

eco@work

Sustainable reading from the Öko-Institut



Values for Business

Rhetoric or reality?

Interested

**CO₂ labels on
the counter**

Inventoried

**Motorhomes give
the climate a break**

Committed

**Claudia Langer,
founder of Utopia**

The Utopians

Where market forces and sustainability meet

The world of the "new" Utopians is a stylish-looking one. It is cheerful and fun, and if you could taste it it would be simply delicious. Along the lines of a feather-light soufflé with a small side salad. Proclaiming its green credentials, but not too heavy on the stomach. Sweet enjoyment with a clean conscience.

In early November 2007 Claudia Langer, the former head of the Munich advertising agency Start AG, launched her latest online company, Utopia AG. In its first five weeks the site, with its own web portal, received more than one million clicks. True to her own motto "A better world doesn't have to be a Utopia", the former advertising executive has created a high-profile, independent consumer platform which she hopes will promote ecologically and ethically sound products and a sustainable lifestyle.

As communications specialist Claudia Langer says: "We see Utopia as a step towards an ecologically better world, in which consumers can influence business through strategic consumption. Utopia's main aim is to set this process in motion and help it to develop, so that the future will be worth living for us all."

The Öko-Institut is one of Utopia's partners; it regularly supports

Utopia with information from its EcoTopTen consumer campaign. Like-minded celebrities such as the actor Axel Milberg and the television journalist Sandra Maischberger keep Utopia in the public eye. And the media stand and stare.

For the site is doing things that others can only dream of: Utopia is creating an exciting and colourful world of advertising in support of sustainability. Utopia.de is a thoroughly successful mixture, combining information aplenty and a practical purchasing guide.

At the same time the platform attracts a network of "Utopians", as registered users of the site call themselves, now already numbering more than seven thousand, who engage in discussion, offer practical tips and evaluate sustainable products and businesses. This growing volume of contributions from experts and users is expected to soon form the basis of a structured archive of news and knowledge.

"Our idea of strategic consumption that communicates the consumer wish for sustainable products to business and industry is working well and has been very positively received", is Claudia Langer's positive reflection on the new website.

We hope Langer continues to transform her Utopian dreams into realities.

cr

info: www.utopia.de
www.oeko.de/081/smallmiracles



Dear readers,

Businesses can no longer ignore the issue of voluntary social responsibility. Virtually every large company now seeks to portray itself as green and socially aware. But what is mere show and what is genuine action? A three-year European research project has been exploring this question. In this issue of eco@work we focus on "Business with values – rhetoric or reality?" and you can read here about the scientists' findings. Moreover, in our "Big Issue" section we describe a new trend in company thinking – the carbon footprint. And we interview Christian Hochfeld, a business expert at the Öko-Institut.

The other major theme of this issue is our 500plus! membership campaign. For 30 years we have been a registered non-profit association with around 3000 members. That is a lot of supporters, but not nearly enough. We are therefore seeking to recruit at least 500 new members. Do you want to help shape a sustainable future? Then join the Öko-Institut – or if you are already a member, recruit a new one. Read more in our Prompting and Discovering sections or at www.oeko.de/members.

At the start of the New Year let us take a brief look backwards. 2007 was a very special year for us at the Öko-Institut. In addition to many projects there were two highlights: we celebrated our 30th anniversary and received the award of "Landmark in the Land of Ideas" from the German president. We should like to take this opportunity to repeat our thanks to all our well-wishers, members, friends and constructive critics!

*We wish you all a good start to what we hope will be a successful year.
Best wishes for 2008*

from

Christiane Rathmann
Head of the Department of Public Relations & Communication
c.rathmann@oeko.de



In 2007 the Öko-Institut was one of 365 Landmarks in the "Land of Ideas". Frank Holstein (Deutsche Bank, left) presented the Öko-Institut's Director, Dr. Joachim Lohse, with the certificate on behalf of the German president.

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Christiane Rathmann (cr)
Katja Kukatz (kk)

Responsible editor:
Christian Hochfeld (ch)

Further authors:
Regine Barth,
Sabine Falk (sf),
Dr. Rainer Griebhammer (rg),
Katharina Hien (kh),
Anne Minhans (am)

