Gaining Profit while Conserving Nature
Guidelines for cooperation of businesses and NGOs in the Visegrad countries
Gaining Profit while Conserving Nature: Guidelines for cooperation of businesses and NGOs in the Visegrad countries

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Get inspired

Holcim Slovakia Ltd., the biggest producer and distributor of building materials and relevant services in the country binds itself to create nesting habitats on the Danube River floodplains in Slovakia by using its own financial resources. In 2012 a memorandum was signed between Holcim Slovakia Ltd. and BROZ, a nature conservation non-governmental organization (NGO) to implement management measures focused on the quality improvement of bird habitats in the region.

MAVR Ltd., the operator of the whole Hungarian national electricity system, has been running its bird protection program since 2009 in close cooperation with Birdlife Hungary. Due to that electricity infrastructure can heavily disturb natural environment, the backbones of this programme are the man-made nests placed on electricity poles and bird averted measures protecting especially different waders as well as the vulnerable great bustard from hitting the transmission lines.

These are just two examples of project results where businesses and NGOs in the Visegrad region cooperate to increase corporate profits and preserve nature at the same.
Need for the guidelines

Leading companies know that “Business as usual” has changed. Investors and customers want companies to address social and environmental concerns. Businesses recognize that developing strategies to meet these needs would also contribute to their sustainability and competitiveness. At the same time, professional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) see that they can achieve widespread and long-lasting change by harnessing the power of the market. In order to be more effective, companies and NGOs are finding ways to work together. These partnerships, if designed and executed properly, can achieve remarkable business and environmental results and inspire others to cooperate.\(^1\)

Furthermore, however, biodiversity, its services, and natural resources form the basis for humanity’s well-being, and for businesses to operate. Visegrad countries have unique natural beauties and resources, but threats posed by unsustainable business operations can lead to their irreversible destruction, with the final result of damaging both society and economy. In order to avoid this, NGOs and businesses must find synergies in working together for the sake of biodiversity and natural resources.

Establishing partnerships, however, is a complex and sensitive process due to different viewpoints. While in Western Europe the exchange between nature conservation NGOs and the private sector has a long history, civil society in the Visegrad countries has no significant experience in this field. These guidelines aim to enhance interest of business and NGO sectors to work together for biodiversity conservation in the region and build their capacities for doing so.

The document has been developed through various consultation platforms, including personal and electronic view sharing of stakeholders with various backgrounds as well as through revealing, yet well-working, but not widespread examples within the Visegrad region.
Analysis of the potentials and pitfalls of cooperation

The potentials as well as the pitfalls of cooperation between companies and NGOs in Visegrad countries are shown through a SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in relation to a product, place, industry, actually in any situation where a decision should be made.²

In our case we analyse the cooperation in Visegrad countries between NGOs working on biodiversity issues and businesses. The elements of analysis are outlined below.

**Internal factors**

*Strengths:* characteristics of this type of partnerships that give advantage over other ways of implementing goals

*Weaknesses:* characteristics that place the cooperation at a disadvantage relatively to other ways of acting

**External factors**

*Opportunities:* elements in the environment that businesses and NGOs could exploit to the advantage of cooperation

*Threats:* elements in the environment that hinder the cooperation and cannot be impacted directly neither by NGOs nor by businesses

We structured the analysis according to the SWOT principle because of four reasons:

First, such way of structuring gives clarity about all the aspects of cooperation in the specific geographical area, and hopefully makes the analysis of this complex issue more easily comprehensible for the reader.

Second, based on the SWOT analysis we aimed to develop a set of suggestions for businesses and NGOs how to make use of strengths, eliminate weaknesses, use the existing opportunities and bypass the threats.

Third, SWOT analysis is often used for planning purposes both in business and non-profit environments. By providing the framework we hope to make it easier to prepare a SWOT for a specific cooperation project.

Fourth, our analysis of the threats can be useful for bringing a systematic change. While they are external factors that are not directly possible for individual NGOs and businesses to change, an external support can be solicited, e.g. from government or EU, to transform the threats.
Strengths

Strengths are the internal characteristics of the cooperation between NGOs and businesses in Visegrad countries that makes it advantageous over implementing their goals individually.

Companies have already discovered that environmental stewardship supports their health and viability. Therefore, they often use tools to improve the environment, including preventing pollution, developing environmentally friendly products and services, educating the public and engaging in philanthropic activities. These initiatives have been however proven not to be enough to reach long-term objectives considering the challenges of environment and society. On the other hand, a partnership project designed and executed in collaboration with a green NGO can assure the external push needed for effective realization of the long-term goals. Through such partnerships, as long as they are designed and executed properly, NGOs often can achieve measurable results faster compared to other approaches, such as advocating for legislative or regulatory change.

Properly designed and executed partnerships can create business value and positive environmental impacts at the same time. Business-NGO cooperation can result in measurable business and environmental benefits such as reduced costs, reduced risk, new market development and enhanced brand value along with reduced environmental impacts in the company's product line, operations or supply chain. It is already proven that global sales of organic food and drink amounted to US$46 billion in 2007, a threefold increase since 1998. Sales of certified ‘sustainable’ forest products quadrupled between 2005 and 2007. These facts show that businesses have the potential to raise their bar
on environmental performance. Innovations arising out of partnerships with NGOs can create competitive advantage for a business as well as establish a new standard of environmental excellence for others to build on.

According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, a 2012 survey with 25,000 respondents from 25 countries, the most trusted institutions in the world are NGOs. Due to this fact NGOs are ideally placed to bring together representatives of all stakeholders in order to develop further the important and neglected discourse around what society expects the purposes of the corporation to be in the future.

Multi-sectoral partnerships have the potential to leverage skills and perspectives not available in the organization. From the business’ standpoint, partnering with an NGO can help a company address issues that it may not have the expertise, skills or resources to manage on its own. NGOs also provide a valuable outside perspective. From NGOs’ viewpoint, a partnership can provide a testing ground for the effectiveness of its approach to a particular issue. Furthermore, uniting professional as well as financial resources provides more effective implementation of joint projects, which are in line with the business interest and at the same time with the core activities of the partnering NGO.

