



Global  
Nature  
Fund

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



GLOBAL NATURE FUND  
International Foundation for  
Environment and Nature



*The key to sustainable development lies within ourselves*

Dear friends,

Many of the people who, like me, grew up in Germany in the two decades after the end of the Second World War have similar memories. We have experienced the steady growth of the society. For example, our first family car, which I still remember well, had a modest 34 hp, the next one was more powerful with 60 hp, and the third car even had 90 hp. The first TV was small and the picture black and white, the next TV set, on which we watched the 1974 Soccer World Cup, was somewhat larger and broadcast in colour, and screen dimensions have just continued to increase ever since. These TV sets allowed me to watch programmes led by people who I regarded as "heroes" at that time, such as the scientist Hoimar von Ditfurth. His programme on climate change from 1978, which is now fortunately available on the internet, is impressive because of how accurately it forecasts the future.

Some of my childhood memories, and those of others my age, are of having the traditional roast dinner once a week every Sunday, although later we ate more meat during the week, and eventually we had meat almost every day. The first holidays away, once a year at most, were initially to the Bavarian Forest, and later to Italy or Spain, followed by long-distance travel. This rapid development shaped me and my generation, and we probably shaped the generation after us. But, where does this need for more come from? I remember a programme that was popular during my childhood with a rather catchy melody. "For Mr Rossi seeks happiness, but seeking it, you will miss a bit, yes, a piece of happiness is missing", were the lyrics of the title melody for this programme. Advertisements shamelessly exploit this pursuit of happiness by constantly suggesting that real happiness can only be found through more and more consumption. For example, it is no longer enough for men of my age to drive a car with 250 hp. They also require a motorbike, a convertible and a campervan, and perhaps they should consider a quad bike and a boat. Konstantin Wecker, who is admittedly also not blameless in terms of ambivalence, once sang that "enough can never be enough".

Don't take me wrong: I am aware that technological progress can also bring benefits, e.g. regarding nutrition or medicine. But the ambivalence I mentioned before, increasingly leads to so-called cognitive dissonance. We know that perpetual growth is simply not possible in a finite world, having already created the major threats of climate change and species extinction. In other words, we do try to reconcile our daily consumption with the warnings of science. However, instead of changing, or at least questioning habits that are questionable or we have grown fond of, we deny the facts and warnings of scientists. We simply shut our eyes.

Now you may be asking yourself what this has to do with the work of the GNF. I am convinced that the key to sustainability lies within ourselves. The first step towards shifting the paradigm away from the perpetual growth and focus on consumption to create happiness is acceptance of the fact that all prerequisites for happiness are present in the affluent countries. In our society however, the idea of 'enough', less growth or even abstinence seem to be concepts devised by the devil. Discussing these topics, even amongst friends and family, means being branded as a killjoy, eco pessimist, a dressed-up idealist, a doomsday prophet, or, in the worst case, as crazy. It seems that even the current pile-up of crises (inflation, pandemic, military conflicts, climate, etc.) is not making us consistently question and change our behaviour. On the contrary, we seem to be hoping or firmly convinced that these crises will soon pass over and we can continue with

the habits we have grown so fond of over the past decades. Of course anyone who has seriously studied sustainable development, will already have reached that concordant conclusion. Left to continue, we will face more dramatic crises more frequently and they will threaten our lives in a way that we have never seen before.

There are also reasons for hope though. The vegan diet is increasingly accepted, more and more people are no longer indifferent to the suffering of overfed animals, and even cars and long-distance travel are not such important status symbols anymore. However, transforming our society needs to happen even faster. This is where the work of the GNF comes in. Our work addresses sustainability, climate change, protection of biodiversity and global justice through projects all around the world.

**Thank you for your continuous support in this!**

Best,

**Udo Gattenlöhner**  
GNF Executive Director



Many NGOs – also the Global Nature Fund – show with their projects that a sustainable development is possible, that takes into account the limits of growth, which our planet shows us. Since the Club of Rome first reported on these limits, 50 years have passed and numerous solutions have been developed, tested and found to be good – but not taken into account in our social and economic system. With innovative and feasible projects, the Global Nature Fund and its partners are working again this year to ensure that a rethinking takes place.

Yours,

**Marion Hammerl**  
President

In the background: Lake Titicaca in South America, the highest navigable lake in the world and the venue of the 16th Living Lakes Conference in December 2022.

Our cover picture: The Hirda fruit is mainly used for Ayurvedic purposes and is cultivated in the Indian Western Ghats, where the GNF has been involved in a project to restore degraded forests since 2022.

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In the Living Lakes network, we are associated with 113 partner lakes and wetlands all over the world. Learn more: [www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes](http://www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes)

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# Living Lakes & Water

The conservation of lakes around the world has been our aim since 1998 when the Living Lakes network, coordinated by the GNF, was founded. Fulfilling this vision however is not becoming easier and the impact of human activities on our environment is ever increasing. For that reason, we carried out a flashlight study focussing on climate change and lakes, to assess the challenges imposed on domestic water bodies, including the animals and people living in and around the lakes.