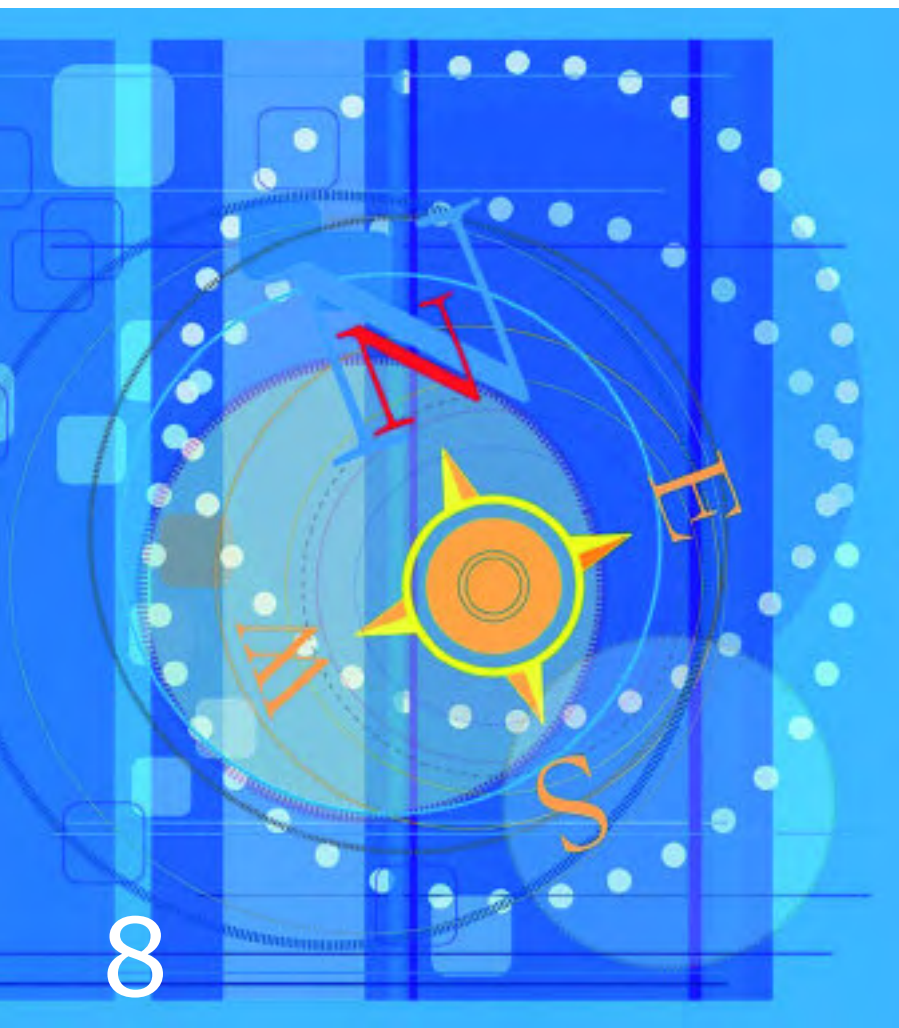
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Address of editorial office:
P.O. Box 50 02 40,
79028 Freiburg, Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 761/45295-0,
Fax: +49 (0) 761/45295-88
redaktion@oeko.de
www.oeko.de

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KNOWLEDGE: Nowadays, practically every major company affirms its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility. Small and medium-sized enterprises follow the corporations' lead and portray themselves as environmentally aware and socially considerate. But just how effective is CSR? Does it really foster sustainable development? Or is mere show and rhetoric?

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UN delegates meet in Bonn

UN delegates meet in Bonn



When Germany hosts the 9th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2008, around 5000 participants from 190 CBD party countries are expected to arrive in Bonn to discuss common measures to combat the ongoing destruction of the natural environment worldwide. In the run-up to this, another conference is scheduled in which around 1200 experts will be taking part. In addition, around 120 environment ministers are also expected. In sum, this represents an enormous challenge for the organizers, but also for the environment. For this reason, the Federal Environment Ministry has asked

the Öko-Institut to devise a rigorous environmental action plan, as Germany needs to set an example in this regard too.

In drafting this plan, the Öko-Institut experts can draw on the experience they gained while devising an environmental plan for the football World Cup in 2006 and the "Green Champions" Guide to Environmentally Sound Large Sporting Events.

kk

info: h.stahl@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/freshaction1

Converting food systems

Solutions to a pressing problem



Rotten meat, price dumping, obesity – there is no end to the news of food scandals and health problems resulting from poor nutrition. It is clear that nutrition has become a persistent social problem, but attempts to solve this problem have not generally resulted in the successful outcome hoped for. Why not? What other approaches might have better prospects of succeeding? These are the questions addressed by the Öko-Institut and its partners in the research project entitled "Ernährungswende" – which translates freely as "convert-

ing food systems". The project's findings have been presented for discussion in the context of a stakeholder dialogue process. A brief summary of the results has been produced in the form of a leaflet aimed at professionals in the business community, politics and society. As well as providing a wealth of background information, the leaflet also presents ways of putting sustainable nutrition into practice, including recommendations for action aimed at specific audiences. The leaflet is free of charge and is available to download from this website or in printed form from the Öko-Institut.

kk

info: u.eberle@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/freshaction1

EU Directive on end-of-life vehicles

Which exemptions are still justified?

Under the EU Directive on end-of-life vehicles, certain dangerous substances have been banned from use – whether in the car body, dashboard or upholstery – in cars brought onto the market after 1 July 2003. The substances in question are lead, cadmium and hexavalent chromium. The Directive also provides for some exemptions, however. Lead, for example, may still be used in plain bearings in vehicle engines. To what extent are these exemptions still justified? The European Commission has assigned the task of evaluating this to the Öko-Institut.

Are there now other, safer substances that could also be used in mass production? Or are no alternatives yet available for certain applications? The researchers working on the project are investigating all these questions and others. The goal of the project is explained by Stéphanie Zangl of the Öko-Institut: "Our work is aimed at helping to ensure that exemptions from the substance ban are only applied in exceptional cases that are genuinely justified, and to adjust these exemptions to current scientific and technological knowledge."

kk

info: s.zangl@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/freshaction1





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Biblis-A not safe from terrorist attack Öko-Institut studying potential air crash consequences

Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, the debate in Germany too needs to be opened up again to include terrorist scenarios that hitherto seemed unlikely, such as the deliberate crashing of a civilian airplane into a nuclear power station. The consequences of a scenario of this sort have now been studied by the Öko-Institut based on the example of Biblis-A, Germany's oldest nuclear power plant. The outcome: "Large-scale destruction of the reactor building cannot be ruled out with any certainty", says Dr Christoph Pistner of the Öko-Institut. "Core meltdown could potentially ensue, promptly releasing large quantities of radioactivity."