When a partnership between a trusted NGO and a well-known company delivers tangible results, it improves the image, reputation and credibility of both organizations. This would bring about respect for both participating entities within their sector as well as within the other sector. For business credibility’s point of view, NGO participation can provide independent “third party” validation of a company’s claim of environmental and social benefits from a project. On the other hand, if a green NGO gets engaged in a joint project with a transparent and credible company, it would also enhance the NGO image within non-profit as well as for-profit sectors.

According to the Global Corporate Sustainability Report 2013, released by the United Nations Global Compact, companies are shifting from commitment to action in the drive towards a sustainable future. Based on survey responses from nearly 2,000 companies across 113 countries, the report provides a snapshot of the actions taken by business to embed responsible practices into their strategies, operations and culture. Furthermore, according to a survey, carried out in Hungary in 2011, representatives of both sectors agreed on the positive impact NGOs potentially play in enhancing business environmental performance. In practise, however, this impact is not recognized and utilised, thus it provides the opportunity for improvement.

In Western Europe cooperation between national parks and the corporate sectors is widely visible, while there are still undiscovered fields for this kind of cooperation in Visegrad countries. In this region, national parks do not often have programs for business cooperation and on the other hand there is no special will from business side to support national parks. Within this context, NGOs have the potential to build bridge between protected area operators and businesses, due to which local businesses can be contracted for instance to renovate infrastructure or to manage habitat conservation and restoration.
There is quite some cooperation in Visegrad countries between NGOs and businesses in other fields than biodiversity conservation (mainly social field), therefore it is understood that the approaches of businesses and NGOs in principle may match. At the same time, growing number of examples of partnering in Visegrad countries on biodiversity related issues proves that cooperation in this field is possible and can be beneficial to both parties. Furthermore, establishing and maintaining an effective business and green NGO partnership gives the opportunity to other companies to follow the good practise and thus change the course of a whole industry. These trends can create opportunities to extend the interest of businesses to biodiversity related cooperation.

What motivates businesses to open up for cooperation?

A number of businesses realize that cooperation with NGOs may improve their corporate image and reputation, which may help reaching new markets and consumers and stimulate the sale of products in this way. Businesses can use the well-working cooperation for enhancing their PR and communication activities. Furthermore, they can use the partnership for opening up to new channels in networking, as well as entering into new markets and reaching new target groups.

Business can easily step in partnering with green NGOs if a CEO or high-level manager is environmentally conscious. A McKinsey survey shows 59% of 1,576 interviewed business executives see biodiversity as more of an opportunity than a risk for their companies.

Partnering is easier initiated when businesses have their core activities linked to some environmental goal, e.g. sustainable tourism/agriculture, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, environmental education and awareness raising. Such already existing good business practices can be enhanced to include cooperation with NGOs in biodiversity related fields.

Based on the so-called ecosystem approach, businesses more clearly perceive and communicate that biodiversity is essential to human well-being. This gives additional opportunity for businesses cooperating with green NGOs to show their contribution to social challenges at the same time.

*Ecosystem means a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes their conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems.*

(Source: www.cbd.int)

Finding an appropriate NGO partner can bring in knowledge and experience to companies in those fields where it is lacking. Cooperative companies gain new skills in reacting to problems as NGOs do. For instance, some NGOs have such expertise that can be useful for businesses in meeting legal requirements or implementing voluntary schemes.
What is the motivation of NGOs to be partners for companies?

NGOs can look at the cooperation with businesses as an opportunity to reach their goals through using other ways and methods used in the for-profit sphere. In case the cooperative NGO and company have the same or similar goal, they can achieve it more efficiently through joint efforts. One example for this is when NGOs use their on-the-ground projects/actions to involve in its implementation local partners including businesses in order to reach higher results.

How open are the NGOs towards partnerships with companies?

- Europe
  - ~50% very open/open

- Germany
  - ~90% very open/open

NGOs often rely on external financial support; therefore another, not insignificant motivation is that cooperation can provide additional financial resources.

Through supporting public good, NGOs can claim universal values, which contributes to step into partnership with the business sector. When partnership is established, NGOs can influence the operation of companies, e.g. water or electricity used by businesses decreased, bicycles used by employees increased.

Cooperation can be more successful if the partnering NGOs can distance themselves from interest groups and activists in order to enhance their accountability as civil society organizations with normative claims. But what is the difference between these three groups? NGOs take consensus-oriented actions; while interest groups take conflict oriented ones and activists are attention oriented.
Weaknesses

Weaknesses are internal issues that hinder the cooperation of green NGOs and businesses in Visegrad countries.

Green NGOs and businesses have different natures of operation and speak different languages; therefore it is a big challenge to understand each other's goals and methods of achieving them. It is, however, often the case that NGOs and businesses do not dedicate enough time to overcome this problem and are lacking appropriate information about the operation of the partnering organization, which creates an obstacle for effective cooperation.

Finding the proper partner from the other sector is a big challenge. It can often happen that the lack of commitment or expertise is missing from the partner after the agreement on the cooperation has been made.9 It can also happen that despite the huge efforts dedicated to the cooperation, its results are insignificant. These extra hours invested in the partnership could have been used more wisely.

What hinders the cooperation of businesses with green NGOs?

While most leading companies and organizations have long-term goals and visions, they often are preoccupied with short-term priorities in their day-to-day operations. The perceived overarching goal for businesses is short-term shareholder profit maximization. This presents the most important barrier to the contribution of companies to environmental sustainability.10

Due to the short-term approach, businesses see partnerships with green NGOs rather as a cost than a benefit. Companies often have prejudice towards green NGOs as “narrow minded”, self oriented entities and thus regularly possess enemy image towards these non-profit organizations.
What are the barriers for green NGOs to partner with companies?

NGOs often have enemy image towards businesses. Some NGOs perceive cooperation with businesses as greenwashing and think the change can only be achieved through confrontation. NGOs that are actively set up by corporations and advocate their business interests disguised as public concerns\textsuperscript{11} can also pose a barrier for trustworthy multi-sectoral collaboration.

*Greenwashing is a form of propaganda in which green marketing is deceptively used to promote the perception that an organization's products, aims and/or policies are environmentally friendly. Critics of the practice suggest that the rise of greenwashing, paired with ineffective regulation, contributes to consumer scepticism of all green claims, and diminishes the power of the consumer in driving companies toward greener solutions for manufacturing processes and business operations (Source: wikipedia).*

Furthermore, cooperation can reduce NGO reputation due to the fact that their biggest strength is their independency and trustworthiness. In case, the partnership turns out to be inadequate, they can easily loose their credibility among other NGOs, in the public as well as among their supporters.

