funded by the German Federal Environmental Foundation« clearly visible.

3. Publications

(1) The results of the DBU-funded project must be made available to the public, preferably in the form of publication in standard professional journals, through suitable events, or by means of inclusion in databases.

(2) Within the context of its stated aims, the DBU is entitled to utilise (also in the form of journalistic reporting) the respective project and project results (in whole or in part), including photos and any filmed footage (non-exclusive right of use). The project results can be processed electronically and sent to any bodies or organisations determined to be necessary by the DBU (also in electronic form).

The funding recipient is responsible for ensuring that the project documentation provided to the DBU (e.g. photos and film footage) are not subject to third-party rights. Should this not be the case, the funding recipient must inform the DBU Branch Office regarding the pre-existing rights.

(3) In the case of publications that are the direct result of the funded project, the following statement must be included in the imprint: »Funded by the German Federal Environmental Foundation«. The DBU logo (word/image mark) must also be used in the publication. A corresponding reference must be included in any invitations, programmes or press releases. Company or product marketing that uses the funding notice and/or the DBU logo is prohibited without the express approval of the DBU.

(4) A copy of every publication must be submitted to the DBU Branch Office, preferably in editable electronic form.

(5) Costs incurred within the context of paragraphs 1–4 are to be included in the cost plan submitted with the project proposal.

XIII. Revocation of the grant

(1) The DBU can revoke the grant if it is not utilised at least in part within one year after receiving the approval letter.

(2) The DBU reserves the right to revoke the grant and to demand repayment of funds disbursed if the funding guidelines or additionally communicated special conditions are not observed, in particular if funds are not used in accordance with the letter of approval or if the use of the funds is not substantiated.

(3) The DBU reserves the right to cease the funding of a project for a justified reason for which the funding recipient is responsible. One justified reason, for example, is insolvency. The same applies if essential preconditions for the implementation of the project no longer exist or if the objectives of the project can no longer be achieved. The reversal of the obligations entered into by the funding recipient shall be regulated by special agreement between the funding recipient and the DBU.

(4) In the event of the opening of insolvency proceedings, the liquidation or the discontinuation of the project for which the funding recipient is responsible, the DBU can demand repayment of the disbursed funding.

XIV. Participation in economic success

(1) Should the funded project generate direct economic profits, this must be reported immediately to the DBU Branch Office.

(2) In the case of project funding in the form of a grant, the DBU can demand repayment of the funding amount, either in whole or in part, from such profits. Profits of up to EUR 50,000 shall be excluded.

(3) Upon request, the funding recipient must grant third parties non-exclusive and non-transferable rights of use or enjoyment of the rights to the result and to parts of the result protected by copyright on terms customary in the industry. The extent to which the project was funded with DBU funds must be taken into account when calculating the usage fee.

(4) The project approval may contain further specifications concerning the economic rights of use.

XV. Specific obligations for the funding recipient in cooperative projects

(1) In the case of cooperative projects, the funding recipient is responsible for coordinating all project activities. He or she is accountable to the DBU in particular for the technical implementation and financial management of the project.

(2) The funding recipient must ensure that the cooperating partners are aware of and comply with these procedural provisions, the necessary components of the approval (e.g. the cost plan), and all important information for the implementation and execution of the project.

XVI. Safeguard provisions

(1) The funding recipient is solely responsible for completing the project. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with statutory provisions, official directives, and the safety and accident prevention regulations.

(2) The DBU is not liable for damage incurred during the process of completing the funded project.

(3) If the DBU incurs damage in the course of funding a project, the funding recipient shall indemnify the DBU.

(4) The DBU is in no way the employer of any employees paid from the funding. This does not apply if the DBU is the owner of the project.

(5) Should the letter of approval contain any rules that diverge from these procedural provisions, the rules in the letter of approval take precedence.

(6) The place of jurisdiction for any disputes arising from the funding contract is Osnabrück, Germany. The contract is subject to German law.