Assuming typical weather conditions, researchers have calculated that an area of 10,000 square kilometres could be affected by emergency response measures. Much larger areas than envisaged under current disaster management planning might need to be evacuated, or residents resettled elsewhere for the long term. In addition, massive damage to the economy and delayed health consequences could be expected.

am

info: c.pistner@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/freshaction2

Ordinance on repository safety

Öko-Institut makes its position clear

The German Federal Government is currently planning to draft an ordinance on repository safety that is intended to provide a regulatory framework for disposal of highly radioactive waste in Germany. The Öko-Institut is using this opportunity to present a position paper setting out for discussion suggestions concerning the substance of the planned ordinance on repository safety. The authors of this position paper go into particular detail with regard to setting protection targets, shaping the procedure, and rules relating to demonstrating long-term safety and the optimization process. In addition, the Öko-Institut sets out its opinion on selected aspects of a draft by the Gesellschaft für Anlagen-sicherheit (a key German advisory institution in the field of nuclear safety) containing suggestions regarding safety requirements for disposal of highly radioactive waste. The position paper is available to download free of charge.

am

info: m.sailer@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/freshaction2



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Federal Environmental Code

Draft proves largely disappointing

In late November last year, the German Environment Ministry published the first draft of an Environmental Code (Umweltgesetzbuch). The Environmental Code is regarded as a key area of reform and is intended to set the course of Germany's future environmental policy. In the view of the Öko-Institut, however, the objective of establishing a clear framework for action in this area has not been achieved. In technical terms efforts to integrate certain parts of previously fragmented environmental law have largely succeeded. Unfortunately, however, this is the sum total of what has been achieved. Regine Barth, an expert in the field, is critical: regarding its provisions on nature conservation in particular, the draft is actually counterproductive, she claims. "It fails to enshrine ambitious environmental standards,

and waters down some of the standards that have already been introduced." While Germany is positioning itself as a pioneer in the fields of climate protection and biodiversity conservation in the international arena, the German government is failing to create the necessary framework in its own environmental legislation, according to the Öko-Institut. The draft therefore urgently needs to be tightened up. The Öko-Institut, German environmental NGO Deutsche Umwelthilfe and the Unabhängiges Institut für Umweltfragen (Independent Institute for Environmental Issues) are currently formulating a firm stance on these issues in the context of a cooperative project on the Environmental Code.

kk

info: r.barth@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/freshaction2

Just



rhetoric?

Social responsibility in business

When “Spiegel” magazine put climate change on the front cover in November 2006, major companies such as BASF, Toyota and EnBW took out full-page advertisements highlighting their own contribution to climate protection. Many large companies are affirming their commitment to socially and ecologically responsible behaviour in other fields, too. SMEs are following their lead and portray themselves as environmentally aware and socially considerate.

Sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are now core issues of company development and business communication; leading businesses are increasingly incorporating them into their company strategy. “The climate change debate has created a new awareness”, says Dr. Volker Hauff, chairman of the German Council for Sustainable Development RNE. If sustainability and responsible corporate behaviour are currently as “sexy” as Volker Hauff suggests, then surely things are on the right track.

**Mere show
instead of
real action?**

Or is it just a case of rhetoric? Mere show instead of real action? Clever PR in place of genuine change? How effective is CSR in





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Tomatoes and technologies on test

How much CSR is in a tomato? Will there soon be a computer produced under socially responsible conditions? How are German and British companies in the food industry implementing CSR? For many years the Öko-Institut has looked at corporate approaches to social responsibility. Its scientists analyse the situation in different sectors and produce recommendations. Examples of projects:

www.oeko.de/081/knowledge1

Can consumers reward corporate social responsibility when buying tomatoes? This is one of the questions explored by the Öko-Institut in a recent project.

practice? Does corporate social responsibility help to promote sustainable development?

These are the questions that a research team of seven European partners, coordinated by the Öko-Institut, has been pursuing in a three-year project. "Rhetoric and Realities – Analysing Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe" (RARE) is the title of the research project, which has been sponsored by the EU's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The scientists involved have investigated the extent to which CSR measures contribute to greater sustainability in four areas – environmental and climate protection, sustainable fisheries, gender equality and the tackling of corruption.

49 participating businesses were surveyed and ten detailed case studies were analysed to establish whether CSR measures have a genuine and positive impact on EU sustainability targets.

The research involved a new approach. Previous studies have often described CSR goals or explored the correlation between CSR and company results. In the RARE project the focus is on the social impact of CSR and on the role that it can play in the mix of different policy instruments.

The findings are summarized by Regine Barth, project manager and coordinator of the Öko-Institut's Environmental Law & Governance Division: "Our examples show that it is perfectly possible for CSR to have an ecological and social impact. However, rhetoric still prevails. The potential of CSR is not on the whole being tapped." The actual effect of CSR varies; it is often difficult to quantify and businesses do not always measure it. The rhetoric around CSR, on the other hand, is cropping up more and more frequently in company statements and reports; even in progressive companies, however, it does not always result in greater sustainability.



Realizing since the mid-1990s that fish stocks are under threat, progressive companies have taken voluntary action. They now offer environmentally responsible fisheries products.



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The PROSA method

PROSA – Product Sustainability Assessment – is a tried and tested method which businesses can call on to carry out a strategic analysis and evaluation of product portfolios, products and services. A new guide uses a number of case studies to illustrate the use of this method of sustainability analysis, which has been developed by the Öko-Institut.

Integrated and forward-looking management methods are essential if the new challenges are to be met. Businesses must take their own steps to deal with global markets with differing cultures and frequently changing customer demands.

The PROSA method covers the whole product line; it analyses and evaluates the ecological, economic and social opportunities and risks of future development routes. More at

www.prosa.org



What makes CSR work?

So what contributes to the social impact of CSR? A key aspect is the need for ambitious targets to be systematically translated into concrete actions. Other success factors: CSR should be firmly anchored in strategic management, it needs to be smoothly implemented and there must be efficient cooperation between the different levels and management areas within the company. "It is also important to involve the whole product chain, including suppliers", says Regine Barth. And she continues: "When businesses are prepared to organize their core tasks in a targeted and strategically more sustainable manner, we see clear evidence of the effects of CSR."