Business and green NGO cooperation is often initiated by NGOs. However, finding an appropriate and credible businesses partner often requires a lot of efforts and resources. For NGOs reaching CEOs is very difficult in the Visegrad region, where there is no dedicated platform for networking and meeting with CEOs. In Western Europe bilateral meetings or attending conferences of relevant stakeholders can be easy; CSR Conferences
are frequent, with even more NGOs than businesses who participate. In the Visegrad region however, for many organizations this is an unexplored field; it is difficult to make the first step in finding appropriate business partners.

In terms of funding, NGOs often have on-the-ground projects, in which participation of international or nation wide companies are not directly relevant. At the same time, NGOs are overwhelmed in delivering the activities identified by the project and thus do not have enough capacity to initiate further activities. Another aspect of funding is that due to the limited number of businesses open for cooperation, competition between NGOs can hinder smaller organization from the opportunity of partnering.

**Opportunities**

**Opportunities are external factors that can be employed to enhance cooperation.**

The financial crisis showed that business as usual is not an option to go further. We are also facing complex environmental and social problems. Humanity is at a moment in history, when it needs corporate businesses more than ever to help cope with the challenges ahead.\textsuperscript{12}

The appreciation of "green" business by general public is growing. Increasing awareness on environmental problems has led a shift of consumer attitudes towards a green lifestyle. People are actively trying to reduce their impact on the environment. However, this is not widespread and is still evolving. Organizations and businesses have seen this change in consumer attitudes and are trying to gain an edge in the competitive market by exploiting the potential in the green market industry.\textsuperscript{13} The Union for Ethical BioTrade’s Biodiversity Barometer Survey (2011) showed that a high proportion of consumers (84%) are ready to stop buying products from companies that disregard ethical biodiversity sourcing practices.

The society sees that enterprises have a huge role to play in solving those challenges green NGOs are struggling to mitigate. Therefore working together in tackling climate change as well as in managing, safeguarding and investing in our natural capital becomes increasingly acceptable.

The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change\textsuperscript{14} discusses the effect of global warming on the world economy. The Review states that climate change is the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen, presenting a unique challenge for economics. The main conclusion of the document is that the benefits of strong, early action on climate change far outweigh the costs of not acting. Without action, the overall costs of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5% of global gross domestic product (GDP) each year. Including a wider range of risks and impacts this could increase to 20% of GDP or more, also indefinitely. The Review proposes that only two percent of global GDP per annum is required to be invested to avoid the worst effects of climate change. In this investment companies have the potential to play the leading role.
Emerging trend of valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services provides another opportunity to enhance business and green NGO cooperation. This method is drawing attention to the economic benefits of biological diversity including the growing cost of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. For instance estimates establish the cost of biodiversity and ecosystem damage expected to cost 18% of global economic output by 2050. This accounting tool can help decision-makers recognize, demonstrate and capture the values of ecosystem services and biodiversity. What however is the role of corporate stakeholders in this process, why should businesses invest in natural capital?

* Natural capital is the value of nature.
* It can be defined as the world’s stocks of natural assets that we benefit from.
  (Source: [www.pitchfornature.com](http://www.pitchfornature.com))

Natural capital matters because every single business in the world not only impacts on nature, but relies on it. So the degradation of ecosystems that is happening today means risks now and in the future for companies that do not recognize how and why natural capital is material for them. Wetlands for water quality, bees for pollination and nature areas for recreation are concrete examples of natural capital that is vital for different companies. Realising that these or other aspects of natural capital are material for a company is the first step towards investing in natural capital. In this process green NGOs can play a significant role through providing their knowledge and expertise.

At regional, EU as well as UN levels commitments for responsible business operation are emerging backed up with stricter and stricter legal framework. This is a clear signal for companies to find helping hands in meeting these requirements and enhancing their knowledge in this field.

The European Union sets criteria for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and defines it as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society”. To fully meet their social responsibility, enterprises “should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders”. The Commission's policy puts forward an agenda for action covering the period 2011-2014. The agenda covers eight areas, including dissemination of CSR best practices, legislative measures for disclosing social and environmental information, and creating EU policies to promote market reward for responsible business conduct. After 2014 the EU CSR policy is expected to require more commitments from companies towards sustainability.

Another set of requirements implied by the European Union emerges from its biodiversity conservation, habitat and species protection commitments. The Birds and Habitats Directives aims to protect some 220 habitats and approximately 1,000 species, which are considered to be of European interest. Companies have to follow the Directives and decrease their harmful impacts on nature so habitats and species are properly protected in the Union. NGOs working on biodiversity issues have tremendous expertise working for these goals and can be a perfect partner for businesses in terms of implementing projects on-the-ground and of enhancing their stakeholder relations.
Yet another field where the expertise of NGOs can be useful to businesses is energy and resource efficiency related areas regulated by EU directives on energy efficiency, ecodesign and energy labelling. Businesses have a strong role to play in delivering the commitments of these EU-wide legislations, while NGOs following and influencing the implementation of these commitments can provide a helping hand for businesses to fulfil their role.

Different types of environmental management system (EMS) as well as sustainability reporting are potential opportunities for cooperation between NGOs and businesses. EMS provides a helping hand for companies to reduce its environmental impacts through a comprehensive, systematic, planned and documented manner. It includes the organizational structure, planning and resources for developing, implementing and maintaining corporate policy for environmental protection.

One of the types is the world wide used ISO 14000 refers to a family of voluntary standards and guidance documents to help organizations address environmental issues. ISO 26000 provides guidance on how businesses and organizations can operate in a socially responsible way. It lacks making requirements, so it cannot be certified to unlike some other well-known ISO standards. Instead, it helps clarify what social responsibility is, helps businesses and organizations translate principles into effective actions and shares best practices relating to social responsibility, globally. It is aimed at all types of organizations regardless of their activity, size or location.

Another one is EMAS created by the EU to provide the highest quality instrument for the voluntary evaluation, reporting and improvement of environmental performances of companies.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) produces one of the world's most prevalent standards for sustainability reporting. This kind of report is an organizational report that gives information about economic, environmental, social and governance performance. From the end of 2013 GRI completely supports\textsuperscript{19} integrated reporting as a proper tool to consider fully sustainability data with other aspects of business performance that shape the drivers and risks of a company's value in the short and long term. Planning, implementing the EMS schemes as well as measuring their outputs through reporting schemes such as the GRI, provide opportunity for NGOs to share their knowledge for improving corporate governance.