Legal

The German Bundestag has adopted the following law:

§ 1 Establishment and legal form

The Federal government will establish a foundation with legal capacity under civil law named the »German Federal Environmental Foundation«.

§ 2 Mission

(1) The DBU's mission will be to fund projects and initiatives to protect the environment, particularly those involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As a rule, the Foundation shall aim to work outside the scope of other governmental funding programs, but may complement them.

(2) To perform its duties, the Foundation must support in particular:

- Research, development and innovation in the areas of eco-friendly and safe processes and products, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises;
- The exchange of knowledge concerning the environment between science, economy and other public or private bodies, as well as project for dissemination of environmental knowledge;
- Collaborative projects within Germany involving the application of environmental technology, primarily carried out by small and medium-sized enterprises, including educational and training measures;
- Conservation and protection of nationally valuable cultural assets from harmful environmental effects (pilot projects).

(3) Every year, the Foundation shall award an environmental prize.

§ 3 Controlling

The Foundation's budget and financial management is subject to audit by the Federal Audit Office.

§ 4 Berlin clause

Pursuant to Section 13 Paragraph 1 of the Third Reconciliation Act, this law also applies in Berlin.

§ 5 Entry into force

This law shall enter into force on the day after its proclamation. The constitutional rights of the Federal Council of Germany are granted. The law above is hereby executed and will be proclaimed in the German Federal Law Gazette.

Bonn, 18 July 1990

President of the
Federal Republic of Germany
Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker

Federal Chancellor
Dr. Helmut Kohl

Federal Minister of Finance
Dr. Theo Waigel

Deed of Foundation and Articles of Association

In accordance with the Law of 18 July 1990 establishing a Foundation entitled the »German Federal Environmental Foundation« (BGBl. I p. 1448), the »German Federal Environmental Foundation« is hereby established as a foundation with legal capacity under civil law with headquarters in Osnabrück, Germany. The Foundation has the function defined in Section 2 of the law. DM 2,519,123,500 will be transferred to the Foundation as an endowment. The legal representative of the Foundation is the Board of Trustees, which is comprised of 16 members. They will be appointed by the German Federal Government.

The Foundation received the following

Articles of Association

§ 1 Name, legal form, domicile

(1) The Foundation bears the name the »German Federal Environmental Foundation« and is a foundation with legal capacity under civil law.

(2) The Foundation is headquartered in Osnabrück, Germany.

§ 2 Purpose of the Foundation

(1) The purpose of the Foundation is to fund projects and initiatives to protect the environment with special regard to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As a rule, the Foundation shall aim to work outside the scope of governmental funding programs, but may complement those.

(2) For this purpose, the Foundation shall promote in particular:

- Research, development and innovation in the areas of eco-friendly and safe processes and products, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises;
- The exchange of knowledge concerning the environment between science, economy and other public or private bodies, as well as projects for dissemination of environmental knowledge;
- Conservation and protection of nationally valuable cultural assets from harmful environmental effects (pilot projects);
- Conservation and restoration of the national cultural heritage (projects of outstanding national significance).

(3) Every year, the Foundation awards an environmental prize.

§ 3 Non-profit status

The Foundation directly and solely serves public-benefit purposes in accordance with the Chapter »Tax-privileged purposes« of the German Fiscal Code. It is altruistic and does not primarily serve its own economic purposes. The funds of the Foundation may be used only for the purposes set out in the statutes. The Foundation may not provide a benefit for any person by means of expenditure unrelated to the purpose of the corporation or disproportionately high remuneration.

§ 4 Foundation assets

(1) The Foundation assets are comprised of the proceeds from the sale of Salzgitter AG and amounts to a total of DM 2,519,123,500.

(2) The assets are preferably to be invested in interest-bearing assets. Measures to preserve the assets are permissible.

(3) Free reserves may be created within the framework of the relevant tax regulations. They are part of the basic assets.