At the same time CSR becomes more difficult for companies when the measures involve impact on their core business – when it is no longer "only" a question of improvements in production issues or the product portfolio. For example, the oil companies surveyed had difficulty not only in implementing their self-set sustainability goals within complex organizational structures, but also in re-orienting their core business to meet CO₂ reduction targets. Despite their

efforts – as evidenced, for example, by the expansion of their field of business to include renewable energies – the investment of the surveyed oil companies in "clean" energies remains comparatively small. Franziska Wolff of the Öko-Institut comments: "CSR can result in social and ecological added value wherever it is associated with direct or indirect profit for the company. If meeting ecological or social targets requires increased financial investment on a long-term basis, CSR as a voluntary instrument runs up against its limits."

CSR is particularly suitable as a tool for orienting a company's product portfolio towards sustainability. "In deciding which products a company should produce, classical regulatory law is ineffective", says environmental expert Regine Barth. "This means that CSR can be an appropriate instrument here." Such examples illustrate both the opportunities and the drawbacks of CSR. CSR cannot replace policy regulation, just as policy regulation cannot replace serious implementation of CSR strategies. "The aim must be a correct mix of policy instruments", says Regine Barth.

Positive example: Fisheries

The findings from the fisheries industry are quite positive. Fish stocks worldwide are under threat, while the EU regularly fails to lay down sufficiently strict

catch quotas. Since the mid-1990s companies have therefore taken action voluntarily. Fearing that fish stocks, and therefore their own income, would collapse, Unilever – in collaboration with the environmental organization WWF – has pioneered development of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label. The label prescribes high sustainability standards and limited catches. Representatives of the retail trade, alerted by environmental organizations and consumers, have supported the successful introduction of this CSR instrument. Companies that deal only in products from certified fish stocks hope that this will give them competitive advantages. "This is a classic example of a win-win situation, because politics has failed us here", says the Öko-Institut's expert Katharina Schmitt.

In the Öko-Institut's view CSR has three major governance functions. Firstly, in the realm of regulatory law it fosters adherence to statutory provisions, because the systematic approach serves to highlight the consequences of corporate behaviour. This is particularly useful where the law is inadequately monitored. Secondly, CSR can strengthen the effect of economic incentive instruments. Thirdly and most importantly, however, CSR helps to promote sustainability in ways that go beyond statutory minimum standards.

Christiane Rathmann / Regine Barth

info: r.barth@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/knowledge1



Carbon footprinting for a better climate?



Retailers and manufacturers are working on CO₂ product labelling

Inventory analysis

Product-specific carbon footprint inventorization is based primarily on the LCA standard (ISO 14040 ff.). However, as a result of the various carbon footprint initiatives there is likely to be a need for hundreds or thousands of products to be inventorized in a manner that enables them to be compared. This presents new challenges, which require internationally harmonized rules for interpreting the LCA standard; an agreement on this issue is therefore needed. Initial proposals for such an agreement have already been put forward, for example by the Carbon Trust and the British Standards Institute (BSI).

In the great climate change debate, proposals for measuring and labelling carbon footprints have attracted considerable support. The term "carbon footprint" was coined in Great Britain. The concept covers many things: the climate impact of products and companies; market- and consumer-specific communication activities; and the measures taken to reduce global warming potential.

In a narrower sense, the carbon footprint encapsulates the effect of products or businesses on the world's climate, taking account of the whole value chain: raw materials, manufacturing, transport, sale, use, recycling and disposal. It is assessed on the basis of a life-cycle inventory analysis and focuses on global warming. The carbon footprint usually expresses not just CO₂ emissions but is

rather an aggregate CO₂-equivalent value which takes all greenhouse gases into account.

Market players, particularly retailers and manufacturers, are displaying a new and rapidly advancing commitment to active climate protection which is very much to be welcomed. The fruitfulness of the trend is, however, hampered by the almost exclusive emphasis on CO₂ as the sole assessment metric and by some purely cosmetic activities.

It is certainly useful to calculate the carbon footprint, since the analysis can then be used to identify suitable strategic measures for improving sustainability performance and the quality of the entire value chain. Possible measures include the development of low carbon products and appropriate labelling for consumers.

Will all products soon carry a CO₂ label?

Pilot project

The "Product Carbon Footprint" pilot project has been initiated by a consortium involving the Öko-Institut, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the market research company Sinus Sociovision and – as coordinators – the TPA-Life agency. The project sets out to work with leading companies for a better understanding of product-specific CO₂ emissions, to collate experience of calculating, reducing and communicating product carbon footprints in the German-speaking countries and to stimulate further work in this field. While setting up the initiative it became clear that the companies themselves would in fact like to see an internationally harmonized procedure.

rg / ch

The issue of the carbon footprint has already given rise to a large number of product-related initiatives, proposals and debates on methodology. Examples include:

Carbon footprint calculation and numerical rating or labelling

The majority of proposals for calculating the carbon footprint originated in Great Britain, where they were put forward by organizations such as the Carbon Trust and the largest British retailer, Tesco. Tesco originally announced its intention to label the carbon footprint of all the 70,000 products that it sells. Since then the number has been considerably reduced; the assessment is currently provided for 30 products. For three items (Walkers potato crisps, Boots shampoo and Innocent fruit juice) the CO₂ emitted in production was assessed through the Carbon Trust's initiative.

