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PRESS RELEASE

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Holcim Slovakia Ltd., the biggest producer and distributor of building materials and relevant services in Slovakia binds itself to create nesting habitats on the Danube River floodplains 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 that improve the quality of bird habitats in the region. **MAVIR 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. Electricity infrastructure can heavily disturb natural environment, therefore man-made nests are placed on electricity poles and bird deflectors are installed to protect large waders and great bustards from hitting the transmission lines.

These are just two examples from Visegrad region where businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cooperate to increase corporate profits and preserve nature at the same. The Guidelines issued today aim to enhance this kind of partnerships through analyzing their complexity, promoting well-working case studies as well as providing practical tips for implementation.

Leading companies know that “business as usual” is not an option anymore. Investors and customers want companies to address social and environmental concerns. Businesses recognize that meeting these needs would also contribute to their sustainability and competitiveness. At the same time, many professional 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 the next generation for successful cooperation¹.

Furthermore, biodiversity with its services and natural resources form the basis for humans to live 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 V4 countries has no significant experience in this field. The guidelines aim to enhance interest of businesses and NGOs to work together for biodiversity conservation in the Visegrad region and build their capacities for doing so.

The guidelines were developed in the framework of a project ‘Enhancing cooperation between the for-profit and the non-profit sectors in the Visegrád countries’ that was implemented by CEEweb for Biodiversity with other partners from Visegrad countries.

Download the Guidelines: <http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/BBguidelinesEN.pdf>

Project website: www.ceeweb.org/about-us/cooperation-with-business

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¹ Guide to Successful Corporate-NGO Partnerships, 2008