(4) The Foundation uses the income from the investment of its assets to achieve its purpose. The administrative costs of the Foundation are to be covered in advance by these funds. Care must be taken to ensure economical management of the Foundation's assets.

(5) The Foundation is entitled to accept grants and donations from third parties. They may be added to the Foundation's assets if so stipulated by said third party.

§ 5 Board of Trustees

(1) The Foundation is chaired by the Board of Trustees.

(2) The Board of Trustees consists of 16 members. They will be appointed by the German Federal Government. If a member resigns, a new member shall be appointed for the remainder of the original member's term of office. A member who is appointed as the holder of a public office shall cease to be a member of the Board of Trustees upon termination of said office.

(3) The term of office shall be 5 years; it may be extended to 7.5 years for members of the first Board of Trustees. Members may only be reappointed once. A dismissal may take place given sufficient grounds.

(4) The Board of Trustees elects one Chairman and three Vice-chairmen from among its members.

(5) The Board of Trustees passes its resolutions by a majority of the votes cast. In the event of a tie, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall cast the deciding vote. The Board of Trustees is quorate if at least half of its members, including the Chairman or one of his deputies, attend the meeting. Resolutions may be adopted in writing or by telex if no member objects to this procedure. The rules of procedure regulate the requirements for the possible use of means of communication for participation in meetings.

(6) The Chairman shall convene the meetings of the Board of Trustees. At least two meetings will be held annually. Minutes will be taken of each meeting. These minutes shall be signed by the Chairman and the Secretary.

(7) The Board of Trustees will adopt its own rules of procedure.

(8) In addition to an expense allowance (monthly remuneration for time spent), the members of the Board of Trustees shall be reimbursed for their travel expenses and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.

§ 6 Representation of the Foundation

The Foundation is represented in and out of court by the Board of Trustees, which is represented by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees together with one of his/her deputies or jointly by two of the deputies of the Chairman. The Board of Trustees will only be represented by two of the deputies of the Chairman if the Chairman is unable to do so himself.

§ 7 Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees manages the Foundation.

It is responsible in particular for

a) defining the Foundation‘s guidelines;
b) creating an annual budget;
c) deciding on the awarding of funding;
d) preparing the annual financial statements;
e) preparing and publishing the annual reports on the Foundation’s activities;
f) deciding on the awarding of the German Environmental Award.

§ 8 Secretary General

(1) The Board oaf Trustees appoints a Secretary General who is responsible for carrying out the activities of the Foundation. He/she shall be appointed for a maximum of 5 years. Reappointment is permissible for a maximum of 5 years in each case.

(2) The Secretary General represents the Board of Trustees in current affairs. Further details will be defined in the rules of procedure issued by the Board of Trustees.

§ 9 Awarding of funding

(1) Funding is to be used as earmarked benefits for measures that are deemed to be worthy of support.

(2) Further details will be determined by the guidelines that are to be issued by the Board of Trustees for the funding of purposes as defined in Section 2 of these Articles of Association.

§ 10 Advisory Board

The Board of Trustees may appoint an Advisory Board to advise it in the performance of its duties.

§ 11 Proof of use

When awarding funding, the Board of Trustees is to make provisions with regard to proof of the appropriate use of these funds by the recipient and with regard to the verification of the use of the funds. The recipient acknowledges that the foundation is authorised to audit the recipient's use of the funds in accordance with their intended purpose or to have said use audited by a third party.

§ 12 Annual financial statement, review

(1) The Foundation's fiscal year is the calendar year. Within the first five months of each year, the Board of Trustees must prepare an annual financial statement for the past calendar year. The statement, including the proof of use, will be audited annually by an auditor or an auditing firm that has been appointed by the Board of Trustees in agreement with the Federal Audit Office. They must audit the statement in accordance with the guidelines to be issued by the Board of Trustees in agreement with the Federal Audit Office.