Different ideas for carbon footprint labelling on products are being discussed and tested:

- the amount of CO₂ can be indicated by a number on the packaging (e.g. 75g CO₂ for the Walkers potato crisps);
- in addition, the Carbon Trust label includes a downwards-pointing arrow,

signifying that the manufacturer has pledged to reduce the carbon footprint within the next two years;

- options for the consumer can be described on the packaging or at the supermarket. An example is the Boots shampoo, which points out that showering or water heating produces most of the greenhouse gases involved in washing one's hair and offers advice on reducing these CO₂ emissions;
- numerical rating can form part of sustainability information or corporate communication and can be provided to private or industrial clients.

Labelling climate-neutral products

These labels involve calculating a product's carbon footprint and usually include internal mitigation measures. Where the carbon footprint cannot be further reduced by reasonable internal effort or expenditure, external offsetting measures are applied. An example of this approach is the "Stop Climate Change" label developed by Agra-Teg GmbH of Göttingen on behalf of BNN, the German association of organic processors, wholesalers and retailers. Organic bananas are the first product to receive this label.

Labelling partially offset products – mostly air miles

These labels involve offsetting parts of the carbon footprint or parts of the product line, usually the food miles and particularly air miles (e.g. the Swiss COOP's label). Interestingly, a number of studies have shown that the carbon footprint of goods transported from abroad by sea is considerably smaller than consumers assume.

Offsets by credit card

Under this model, product-related CO₂ emissions are offset by external projects and the charges are collected by credit card. For example, the Compensate Club in Switzerland offsets CO₂ emissions from petrol used in motor cars; motorists use a special credit card to pay for fuel.

Extension or revision of existing labels or marking schemes

The European Commission is currently investigating whether and how the EU's ecolabel scheme might be extended to include carbon footprint information. This could be done generally for whole product groups and/or for individual products. The German government has announced its intention to introduce a CO₂ labelling scheme for cars within the context of its climate action programme.

Many manufacturers and retailers realize that drawing up a climate strategy involves carrying out CO₂ emissions inventories for individual products or for the company's entire product portfolio. The use to which these emissions figures should be put in external communication (e.g. by making them publicly available, printing them on product packaging, using them for labelling or for CO₂ offset calculation) remains, however, an open question and there is heated debate about possible outcomes.

Retail companies such as Metro, Rewe, Karstadt and IKEA have expressed reservations about carbon footprint labelling for all or many of their products. Other companies have already taken the decision to inventory the CO₂ emissions of individual products or services and partially offset them. For example, Deutsche Post inventories the CO₂ emissions associated with the mail with the aim of making the letter business climate neutral.

In carrying out its carbon footprint projects the Öko-Institut will ensure that wherever possible an internationally uniform standard is used to calculate the climate impacts of products and businesses. In addition, new or additional measures for reducing climate impact need to be put in place so that customers have a sound and credible basis for making their purchasing decisions.

Dr. Rainer Griesshammer



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info: r.griesshammer@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/knowledge2

"We need the companies for sustainable development"



Christian Hochfeld, deputy director of the Öko-Institut.

CSR can give Germany advantages as a location for business, according to a paper on corporate social responsibility published in September 2006 by the German Council for Sustainable Development RNE. But it won't happen automatically, say the authors, and they go on to make recommendations to the German government and to industry. More than a year on, what is the situation like now in the corporate world? eco@work questioned Christian Hochfeld, CSR expert and deputy director of the Öko-Institut.

If we look at current sustainability reports and the advertising put out by large German companies on the subject of climate protection, we get the impression that all the companies out there are environmentally aware and socially responsible. Is there reason to celebrate?

Unfortunately celebration would be premature. Companies have written their own progress reports and given themselves predominantly good marks, thus disguising the fact that very few companies have really realized how the challenges of climate protection and sustainable development will change the whole context of corporate behaviour in the years that lie ahead. If they are to prosper, businesses must adjust all their activities as soon as possible. One sometimes has the feeling that the debate about CSR in Germany is distracting us from the central challenges. We therefore need even greater transparency with regard to the absolute social contributions of corporate activities, so that the change that sustainable development requires can be achieved. That is the only thing that can serve as a benchmark for evaluation in future.

What is required for a corporate sustainability strategy to really be effective?

The key requirement is this: Leading companies must come to see environmental performance and social responsibility as a strategic component of their core business. Senior managers would then take the view that sustainability and CSR determine business success in the medium and long terms. Business opportunities chiefly arise when companies make use of innovations and target their product portfolio to tackle the problems of climate protection and contribute to sustainable development.

Why is it that social responsibility is not always mainstreamed in industry?

If companies regard issues of environmental performance and sustainability only as a millstone round their necks and have an eye only for the costs, this approach of course doesn't work. The lack of insight among top management is one of the biggest obstacles. In our view it is clear that in future no business will be able to avoid this issue and that we need the companies for sustainable development!

What policies can help to ensure universal implementation of CSR?

We are in favour of an active CSR policy in Germany and the EU – a policy which both promotes and

requires sustainable business development. We need a policy that promotes competition for sustainable companies and products – for example by following the "Top Runner" principle – but which can also fall back on regulation as an additional solution. At the same time we need greater clarity about the real contributions made by companies. In the same vein, it is important to single out not only the best but also the "black sheep".

What does that mean?

These days we come across some major discrepancies in behaviour. Some companies publicize the contributions they have supposedly made to sustainable development while at the same time lobbying against the creation of the political conditions needed if sustainable development is to be achieved through the necessary transformation of the market. We shall strive for the achievement of greater transparency, so that it becomes possible to distinguish between those who are pressing forwards and those who would prefer to apply the brakes. When it comes to sustainability, what you see must also be what you get – without misleading packaging for political effect.

Many thanks for the conversation.