At UN level, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have been exploring ways to enhance private-sector collaboration in achieving the goals of the Convention. This business engagement has been captured in recent Conferences of the Parties (COP) decisions, which include \textit{inter alia} the promotion and facilitation of the dialogue between government and business; highlighting best practices in areas such as standards; and investigating sustainable public procurement.\textsuperscript{20} This global level dialogue shows that business and agencies dedicated to biodiversity conservation are getting closer, thus it sets the framework for initiatives at regional scale, in which enhanced cooperation between companies and green NGOs in the Visegrad region can be a leading example.
Threats

Threats are arising externally, cooperating businesses and NGOs cannot influence them and thus threats can have a barrier effect on cooperation.

During the past 60 years humanity has been living in the era of consumerism that encourages the purchase of goods and services in ever-greater amounts. With additional two or even three billion middle class consumers, we will face 140 billion tones of natural resources extraction per year and three Celsius or more rise in global temperature by 2030 under business as usual scenario.21

A continuous need for growth and possession drives natural resource exploitation, which has impacted the environment more extensively than in any other period in human history. This phenomenon cannot continue forever within a finite system like the Earth, which already exceeded its carrying capacity in the 1970’s. Since that time humanity has been living in a state of overshoot, in which people are consuming natural resources faster than they can be regenerated. In other words, we are using up resources, which were meant to serve future generations. As a consequence of overconsumption, the scarcity of natural resources such as oil, on which our present society is heavily based on, is already becoming a reality. Moreover, the impacts of unsustainable resource use are already being felt through a growing number of economic, environmental and social troubles such as: economic tension because of resource depletion and unequal access to scarce resources; climate change and biodiversity loss; and health problems due to pollution. EU and UN level discussions, however, are going on to solve these interrelated issues aiming to promote and realize sustainable development; through which natural environment is maintained and society well-being is enhanced.

Businesses on one hand are the drivers of consumption, since their interest is that the more people are consuming, the more profit is gained for corporate shareholders. Therefore, companies put huge efforts in marketing activities and in defeating their competitors on the market. On the other hand, people consume more and more, thus businesses have the role to play in meeting this higher demand. This phenomenon can put an obstacle for business and green NGO partnership, since companies, including its employees follow the myth of gaining more and more profit, underpinned by the increasing consumer demand, which pose bigger and bigger threat to environment.
The reason why the purpose of the corporation is to create wealth for shareholders is so problematic is concisely set out in the work of Law Professor, Joel Bakan. Professor Bakan argues that: “At least in industrialized countries the corporation, as created by law, most closely resembles Milton Friedman’s ideal model of the institution: it compels executives to prioritize the interests of their companies and shareholders above all others and forbids them from being socially responsible—at least genuinely so”. “People who run corporations are, for the most part, good people, moral people. They are mothers and fathers, lovers and friends, and upstanding citizens in their communities, and they often have good and sometimes idealistic intentions … Despite their personal qualities and ambitions, however, they must always put the corporation’s best interests first”.

As discussed in the section on opportunities, the economic recession caused by the financial crisis on one hand can provide opportunity to change business as usual. On the other hand, the recession can pose threat for business and green NGO cooperation. Namely the decreased profits, lack of extra resources that can be spent on CSR and limited NGO budgets can cause difficulties to finance cooperation in the time of economic recession. NGO sponsors, e.g. LIFE programme of the European Union will not solve this problem either, since they do not explicitly encourage the beneficiaries to look for partnerships from the for-profit world.

Environmental taxes as a percentage of total revenues from taxes and social contributions are intended to move towards 10% by 2020 within the European Union. They have moved slightly in the opposite direction in the last decade. The EU average moved from 6.67% in that year to 6.17% in 2011. When comparing the environmental tax revenue to GDP, most of the countries were in a range between 2% and 3% of GDP in 2011. According to Eurostat, Slovakia was among those countries where environmental taxes were less than 2% of GDP, while the EU-27 average was 2.4% of GDP. Low rate of these taxes means that countries, including the Visegrad region are far from reaching the set target, which provides a signal for lacking willingness in enhancing corporate environmental responsibility.

Another barrier in the way of enhancing business and green NGO cooperation is that social problems are much more direct and tangible. If a company gets engaged in collaborating with NGOs dealing with poor children or disabled people, the results of the cooperation can touch their customers more deeply. It seems people are more sensitive for human related problems and that is the reason for more cooperation in the social field.

There is a public perception issue if an NGOs starts partnership with an organization from the for-profit sector. Consumers often think of this kind of cooperation as greenwashing and decrease primarily the reputation and credibility of the partnering NGO.

Even while the numbers of environmentally friendly products and environmentally conscious consumers are increasing there are still lots of cheap imported goods on the market. To some extent this diminishes the interest of businesses and consumers to focus on environmentally friendly goods.
Examples of well-working cooperation

In this chapter we present a number of case studies from Visegrad countries where the cooperation between businesses and green NGOs was or still is successful. We hope the case studies will confirm to the reader that cooperation can be beneficial and suggest some ideas for potential projects. Three types of cooperation are presented:

**Philanthropy partnership:** corporate donation for NGOs in order to carry out their activities

**Project based cooperation:** established to the delivery of one single project, thus these kinds of partnership last only in short term.

**Strategic partnering:** long term cooperation between stakeholders with jointly planned and implemented activities.

In addition, we included two case studies about enterprises established by NGOs that function later as independent successful businesses. These two examples can serve as an inspiration about the feasibility of environmental businesses.
Green Store certification system, Poland

Environmental Partnership Foundation and Tchibo Warsaw developed together a brand new certification system for retail and service industry, called Green Store. Tchibo stores were the first to obtain the certificate that is now to be promoted nationwide.