(2) The Foundation's budget and financial management is subject to review by the Federal Audit Office.

§ 13 Amendments to the Articles of Association

A majority of three-quarters of the statutory number of members of the Board of Trustees is required in order to make amendments to the Articles of Association. Any amendments require the approval of the Federal Minister of Finance and the Budget Committee of the German Bundestag.

§ 14 Termination, escheat

In the event of termination of the Foundation, its assets shall pass to the Federal Republic of Germany, which shall use them in accordance with the purpose of the Foundation.

(Version from 21.02.2023)

DBU Fellowship Programmes

Through its Fellowship Programmes, the DBU promotes the qualification of young graduates in the fields of environmental protection and nature conservation. These »investments in young minds« aim to build interdisciplinary scientific expertise, helping to address pressing environmental challenges and foster a network of motivated, future-oriented environmental professionals.

Many fellows work on topics that closely align with the DBU's broader funding priorities. In contrast to project funding, the support for young researchers focuses more strongly on scientific development and can serve as a foundation for later, application-oriented research projects.

The two fellowship programmes specifically support, on the one hand, doctoral studies at German universities and, on the other, the further qualification of young professionals from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in Germany. Both programmes are open to above-average university graduates from all disciplines and fund projects with strong environmental and practical relevance.

Beyond financial support, the DBU offers fellows a variety of opportunities for exchange and development, including seminars, participation in the German Environmental Award ceremony, and personal guidance from DBU mentors. An online communication platform also facilitates networking among current fellows and alumni. Additionally, results from selected projects are shared through various public outreach channels.

PhD Scholarship Programm

PhD fellowships are awarded to outstanding young scientists who demonstrate excellent academic performance, enthusiasm, and commitment. Candidates should show willingness to look beyond their specific disciplines and recognize the environmental significance of their research topics.

The fellowships support scientifically ambitious dissertations at German universities for up to 36 months. Projects should develop innovative solutions for environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources.

Alumni of the program become highly qualified specialists with extensive expertise in environmental sciences and play a key role in advancing environmental and nature conservation throughout their professional careers.

For further information, current announcements, and contact details, please visit **www.dbu.de/en/promotion/doctoral-scholarships**.

Funds and services provided by the DBU

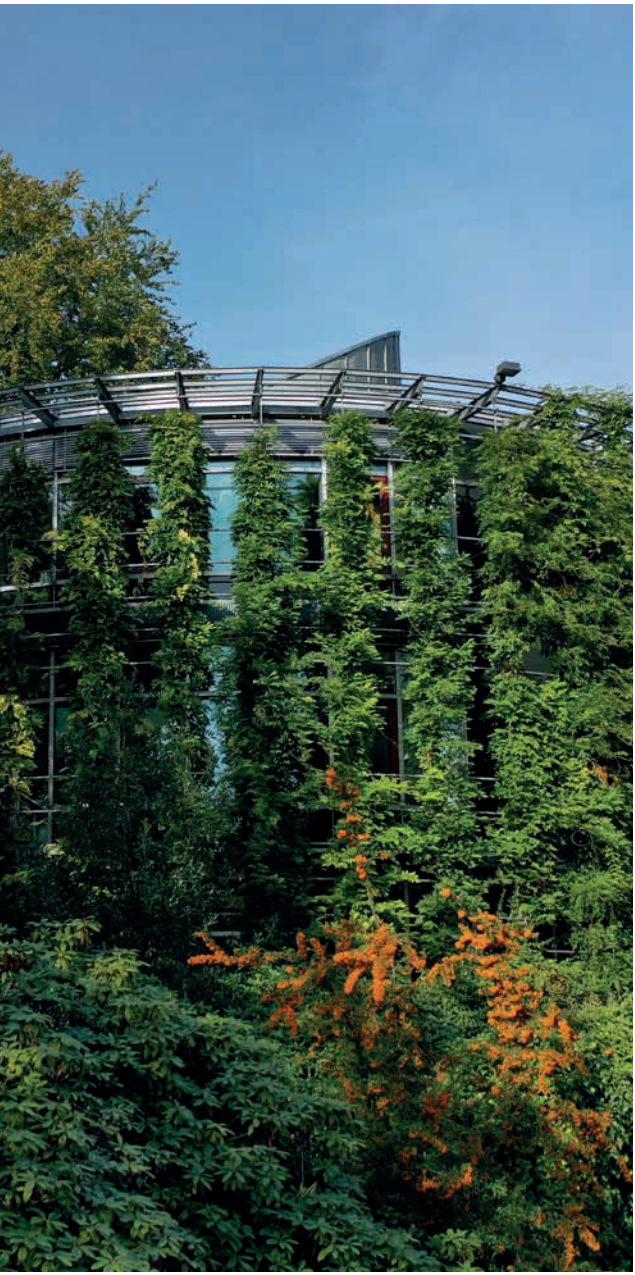
- Funding period: max. 36 months
- Monthly basic funding: EUR 1,650
- Monthly material costs: EUR 150
- Further subsidisation of material costs possible
- Monthly child supplement and further support for families possible
- Subsidy for health insurance
- Personal guidance from DBU mentors

