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**German Federal Environmental Foundation
(Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, DBU): A Short Portrait | June 2026****Founding**

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

Financing

The endowment capital (from the German government) stems from the proceeds of the privatization of the steel company Salzgitter AG and is three billion euros today. The yield from the capital is 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

Funding Areas

1. Sustainability communication, education and evaluation
2. Sustainable diet and food production
3. Environmentally-friendly products
4. Climate-friendly and resource-saving construction methods
5. Sustainable development of residential areas
6. Renewable energy, energy saving and energy efficiency
7. Resource efficient production processes and materials
8. Circular economy and efficient use of large and environmentally relevant material flows
9. Nature and water protection
10. Environment and cultural assets
11. Marine Nature Conservation Fund

In addition to these funding areas a so called open topic funding is aiming at those projects that possibly may not be assigned to one of the above mentioned funding areas – but which are nevertheless of high environmental impact and relevance and meet the funding requirements of the *DBU* statutes.

- Since its foundation the *DBU* has supported more than 11.500 projects with around 2.18 billion euros.

German Environmental Award

Annual presentation of the German Environmental Award, one of the most highly endowed environmental awards in Europe, totalling 500,000 euros

Activities

The *DBU* supports the creativity of small and medium-sized companies in practically solving environmental challenges, thus supplying incentives for ecological innovations (exemplary, environmentally friendly, innovative). By promoting environmentally friendly and healthy products and production methods, it focuses on preventive and integrated environmental protection. At the same time, the *DBU* aims at reducing the risks for companies embarking on more sustainable production techniques. It fosters measures that practically and directly protect the environment. And the German Federal Environmental Foundation supports the exchange of environmental knowledge between science and economy as well as public and private institutions. The *DBU* also preserves and secures valuable cultural heritage, at risk of being harmed by environmental damage. The *DBU* backs nature-conservation projects that protect habitats and wild species and that serve to promote a natural, location-specific diversity and a sustainable use of ecosystems

Subsidiary companies

The *DBU* has two non-profit subsidiaries: the *DBU* Centre for Environmental Communication (*DBU Zentrum für Umweltkommunikation, ZUK*) and the *DBU* Natural Heritage (*DBU Naturerbe*). *ZUK*, founded in 1999, supports the *DBU* by communicating its themes, projects and current main topics, addressing a wide range of target groups. The subsidiary *DBU Naturerbe*, founded in 2007, secures 66 nature heritage areas (woods, open countryside, wetlands) for nature conservation in the long term – amounting to some 70,000 hectares in ten German states. Its main objectives are preserving the regional animal and plant species in different habitats and raising awareness of nature and sustainability issues among citizens