The interview was conducted by Christiane Rathmann.

info: c.hochfeld@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/values

Courageous

Regine Barth has the courage of convictions

Regine Barth is a person who likes a challenge. This can be the Regional Dialogue Forum set up to mediate the expansion of Frankfurt airport. Or the ongoing controversies over the plan to create a German Environmental Code. The lawyer has headed the Öko-Institut's Environmental Law & Governance Division since 2001. And since then the 39-year-old has been tackling enthusiastically the many questions at the interface of politics and science, particularly that of the right "instruments" to be deployed. What makes this such exciting work? "I want to use the tools of my craft to create something new, not just analyse what is there", says Barth. She stresses that it is essential in such work to stand up for one's convictions – and to muster the courage to reconsider one's opinions in the light of new findings.



"Indifference is the greatest barrier to innovation, as then everything just stagnates", notes the lawyer. She makes no claim to having a blueprint for a sustainable future. She prefers instead to ask herself how the world can be made more sustainable here and now. "I believe that people can do great things. I take this confidence from history, from the development of the rule of law, social security systems, the United Nations and many other examples. I believe in the blend of creativity, intelligence and responsibility." This can indeed set a great deal in motion. *cr*

info: r.barth@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/wishes

Responsible

Dr Brigitte Hamm upholds human rights

She was shaken by the scandalous chemical disaster in the Indian city of Bhopal, which killed 20,000 people and has devastated the health of a further 120,000 to this day. Dr Brigitte Hamm doesn't just want to conduct studies; she wants to actually support the groups affected. "Respecting and protecting human rights is no longer just the job of governments, but also of companies operating on the ground," says Hamm, a member of staff at the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Binding rules are largely lacking, however. For this reason, voluntary initiatives are worthwhile. One

example is the Business Leaders' Initiative on Human Rights (BLIHR), in which businesses commit themselves to observe human rights.

Consumers too can wield considerable power if they give importance to certified products and fair trade. "If large chains become involved in labelling schemes, as is happening in the Netherlands and Britain to a greater extent than in Germany, they can reach a large number of consumers", explains the 61-year-old. The urgent question now, according to this researcher, is to what extent transnational corporations in the new boom economies such as China and India exert a positive or negative impact on standards. *kh*

info: www.inef.uni-due.de
www.oeko.de/081/wishes

Committed

Claudia Langer is an ecorrect consumer

As a relentless optimist as well as a high-powered career woman, she is working on something she is convinced of: utopia is feasible – together we can change the world! "Never before in business and politics has there been the level of awareness that there is today regarding ethical consumption", says communications expert



Claudia Langer. This is why the 42-year-old has set up the web portal utopia.de, intended to provide a forum for orientation and exchange for all those who think "we really ought to do something." The fact that we as consumers can send important signals via what we choose to consume, or not to consume, was not always at the forefront of Ms Langer's mind. A child of the "no future" generation, at the age of 19 she founded the events management agency Avantgarde, and at 27 went on to establish one of Germany's most successful advertising agencies, start AG. But soon she was no longer satisfied devising pithy slogans for MTV, Burger King or Deutsche Bank. "I used an advertising presentation to try to talk an energy supplier out of nuclear energy – and they just thought it was cute", explains mother of three, Langer. Disillusioned, she and her husband left the agency they had established and launched into the adventure of a sabbatical year to decide on their way forward. The result has been available on the Internet for all to see since November, and has already attracted 7,000 members in only four weeks. *kh*

info: www.utopia.de
www.oeko.de/081/wishes

Greening sports

Each year about 150 large sporting events are held in Germany, attracting millions of spectators. In social terms, therefore, they have a crucial role to play. Large sporting events are also significant from an economic point of view, but they always have a negative impact on the environment. For this reason the Öko-Institut and the German Sport University in Cologne have jointly compiled a guide



Fresh off the press: A guideline for environmentally responsible sporting events.

on how to organize major sporting events in an environmentally friendly manner. The guide is published by the Federal Environment Ministry and the German Olympic Sports Federation, and is aimed at events organizers, sports associations and clubs, municipal bodies and promoters. The guide is designed to reconcile the interests of the different groups involved, and to provide an overview of environmental protection measures. Its objective is to combine environmental performance with economic benefits.

"Previous experience shows that environmental performance at sporting events results in real win-win situations. The environment and event organizers benefit equally. Those who use resources sparingly also save costs and make a contribution to sustainability," says senior project manager, Martin Schmied of the Öko-Institut. *sf*

info: m.schmied@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/investigating1

E-TRACK: Where does network electricity come from?

Öko-Institut, together with ten international energy institutions, has published recommendations for a European system of electricity disclosure. In the final report of the E-TRACK project, the institutions suggest ways to standardize tracking of where the power that is fed into Europe's electricity networks comes from. E-TRACK proposes a coordinated and consistent system in which the way electric-

exist, with energy suppliers being able to choose freely between them. The first will be the standardized system, in which every unit of energy will have a guarantee of origin. This system operates on the basis of an electronic certificate registry, providing a sound and unambiguous means of accounting for electricity attributes. The second option will be the "residual mix" for energy sources that cannot be matched with a



How to track the electricity fed into Europe's power networks? The Öko-Institut has the answers.