**Type of case:** strategic  
**Location:** Poland, Warsaw - Krakow  
**Type of area:** Cities and towns, urban areas  
**Duration:** 2 years, since 2011, and to be continued  
**Involved stakeholders:** Environmental Partnership Foundation (EPF based in Krakow), Tchibo Poland (Warsaw)

**Activities carried out in the framework of the cooperation:** The cooperation started when in 2011, Tchibo contacted the EPF in order to obtain the Green Office certificate (one of the programs run by the foundation in order to help the business’ offices to stand out against their competitors and reduce their impact on the environment and operating costs through innovative problem-solving). As Tchibo wanted to certificate its stores as well as its offices, partners decided to develop a new certification scheme dedicated to this purpose. The work started from developing criteria for certification and verification. This stage lasted 4 months and each partner brought in the following expertise: for the EPF eco-standards were the most important, while Tchibo stressed social responsibility, transparency and corporate governance. Then detailed instructions were prepared and introduced to 51 Tchibo stores in Poland. After the audit, the independent jury awarded the certificates.

**Results:** Green Store Certificate is the first eco-standard in Poland dedicated to companies operating retail stores. It focuses at businesses that operate in an environmentally friendly way, in line with the principles of transparency and corporate governance, and their relationships with stakeholders are based on respect for human rights. The first 51 certificates were awarded to 51 Tchibo stores in Poland.

**Plans for continuation/extension/improvement:** EPF makes the scheme available to other retailers. The certificate is meant to be promoted nationwide and become popular among retailers.

**Benefits and motivation of stakeholders:** Tchibo promoted the company as socially responsible, environmentally friendly and actively implementing its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) strategy. They also strengthened the image of the company as environmentally friendly in the eyes of customers, employees, suppliers and other stakeholders. The EPF received help in developing the certificate, including piloting the process. The certification of Tchibo stores helped to launch and promote the new certificate. The Foundation also strengthened its image as an expert organisation and leader in eco-certification.
General information on legal background and other incentives /obstacles in the country:
Certification rules and criteria have been developed on the basis of ISO 26000, international standards for corporate social responsibility and principles for sustainable development of the Global Reporting Initiative. As for now, the initiative is in its first stage and is based on cooperation between NGO and the company. On the long run, the certificate is to be promoted nationwide and spread among retailers. In Poland this kind of partnership is not well known yet, as most of the cooperation schemes between NGOs and businesses still are limited to donation.

Green Office Programme:

Hotels for birds and bats, Slovakia

Over two years more than 10,000 nesting and roosting sites for birds and bats were preserved or created; dozens of construction companies could easily meet the legal requirements and do their job in an environmentally friendly way. These are some of the results of cooperation project between green NGOs and business sector represented mainly by construction companies and associations of building-keepers and janitors. The campaign on protection of birds and bats during reconstruction and thermal insulation of buildings in Slovakia started in 2011. Since 2012, it has been financially supported by the European Commission (LIFE programme) and Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic. The cooperating parties have implemented measures to protect the species and their nesting and roosting sites or to create new artificial habitats through installation of special boxes for birds and bats on buildings.

- **Type of case:** project based
- **Location:** Slovak Republic
- **Type of area:** urban areas
- **Duration:** since 2011
- **Involved stakeholders:** BROZ, Slovak Ornithological Society/BirdLife Slovakia, Slovak Bat Conservation Society, associations of building-keepers and janitors, companies dealing with thermal insulation and reconstruction of buildings
Activities carried out in the framework of the cooperation: Green NGOs and experts cooperate with business sector starting with the preparatory stage of construction works. NGO experts carry out a survey of buildings to find out if protected species are present and write an expert opinion that includes a list of technical measures necessary to preserve nesting and roosting sites. If not possible to preserve the existing sites, nesting and roosting boxes are installed. Experts provide special boxes and assistance in their installation on buildings. On the other side, the representatives of associations of janitors inform relevant state institutions in advance about the planning of construction works.

During construction works, experts assist in implementation of practical conservation measures. For instance, if a colony of bats is present in a building and the bats are threatened by construction works, experts take appropriate measures to move the bats out of the building. Otherwise, the species would be trapped in the building and die.

Results: Over the last two years more than 10,000 nesting and roosting sites for birds and bats have been preserved or created through installation of special boxes in reconstructed buildings. More than 600 meetings with public and representatives of building companies and associations of janitors have been carried out in all eight administrative districts of Slovakia. Practical measures and benefits have been presented to a wide public at more than 100 meetings. Intensive media campaign has been carried out
and more than 50 media outcomes have been published to inform the public about the species ecology, importance for urban areas and also about practical measures to protect their habitats in buildings.

Overall a positive attitude of the public and particularly of the business sector has been observed. Some of the companies have started to construct special boxes for birds and bats according to the guidelines provided by green NGOs.

Over the last 2 years a significant increase in a positive attitude of the public towards the protection of birds and bats in buildings has been observed. People actively contact green NGOs and inform them about the presence of the species and on-going construction works and ask them to secure that the species will be able to find a suitable habitats in the buildings also after their reconstruction.

**Plans for continuation:** More personal meetings with representatives of business sector and the public will be held. Workshops on technical measures will be organized. Presentations and excursions for public will be organized. Relevant information will be spread to a wide public through media, both printed (news, magazines) and electronic (internet, TV, radio). A travelling exhibition and documentary on the topic are being prepared. Information and promotional materials (such as leaflets and T-shirts) will be distributed.

**Benefits and motivation of stakeholders:** Main benefit for stakeholders is the protection of populations of birds and bats that play an important role in elimination of tiresome insects in urban areas. Cooperation with green NGOs helps the building companies to fulfil legal requirements related to biodiversity protection without unnecessary complications and delay in building works. Green NGOs gain support from public and business sector in protection of biodiversity in urban areas. In particular, species such as Common Swift (Apus apus) and Common Nuitral (Nyctalus noctula) are closely related to urban areas since almost 100 percent of their populations are nesting and roosting in buildings.

**General information on legal background and other incentives /obstacles in the country:** It is obligatory to take appropriate measures if protected species or habitats are threatened by a human activity according to both environmental policy as well as policy related to construction. However, so far it was not followed appropriately and the relevant state institutions were not able to deal with this issue in a full extent due to lack of financial and personal capacities. Green NGOs are the most active in implementing both the practical measures and public awareness activities. They still find that communication with some inhabitants and representatives of state institutions and business sector needs to be improved.