Requirements and conditions

- A university degree with above-average performance
- Good knowledge of German (at least level B2)
- The dissertation is being written at a German university and has not yet begun (a dissertation will be considered to have begun if the individual has already been reaching the topic of the dissertation for more than 1 year after graduation)
- The dissertation addresses the environmental situation in Germany or global environmental issues with relevance for Germany

Selection procedure

- Applications may be sent online in German with an exposé for a scientifically based dissertation with a high degree of environmental and practical relevance
- Evaluation of applications by DBU
- Interview in German in Osnabrück



CEE Fellowship Programm

CEE fellowships are granted to university graduates from 19 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) for further qualification in the field of environmental and natural conservation. They allow for a 6- to 12-month exchange at a German host institution: universities, research institutes, companies, environmental and natural conservation offices, NGOs, associations, etc.

During the fellowship, the fellow has to work on possible solutions to current environmental issues. This is intended to empower alumni to subsequently apply the knowledge received in their home countries.

For further information see:
www.dbu.de/en/promotion/moe-fellowship/

Funds and services provided by the DBU

- Funding period: 6–12 months
- Monthly scholarship amount: currently EUR 1,350, from 01.08.2026 EUR 1,450, exempt of tax and social security contributions in Germany
- Health, accident and liability insurance
- Support with assistance in finding a host institution in Germany
- A multiple-week German language course in Osnabrück at the start of the fellowship
- Annual alumni meetings in the respective home countries
- Support with the organisation of specialist colloquia

Requirements and conditions

- Applicants must be a citizen of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Kosovo, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Northmacedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary
- Permanent residency in the countries listed above at the time eof application
- An above-average university degree (good to very good) from the countries listed above
- The applicant's degree must not be older than three years at the time of application
- PhD students are permitted to apply as long as their dissertation will not be completed during the fellowship

Selection procedure

- Online application in German or English with a proposal on an environmentally relevant and practical topic
- Interview in German or English in the applicant's home country or online

Alumni promotion

The DBU awards travel and alumni fellowships to former fellows of the MOE Fellowship Program. The travel fellowships are intended for participation in an event on current environmental topics in Germany.

The three-month alumni fellowship can be used for further scientific training in the course of a PhD/postdoc position or for further qualification between cooperating institutions/organizations/ companies.