ity is generated is characterized by particular "attributes of power generation". These attributes relate, for example, to the source of fuel used, the emissions produced in generating the energy, and any public support obtained. This information can be used for the purposes of complying with the Europe-wide requirement for electricity disclosure. As a result, there will be greater transparency for consumers to decide which electricity they wish to use. Up to now, besides the European Energy Certificate System (EECS), which is the only standardized certification system for electricity in Europe, there have only been national guarantees of origin for renewable energy sources, or private labelling schemes for "green energy". The coexistence of parallel systems can result in errors and double counting, especially of electricity from renewable sources. E-TRACK proposes to build on the EECS and, sooner or later, integrate existing systems into the new standard. Two options will

guarantee of origin. Energy retailers can use this option to disclose to consumers energy attributes based on a statistical mix of the overall power generated, for example in a geographical region. This mix is corrected, however, to take account of attributes included in the guarantees of origin already issued, and energy imports and exports. The annual cost to the average European household of having such a reliable system of accounting for energy attributes is expected to be less than 40 cents a year. For consumers who want to do something for the environment, the Öko-Institut makes the following recommendations: use electricity as efficiently as possible and choose a certified green power product, for example, one that carries the "ok-power" label. The E-TRACK project was supported by the European Commission through the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme. *kh*

info: c.timpe@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/investigating1

Climate plus: Motorhome holidays

The warnings contained in IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) assessment reports have also prompted discussion in the tourism industry. In this context the German caravanning industry association recently commissioned the Öko-Institut to compare the greenhouse gas emissions of motorhome holidays with those of other forms of travel.

The most significant climate plus of this type of holiday comes from overnight stays. If a motorhome containing two people overnights on a designated stopover site, each person produces about one kilogramme CO₂-equivalent. Each person staying on a campsite emits five times this amount, and those in a hotel a massive twelve times more. As expected, the motorhome



Stays on motorhome stopover sites have a far smaller carbon footprint than on a campsite or in a hotel.

The study revealed that overnight stays on designated motorhome stopover sites are far less damaging to the climate than those on a campsite or in a hotel. Moreover, holidaymakers in motorhomes often choose destinations closer to home, meaning fewer carbon dioxide emissions than more distant holiday resorts. A typical motorhome holiday, averaged over all holiday destinations at home and abroad, generates 0.61 tonnes of greenhouse gas (calculated as CO₂-equivalent emissions). All other modes of holiday travel by German tourists emitted at least half as much again, or an average of 0.95 tonnes. Although fans of motorhomes tend to go away more often than other people, they still compare favourably. The average German tourist is responsible for about 20% more greenhouse gas emissions per year than the average motorhome tourist.

fares better as a means of transport than domestic and inner-European flights, but it comes off poorly compared to a bus or car.

However, as the latter usually go hand in hand with hotel accommodation, the emissions calculated for the entire journey are offset, depending upon holiday duration and distance travelled. If a campervan with two people travels not more than 170 kilometres per overnight stay, or 340 kilometres with four people, the greenhouse gas emissions balance is better than that of the car journey combined with hotel accommodation. With respect to air pollutant emissions, which were not included in the context of the study, significant decreases can be expected in future due to new low-emission vehicles. *kh*

info: m.schmied@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/investigating2

Greening disposal

Whether or not they contain ozone-depleting CFCs, refrigerators should be disposed of collectively in a single recycling plant. This is the advice of the scientists at the Öko-Institut because sorting errors - which are unavoidable - result in serious ecological damage. About 80% of domestic refrigeration appliances discarded by private households contain CFC refrigerants. "It is impossible to



Recycled together: Refrigerators with and without CFCs.

sort them perfectly accurately, and the lack of labelling on many old appliances makes the job even more difficult," says scientist Günter Dehoust of the Öko-Institut. However, processing a CFC-containing appliance in the CFC-free disposal channel releases a large amount of CFCs into the environment.

It is no less problematical when CFC-containing appliances end up in large shredder facilities, to be processed alongside cars and other scrap metal. In contrast, however, technological advances in fridge recycling companies allow all appliances to be processed together in an environmentally sound manner. The study aims to provide background information on the implementation of the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). *kh*

info: g.dehoust@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/investigating2

What would life be like if ...

... lots of new members joined the Öko-Institut?

You've noticed, haven't you?

After the Öko-Institut's name there are two letters, a small e and a big V, making e.V. That stands for *eingetragener Verein*, the German term for a registered non-profit association. We have held on to those letters e.V. for quite some time – for thirty years, to be precise. And that's a good thing. For the small insignificant e and the capital insignificant V stand for values that are anything but insignificant. They are first and foremost the guarantee of our independence. They stand for independent, values-led research for the environment. Does that sound a bit over the top? It's the fact of the matter. Just look at the projects that our members have made possible and have supported in recent years.

For example, there were the first studies of electricity disclosure, undertaken in an endeavour to make the electricity market more transparent. And there was the "Green Investments?" study, which provided the first systematic survey of products currently on the market and proposed criteria for companies to work to. There were the major projects on the turnaround in energy policy, the turnaround in chemicals policy, genetic engineering in agriculture, sustainable tourism and environmental performance in cyberspace. There was the project on sustainable consumption, the starting point for the consumer information campaign EcoTopTen. You may also have heard about the Solar Ship, the ecologically designed office building that our Freiburg office moved into in summer 2006; it is a symbol of our very concrete vision of the energy scenario of the future. It could not have been achieved without the many generous donations and loans at favourable rates that have come from our members, friends and sponsors.

Our clients, too, value the e.V. They associate it with credibility and firm



roots in society. It is true that our work is financed primarily through contracts from government ministries at national and regional level and from companies and the European Union. But this does not mean that our members are of secondary importance. Members' subscriptions and donations play a crucial role in providing the basis for independent research. So that we can continue to count on that in future, we need new members. And so we have set ourselves a target: 500 plus! Granted, we can't offer them the sort of things you might expect from a club. There won't be any Christmas parties, tournaments or group outings. But there will be discussions and projects for a better future, and persistent and successful pressure on policy-makers and companies.