**Further information:** www.dazdovniky.vtaky.sk
Holcim Slovakia helps the survival of Sand Martin

In 2012 a memorandum was signed between Holcim Slovakia Ltd. and BROZ on cooperation in implementation of management measures focused on improvement of quality of habitats of birds in the region of the Danube River floodplains in Slovakia. Holcim Slovakia Ltd. is the biggest producer and distributor of building materials and relevant services in the country that puts efforts in sustainable development of the building sector in Slovakia.

**Type of case:** strategic  
**Location:** Slovak Republic  
**Type of area:** Danube River floodplains  
**Duration:** since 2012  
**Involved stakeholders:** BROZ, Holcim Slovakia

**Activities carried out in the framework of the cooperation:** Based on the memorandum, Holcim Slovakia Ltd. binds itself to implement technical measures that will create suitable nesting habitats for Sand Martin (Riparia riparia) in Veľké Uľany and Podunajské Biskupice by using its own financial resources. Regular maintenance of the habitats is included. It was also agreed that Holcim Slovakia Ltd. will minimize its activities that disturb nesting birds or destroy their habitats. If an unforeseen action needs to be done, Holcim Slovakia Ltd. will consult with BROZ in order to minimize its potential negative impact on biodiversity.

On the other side BROZ binds itself to promote cooperation with Holcim Slovakia Ltd. through printed and electronic media (internet, web site, etc.). BROZ also carries out a regular monitoring of birds populations in the specific area and proposes necessary management measures to secure favourable conservation status of the species and habitats. BROZ experts are obliged to follow security regulations of Holcim Slovakia Ltd. when working in the area.
**Results:** Two localities in the area of Veľké Uľany and Podunajské Biskupice have been restored and suitable nesting habitats for Sand Martin have been created.

**Plans for continuation/extension/improvement:** It is foreseen to continue the cooperation in the coming years and jointly support protection of biodiversity in valuable areas along the Danube River in Slovakia.

**Benefits and motivation of stakeholders:** The main benefit for Holcim Slovakia Ltd. is its promotion as a company that is taking care about the environment and sustainable use of natural resources. For BROZ, apart of direct contribution to implementing the mission of the NGO, this is a strategic partnership that can be used as a good example for future communication and cooperation with stakeholders.

**General information on legal background and other incentives /obstacles in the country:** The public has positive attitude towards a good cooperation between green NGOs and business sector. If positive cooperation with a leading company in a specific industry is established and promoted, it can attract other businesses to be more interested to cooperate with NGOs and in perceiving NGOs as professional partners.

### Support for nesting birds by MAVIR, Hungary

MAVIR’s main tasks are to safeguard the uninterrupted and sustainable operation of Hungarian electricity system, to realise the access to the network for users on an equal basis, to ensure the economic and efficient operation of transmission network as well as the smooth functioning and expansion of balance group system supporting the electricity market. The electricity transmission is realised in natural environment, thus to maintain the diversity of environment is MAVIR’s particular responsibility. The MAVIR bird protection program aims to keep the harmful impact as low as possible. The backbone of it is the nesting program where man-made nests are mounted for birds of prey as well as bird deflectors for the protection of waders and the great bustards.

**Type of case:** strategic  
**Location:** Hungary  
**Type of area:** Bird protection  
**Duration:** since 2009  
**Involved stakeholders:** Birdlife Hungary, Pro Vértes Foundation, Hungarian National Parks, Hammarproduktor (Sweden), MAVIR

**Activities carried out in the framework of the cooperation:** In cooperation with Birdlife Hungary, Pro Vértes Foundation, numerous civic and professional organisations and in relation to EU LIFE program, MAVIR has installed man-made nests on pylons where the presence of protected birds is expected. The project team shares its experiences on bird protection conferences and provides opportunity for Hungarian and environmental protection experts of neighboring countries (Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania) to learn and acquire working methods in nest installation.
The programme additionally helps the migration of great bustards and large waders by bird deflectors put on transmission lines. By detecting them in time they can evade the dangerous lines.

In addition to the direct protection of birds, the programme includes communication activities on its success. Besides online nest monitoring, it welcomes those who are interested in the birdlife of Hungary with bird ringing and birdwatching programs. The former one provides useful information also for ornithologists since they can learn more about the life of populations and can elaborate a strategy for the protection of endangered species.

**Results:** Thanks to the man-made nest program, today more than 250 saker falcons, i.e. 80% of the Hungary's population, nest on MAVIR's pylons. The offspring hatched and grown in these nests have saved the population from its “on the verge of extinction” status.

In the framework of the great bustard and wader program, more than 2,000 bird deflectors were placed on the transmission lines crossing the relevant areas. The number of collision accidents of great bustard population has demonstrably reduced to quarter on the areas supplied with deflectors.

**Plans for continuation/extension/improvement:** It is foreseen to continue the cooperation in the coming years.

**Benefits and motivation of stakeholders:** The bird protection program is an excellent example of MAVIR’s commitment to environmental responsibility, which at the same time increases the reputation of the company. Due to this activity, the population and the
survival chances of critically endangered species involved in the program have demonstrably increased. It encourages all project partners to continue the program. The achieved results are justified by the fact that more and more civic and professional organisations have been joining this initiative.

**General information on legal background and other incentives /obstacles in the country:**
The status of critically endangered bird living in the vicinity of transmission lines is defined by the EU; their protection is regulated both at EU and at national levels.

The partnership includes both national and international cooperation (with Slovak, Austrian, Romanian civic and professional organisations). The public can follow, via the camera program, the life of birds from spring to autumn, from nesting to flying out of the young ones. The number of observers is increasing year by year, both from Hungary and abroad.

**Further information:**
* MAVIR website – www.mavir.hu (the nest camera program can be followed from April to August).
* Birdlife Hungary – www.mme.hu
Businesses established by NGOs

1. Hostětín apple juice plant, the Czech Republic

The apple juice plant in Hostětín is a micro-enterprise with a strong environmental and social accent. The idea of establishing the apple juice plant came from the civic association Tradice Bílých Karpát (Traditions of White Carpathians) with co-operation of Luxembourg NGO Hellef fir d’Natur. The enterprise, entitled Mostarna Hostetín, Ltd., considers sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage of the White Carpathians. Requirements for organic agriculture and processing are applied in the juice plant. Association Tradice Bílých Karpát is an umbrella organization of mainly environmental NGOs and individuals that support sustainable development in the region. ZO CSOP Veronica is the founding member of the association. Information about partnership between Mostarna Hostetín, Ltd. and ZO CSOP Veronica is regularly spread among the public (during the site visits, excursions, workshops, in publications etc.).