For more information on the application requirements see:
www.dbu.de/en/promotion/moe-fellowship/alumni/

Small Grants

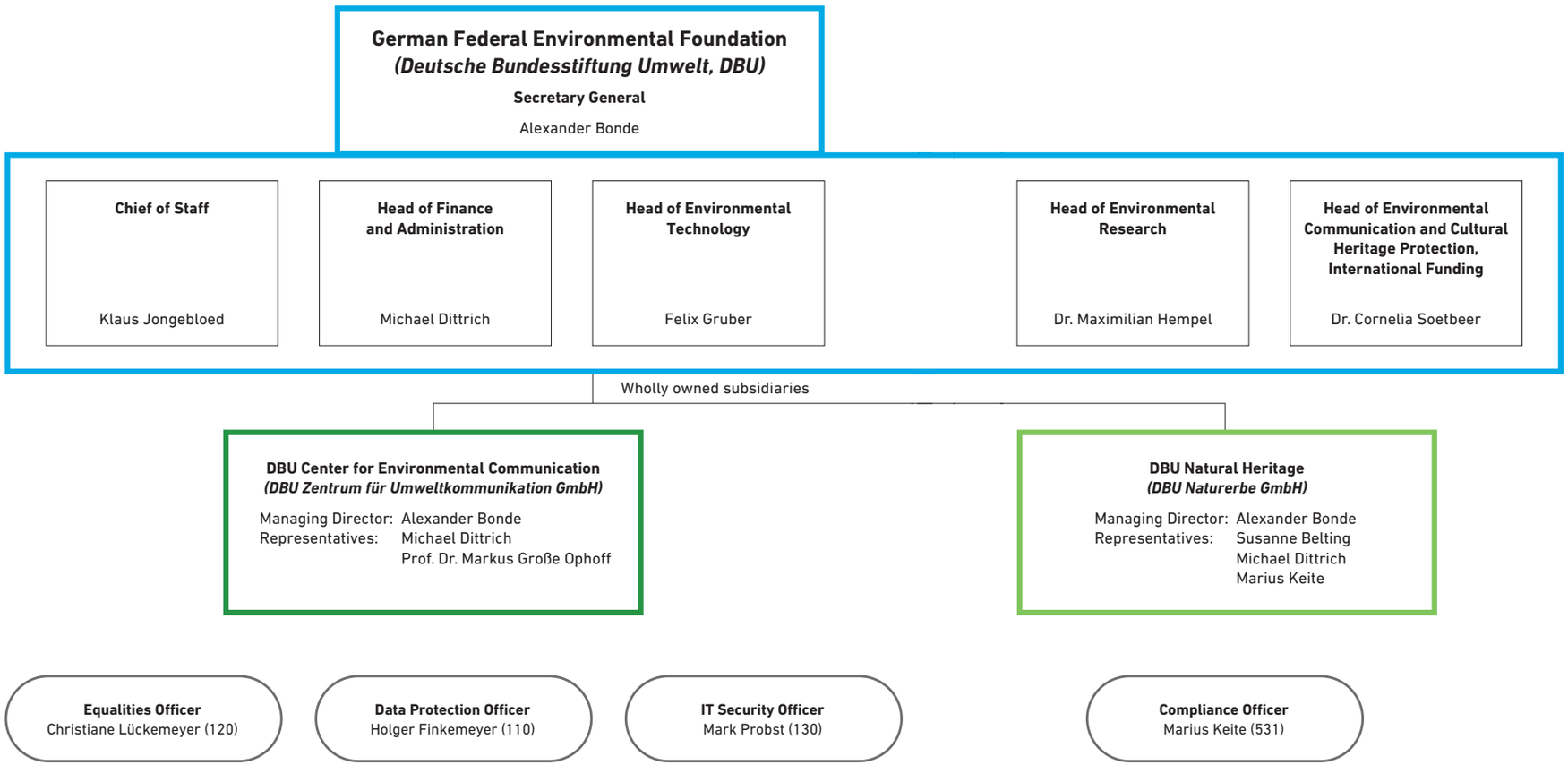
After completing the fellowship, fellows have the opportunity to apply for a small grant project. The small grants are intended for projects in the respective home countries of the fellows and are aligned with the funding guidelines of the DBU. This is intended to facilitate the return of the fellows to their home countries upon completion of the fellowship in Germany, enabling them to apply the skills they have gained in environmental protection and nature conservation. Funding is granted for a maximum of six months.