So what will happen if lots of new members join the Öko-Institut? We think that many more people will then become aware of us, because our members publicize our organization and our work. We shall have to consider what space we need to cope with the crowds at the next

annual conference, because the number of people registering breaks all records and prominent members – representing the broad supporter base – lend weight to our cause. Above all, though, we shall be able to continue our critical studies, drawing attention today to the pressing problems of tomorrow. Because more members of course mean more financial support. This money enables us to address issues for which other funders cannot be found immediately, but which are no less significant for society because of this. Thank you for your support!

Katja Kukatz

Katja Kukatz is a journalist in the Department of Public Relations & Communication at the Öko-Institut.



info: k.kukatz@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/prompting



Join our 500plus! membership campaign.

For 30 years the Öko-Institut has been a non-profit organization. It is true that our work is financed primarily through project-related contracts and funding from public and private clients. But we still need you as a member. For our members ensure that the institute re-

tains its strong links with society at large; they enable us to continue our crucial sustainability research and to remain financially independent in the long term.

That is why we have launched our 500plus! membership campaign. We are aiming to recruit 500 new members – and to offer attractive new services to our long-standing supporters. We plan to consult you shortly in order to find out what you want. We shall be using our e-zine *eco@work* and our website to keep you more thoroughly and more regularly informed about the institute's events, activities and research findings.

The members' area of our website will be systematically expanded. We look forward to discussing developments with you.

Join in! You will be helping to solve some of the pressing social challenges of today and tomorrow. Please tell other people about our campaign and write to us if you have comments or suggestions.

info: c.rathmann@oeko.de
www.oeko.de/081/discovering



In return for your commitment ...

There are many good reasons for joining the Öko-Institut. The most important is that you are supporting independent and crucial environmental research, new ideas and initiatives for a sustainable future. But you also benefit from some very practical advantages.

- As a member you receive a printed copy of the e-zine *eco@work* free of charge. You can also request copies of our current studies.
- You can join a free guided tour of the Sonnenschiff (Solar Ship), the Öko-Institut's "Plus Energy" building.
- You can take out a subscription at reduced rate to the KGV-Rundbrief bulletin and the ELNI newsletter.
- We shall keep you informed about talks and conferences organized by the Öko-Institut; where events are charged for, members pay a reduced admission fee.
- You will receive an invitation to our twice-yearly lecture series "The Öko-Institut in dialogue", where you will have an opportunity to talk directly to our scientists.
- You may be able to offset your subscription against tax.

Who to contact

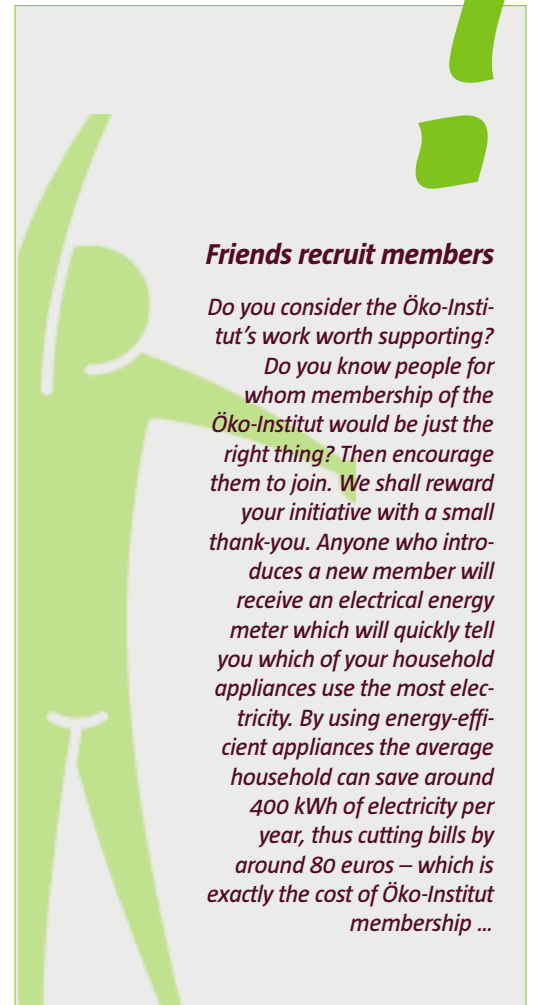
If you have **any questions** Romy Klupsch will be pleased to help. She can be contacted by telephone on +49-61-45 295-24 (10.00-12.00 h) or by e-mail at r.klupsch@oeko.de.

Members of the Öko-Institut pay an **annual subscription** of 80 euros, concessions (e.g. students, pensioners, unemployed) 35 euros. You can also take out life membership for a one-off fee of 1000 euros.

Already made up your mind?
A registration form is online at www.oeko.de/members

Friends recruit members

Do you consider the Öko-Institut's work worth supporting? Do you know people for whom membership of the Öko-Institut would be just the right thing? Then encourage them to join. We shall reward your initiative with a small thank-you. Anyone who introduces a new member will receive an electrical energy meter which will quickly tell you which of your household appliances use the most electricity. By using energy-efficient appliances the average household can save around 400 kWh of electricity per year, thus cutting bills by around 80 euros – which is exactly the cost of Öko-Institut membership ...



International climate protection

In early December 2007, the international community gathered in Bali for the 13th United Nations Climate Change Conference with the aim of agreeing on a comprehensive process for adopting an ambitious, binding climate protection regime for the period after 2012. This is namely the year in which the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires. Öko-Institut scientists were at the negotiation table as members of the German delegation, and were also a part of the delegation of the European Commission.

How do the experts view the decisions reached in Bali? Where is international climate policy heading? And what are the challenges that will need to be overcome on the road to establishing a successful post-2012 climate protection regime? Read about it in the next issue of *eco@work* in spring 2008.



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