**Type of cooperation:** strategic  
**Location:** Hostětín, Czech Republic  
**Type of area:** organic agriculture, sustainable development  
**Duration:** Since 2000  
**Involved stakeholders:** NGO: ZO CSOP Veronica and Business: Mostarna Hostetín, Ltd.

**Activities carried out in the framework of the cooperation:** Partners share the estate, where fruit orchard has been planned, and they promote its products jointly. The products of the juice plant are sold in ZO CSOP Veronica’s shop. The NGO also leads excursions to show Hostětín model projects of sustainable development, including the juice plant. Besides, they have issued publications on this initiative as well as kept on organizing jointly the annual Apple feast at the end of September. Last but not least, partners have developed and implemented further common projects.

**Results:** Apple juice plant is established as a microenterprise that produces and delivers regional and organic products to shops throughout the country.
**Plans for continuation/extension/improvement:** To continue this close cooperation, educational activities to promote regional products as well as organic farming will be enhanced and sustainable energy management of the plant will be established.

**Benefits and motivation of stakeholders:** ZO CSOP Veronica: the motivation is based on the mission of organization (support of organic farming, restoration of old fruit varieties, and sustainable development). Apple juice plant: the motivation is in line with environmental, economic and social goals of its NGO owners.

2. **Awareness raising on the importance of sustainable tourism, Poland**

Academic Section of Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (AS of PTTK) in Krakow and EKO-TOURIST Sp. z o.o. promote the idea of sustainable tourism and raise people’s awareness towards environmental problems through extensive knowledge sharing about the country as well as commonly recognizable trademark of PTTK.

**Type of case:** philanthropic (donation)/strategic  
**Location:** Poland, Krakow  
**Type of area:** Cities, towns, natural and protected areas  
**Duration:** permanent cooperation, since 1989  
**Involved stakeholders:** Academic Section of Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (AS of PTTK) in Krakow and EKO-TOURIST Sp. z o.o.

**Activities carried out in the framework of the cooperation:** Academic Section of PTTK in Krakow is a non-profit organisation promoting active and sustainable tourism as well as outdoor education and different types of activities in nature, especially in the area of Southern Poland and Carpathians. EKO-TOURIST Sp. z o.o. was established in 1989 by environmental protection activists and mountain guides affiliated with Academic Section of PTTK and Polish Ecological Club, a tourist office practising
nature- and culture-based tourism. Bounded by common goals, share in profits and decades of experience in tourism, the two bodies are actively engaged in popularisation of sustainable tourism as well as helping to preserve and protect places rich in natural beauty and biological diversity by organising trips to National Parks, Biosphere and Bird Reserves, protected landscapes, mountain areas and other places attractive for tourists. They’re trying to influence people’s minds and raise their environmental awareness as well as to foster sustainable and intelligent management of biodiversity and ecosystems in local communities.

Results: Decades of close cooperation has brought wide-ranging network of contacts including academics, state administration of nature protection, NGOs and independent experts. As a result of trips organised by both parties, deepened understanding of environmental problems of AS of PTTK members and EKO-TOURIST trips participants can be observed.

Plans for continuation/extension/improvement: As the partners share common mission, profits and are legally connected, both stakeholders declare further cooperation and promoting the idea of sustainable tourism.

Benefits and motivation of stakeholders: The establishers and owners of the EKO-TOURIST, who were also the members of Academic Section of PTTK knew the organisation and its values very well. Therefore, when creating the company, they aimed to promote environmental and ecological awareness. Basing on decades of experience in tourism they managed to create a company addressing all nature lovers. The constant cooperation with the commonly recognisable organisation, the AS of PTTK, enabled to strengthen the positive image of the company, which resulted in wide recognition of its trademark. Academic Section of PTTK has a share in the EKO-TOURIST profits, various discounts for its members as well as a priority over other clients participating in the trips organised by the office. The partnership can help the NGO with administration and organisational support from EKO-TOURIST.

General information on legal background and other incentives /obstacles in the country: This kind of partnership spreads fast as it is profitable for both sides. More and more NGOs start to think more strategically about the partnerships with business as the collaboration with the private sector often enables them to fill in financial gaps. Business sector, on the other hand, often uses the knowledge coming from the NGOs and under the banner of shared value uses it to develop new markets for its products. The attitude of the public towards this type of partnership seems to be generally positive.

Further information:
EKO-TOURIST website: www.eco-tours.pl/about_us.php
Exploit the full potential while avoiding the pitfalls

Use strengths

A partnership occurs when organizations bring together their distinct views, expertise and resources to work towards common goals. Partnerships also require readiness from all parties, where both sides must be open for a high degree of transparency. The cooperative entities should identify gaps, which their partnering fills in, formulate common goals, set clear criteria for the partnership and clearly communicate their interest in developing their joint strategy, while paying attention to divide the tasks together with mutual understandings.

One step further is when NGOs and businesses define the mission of their joint work and develop ethical codices for both parties of the cooperation. A partnership is best measured by the environmental and business results achieved once both organizations have shared the risks, responsibilities and rewards of the project.

Overcome weaknesses

In order to overcome weaknesses of multi-sectoral cooperation, the business and NGO partners should understand the other partner, its goals, language, operational methods and interest as well as each other’s challenges and their potential solutions. They need to destroy the “enemy image” of the other entity bearing in mind the difference between
their natures, and thus be flexible towards cooperating with one other and making compromise. On the other hand, both parties need to carry out pre-investigation order to find proper partner and optimize efforts dedicated to the partnership.

What is needed is to re-visit the purpose of the corporation so as to explicitly recognize a corporate purpose, which extends beyond simply making as much profit as possible within the law regardless of whether that is expressed as being in the short-term or the long-term. This can be thought of as re-incorporating society into corporate purpose. Once that is done, company law and corporate governance will naturally change to reflect this purpose. This change would reflect, in legislation, corporate and director responsibility, which has broad ranging implications for all corporate behavior and frees the mostly good managers to do the right thing, without fear of being sacked or sued for not delivering a quarterly share price that is quite as high as it might otherwise have been.24

Last, but not least, if organizations are already open for cooperation, the lack of knowledge on the other sector workflow and operation can be overcome if potential parties would dedicate enough time and effort to understand the approach of the other’s; and thus reveal relevant and beneficial knowledge for both parties.