For more information on the application requirements see:
www.dbu.de/en/promotion/moe-fellowship/alumni/

Organisational matters

German Federal Environmental Foundation
Foundation structure

German Federal Environmental Foundation
Street address: P.O. Box 17 05, 49007 Osnabrück, Germany
Home address: An der Bornau 2, 49090 Osnabrück, Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 541 | 9633-0 (extension)
Website: **www.dbu.de/en**



Last updated: 01.04.2026

See the current organizational chart:
www.dbu.de/en/about-us/employees/organigram/

German Federal Environmental Foundation
Organisational chart

German Federal Environmental Foundation
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Deputy: Michael Dittrich (101)

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Deputy: Jutta Gruber-Mannigel (511)

Legal
Marius Keite (531)
Deputy: Jana Marcus (532)

Foundation Development
Jutta Gruber-Mannigel (511)
Deputy: Fabian Deffner (512)

Press
Klaus Jongebloed (521)

Controlling
Dirk Jantzon (540)

Department 1
Finance and Administration
Michael Dittrich (101)
Deputy: Holger Finkemeyer (110)

Unit 11
Accounting and Internal Services
Holger Finkemeyer (110)

Unit 12
Human Resources
Christiane Lückemeyer (120)

Unit 13
Information Technology (IT)
Mark Probst (130)

Unit 14
Financial Project Controlling
Bernhard Hanke (140)

Unit 15
Investment
Rainer Königs (150)
Sascha Beckmann (152)
Bernd Sökeland (153)

Department 2
Environmental Technology
Felix Gruber (201)
Deputy: Dr. Michael Schwake (213)

Unit 21
Safe and Eco-Friendly Processes and Products
Dr.-Ing. Jörg R. Lefèvre (211)
Dr. Michael Schwake, Dipl.-Chem. (213)

Unit 22
Green Start-Up
Fabian Vorländer (220)

Unit 23
Offshore Wind Energy and Marine Technology
Dr. Klaus Michels (230)

Unit 24
Energy
Dr. Katrin Anneser (242)
Dirk Schötz, Dipl.-Ing. (243)

Unit 25
Sustainable Construction
Sabine Djahanschah, Dipl.-Ing. (201)

Department 3
Environmental Research
Dr. Maximilian Hempel (301)
Deputy: Dr. Hans-Christian Schaefer (350)

Unit 31
Circular Economy and Resources
Dr. Volker Berding (311)
Dr. Melanie Kröger (312)

Unit 32
Marine Nature Conservation Fund
Dr. Stefanie Moorthi (320)

Unit 33
Nature Conservation and Water Conservation
Dr. Sina Volz (330)

Unit 34
Land Use and Digitalization
Dr. Steffen Walther (340)
Christiane Grimm, Dipl.-Ing. agr. (342)

Unit 35
PhD Scholarship Programme
Dr. Hans-Christian Schaefer (350)

Unit 36
Food
Dr. Susanne Wiese-Willmaring (361)

Department 4
Environmental Communication and Cultural Heritage Protection, International Funding
Dr. Cornelia Soetbeer (401)
Deputy: Dr. Alexander Bittner (431)

Unit 41
STEM Education and Sustainability Assessment
Melanie Vogelpohl (410)

Unit 42
German Environmental Award and Events
Martin Schulte (420)

Unit 43
Education and Civil Society
Dr. Alexander Bittner, Dipl.-Forstw. MA (431)

Unit 44
Vocational Training and Consumption
Verena Exner, Dipl.-Kff. (441)

Unit 45
Environment and Cultural Heritage Protection
Constanze Fuhrmann, M.A., M.Sc. (451)

Unit 46
CEE Fellowship Programme
Dr. Nicole Freyer-Wille, Dipl.-Geogr. (461)

Funding applications are processed in interdisciplinary groups of funding topics.

- **Energy**
- **Products and Processes**

Head: Felix Gruber

- **Water and Nature Conservation**
- **Resources and Circular Economy**
- **Marine Nature Conservation Fund**

Head: Dr. Maximilian Hempel

- **Education and Nutrition**
- **Construction, District Development and Cultural Heritage Protection**

Head: Dr. Cornelia Soetbeer

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The German Federal Environmental Foundation' interdisciplinary project groups

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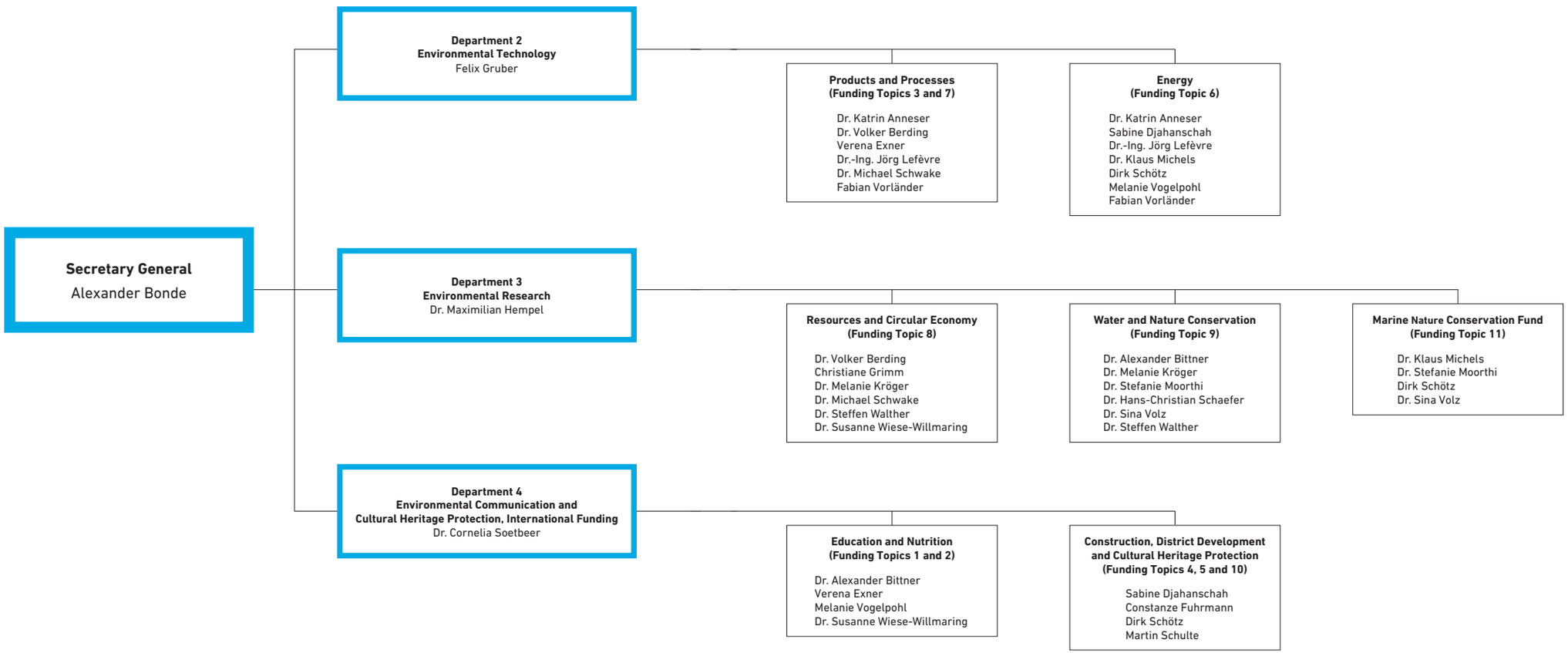

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