**Exploit opportunities**

Cooperation must merit from the moment in history, where green business appreciation has been increasing, while the most trusted institutions are NGOs. The cooperative parties should recognize that they serve the interest of the same people. NGOs target groups are at the same time companies' customers and suppliers or live in the communities where businesses operate. This mutual interest, fuelled by the private sector's assets, skills, and investment potential should be scaled up in the frame of cooperation.25

Enterprises have a huge role to play in solving those challenges green NGOs are struggling to mitigate, such as climate change or the loss of biodiversity. Therefore, putting efforts in ecosystem valuation and in economics of climate change can show the economic as well as environmental impacts of the cooperative activities. Due to the enhanced efforts, companies can meet more easily those commitments, which are emerging both at EU as well as UN levels.

**Consider threats carefully**

Due to the overuse of natural resources, scarcity is just the matter of time if business as usual continues. Therefore, being prepared for the change and adopting the precautionary principle has competitive advantage in the longer term.

In order to increase the number of environmental projects compared to social ones within the cooperation activities, the partnership should emphasize the social benefits and the enhancement of well-being by environmental projects using the approach of ecosystem services.
Practical tips on how to realize partnerships

The success of a partnership depends to a great degree on the strength of the project around which it is organized. A project generally has three phases — design, execution and measurement of results. Each phase is crucial to success. A well-structured project can create lasting changes and leave a legacy of innovations for others to adopt.

Design: structure partnerships for success

First, organizations open for cooperating with the other sector should identify what to accomplish through the project. For this, the selection of the topic and the definition of topic related objectives are necessary. After the main framework is drafted, parties can identify their expectations and develop certain criteria for the project. These may include environmental impacts, business benefits, project scope and timeframe, leverage potential, aptness with capabilities of the company or NGO, alignment with organization’s core values and the necessary support from appropriate level of management as well as in terms of finances.

The second step is to find the appropriate partner(s) who can fit in the designed framework. Struggling to find the answers for the following questions might give a helping hand in this process. What motivates the company or the NGO to cooperate with the other sector? What is the attitude of the company towards biodiversity? How does the NGO view business? What is the decision-making style in the potential partner’s organization? Does the company/NGO have a favourable partnership history and reputation? Can credibility and trust be established and maintained throughout the project with the selected entity? Does the partner have the necessary expertise and capabilities? Is the partner similar in size and lobby power? Typically, if a large company collaborates with a small NGO, there is a danger that corporate interests dominate the partnership.26
Third, after designing the framework and finding the appropriate partner, we should select what kind of partnership we would like to establish. In one case a company simply can sponsor an NGO advocating issues important for the business, or the non-profit organization can merely look for corporate donation. In another case partners can get engaged in carrying out one specific project, then they are cooperating only in short term. The strongest relation between cooperating parties is the strategic partnership when NGOs and businesses together identify their long-term strategy.

In some situations, however a partnership may not be practical. If the need is immediate, or can be achieved independently, a partnership might not make sense for the company. Similarly, an NGO may determine that a partnership is not the best way to achieve a particular policy goal or social outcome. In general, if a company or NGO can accomplish its goals on its own, there may be no need to partner.

**Execution: make the plan real**

When we start implement the project, a project team needs to be set up building on the support from appropriate level of management from both parties. Early decisions should be made about what information the team will need in order to develop effective recommendations and how it will gather the information. It is also necessary to identify specific tasks, the sequence in which those tasks will be conducted, and a lead person on the project team to oversee each task.

In order to keep all members of the project team engaged, distribute tasks equally among team members and ensure that the project remains equally important to the company and the NGO.

The main role of the project team is to develop a clear project plan. While work plans often change in the course of a project, developing an initial work plan enables each party to communicate its expectations. This work plan needs to set whenever possible measurable goals, as well as to define a scope of work for the project at the outset in order to ensure that the staff and resources are available to meet the partnership goals. Companies and NGOs may work on different timeframes; therefore ensuring agreement on the specific project timeline is especially important. Plan regular team meetings and re-evaluate the project plan and schedule if milestones are not being met. Both the business and the NGO should have significant roles and responsibilities. It is essential for success that both business and NGO are equally important. The project plan should include also the budget for implementing the project as well as identifying parties, which will provide financing based on the criteria developed by both parties in the design phase.

Furthermore, members of the project team need to agree on deployment of control mechanisms. The question of control derives its relevance from the threat of an imbalance in power. Therefore, partnerships must be designed so that both parties remain independent from another. One possibility to achieve a balance and to avoid undesirable entanglements is in involving a third partner, such as for example the government.
Involving the government as a partner exposes a partnership to wider scrutiny. Another way of adding a certain degree of control to a partnership is the adherence to standards. Standards enhance the legitimacy of a partnership and exculpate companies from the allegation of greenwashing and NGOs from the allegation of co-optation.

During the implementation phase parties should pay attention to communicate the interim results, further plans, as well as carried out activities. They need to identify and work towards early, visible results. Achieving and highlighting even a minor accomplishment as soon as possible can generate enthusiasm and momentum for a project as well as provide an indicator for ultimate success. Last but not least, if the project is carried out in an open manner and results are made public others can also benefit from the venture.

**Measurement and follow up: ensure long term effect**

In most cases, environmental initiatives will only sustain themselves when they deliver specific, measurable business benefits, particularly regarding a company’s strategic objectives and core business functions. Once these benefits are accounted for, communicating the results both internally and to external stakeholders will bring increased public recognition to the partners and push others in the industry to follow this case. In order to achieve this, cooperative parties need to make efforts in measuring outcomes and economic and environmental benefits of their joint activities.

Good examples on how to carry out this kind of measurement can be found in a recently published publication. The partnership outcomes should be applicable to other parts of the company, others in the industry, or to other NGOs and the public. Last but not least, follow up steps should be defined in order to give a chance for the continuation of the partnership.

**Abbreviations**

CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity  
CEO – Chief executive officer  
CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility  
EMAS – environmental management scheme  
EMS – environmental management system  
GRI – Global Reporting Initiative  
ILO – International Labour Organization  
ISO – International Organization for Standardization  
NGO – Non-governmental Organization  
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
UN – United Nations
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