An ecological dystopia –  
and an outlook for all of Europe?

Lake Volvi, Greece,  
fell completely dry in 2019.

## NEW REPRESENTATION FOR EUROPE'S WATER BODIES

**Dr Thomas Schaefer**

In May 2022, eight environmental organisations from five EU countries founded the European Living Lakes Association (ELLA) for the protection of lakes and wetlands. ELLA is a step towards even better joint ecosystem conservation work in the future. The founding members are the German organisations Global Nature Fund, the Lake Constance Foundation and Environmental Action Germany, together with Peipsi CTC based in Estonia, the Polish Ecological Association ETNA, Fundación Global Nature from Spain, as well as LBDCA and the Association of Civil Society Organisations Lake Balaton, both based in Hungary. The management committee consists of five members, one person from each country. Germany is represented by our Executive Director Udo Gattenlöhner.

Recent figures published by the European Environment Agency show just how much this new strong voice is needed. In the period leading up to 2015, only about 40 percent of European surface waters (rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters) were of good or very good environmental status. The remaining 60 percent need enhanced conservation, or even restoration efforts, in order to meet the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive. The responsible administrations in Germany and across Europe, however, are limited in their ability to address this situation by staff and resource shortages.

### Cross-border sustainability action

The foundation of ELLA brings with it some big goals. It is particularly important to call attention to the conservation of lakes and wetlands, as well as the protection of aquatic biodiversity, and the associated ecosystem services within Europe. Together, we aim to implement joint flagship projects for habitat restoration and have already started to increase our advocacy for the improvement of the policy and legal frameworks for wetland protection. ELLA is also an ideal platform to foster the exchange and effective interaction between the various stakeholders in lake regions. Additionally, ELLA promotes scientific collaboration, and compiles research outputs on lake and wetland conservation for public dissemination. The flashlight study on lakes and climate change, published



in June 2022 by the GNF, was an important first example of this.

The European Living Lakes Association builds on over twenty years of close cooperation between the European members of the global Living Lakes network. ELLA's headquarters will be at Lake Constance, which is one of the largest freshwater lakes in central Europe and where the Living Lakes network was founded in 1998. ELLA and the member organisations individually, will continue to be part of Living Lakes and advocate for exchange and cooperation between wetland conservation initiatives in Europe and across the world.



[www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes/europe/ella](http://www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes/europe/ella)

One of thousands of waters in Europe equally unique and worthy of protection: the Estonian Lake Peipsi.



**Dr Thomas Schaefer**

is a biologist, sustainability manager and has been actively involved in nature conservation for 37 years. As the head of the Living Lakes & Water and Nature Conservation departments at the GNF, he is particularly committed to Living Lakes in Germany and worldwide.

## EXTREME LAKE IN EXTREME DANGER

Dr Viktor Konitzer

In the communities surrounding Lake Malawi, people often lack the most basic necessities. This has set in motion a spiral of overfishing, environmentally damaging fishing methods and the loss of biodiversity, all of which have led to the GNF declaring Lake Malawi as “Threatened Lake of the Year 2022”. With this we aim to contribute to the protection of biodiversity whilst securing the livelihoods of the people around the lake.

### A biodiversity hotspot

The biodiversity of Lake Malawi is immense. With 700 to 800 species of cichlids, many of which are found only there and nowhere else in the world, this lake is one of the richest ecosystems on Earth in terms of fish species. The surface of the lake is as large as the German state of Brandenburg, it is the second deepest on the African continent and, having existed for several million years, it is one of the oldest lakes on earth. Over time, an extraordinary diversity of species has evolved. It can take a while for such a gigantic lake to show negative effects of human activities and yet, Lake Malawi has already clearly passed this point.

### A lake under pressure

Since gaining independence in 1964, Malawi’s population has increased almost fivefold to an estimated 19.7 million. More than half of the people live below the poverty threshold and about a quarter live in extreme poverty. Daniel Mwakameka, director of our Living Lakes partner organisation Action for Environmental Sustainability (AFES) in Malawi, explains that

the demand for food can hardly be met anymore, which results in overfishing, biodiversity loss and pollution of Lake Malawi. Mwakameka also describes how population growth has led to increased agricultural land use in the lake’s catchment area, and that inappropriate agricultural practices, deforestation, soil erosion and high amounts of fertiliser and pesticides pose a serious threat to this sensitive ecosystem. Additionally, Lake Malawi is very vulnerable to the effects of climate change, says Mwakameka.

### Possible solutions to the crisis

So far, the aforementioned issues, together with natural disasters, lack of financial and technological capacities, and insufficient coordination of policy, have hampered efforts to protect Lake Malawi; but it is not too late to turn the situation around. The joint activities of the GNF and our local partner AfES are doing their part. Our programme manager Thies Geertz explains that this involves supporting decision makers from responsible authorities, fishing associations, management boards and village committees in the sustainable use of natural resources. Geertz says this includes providing farmers with training on biodiversity-friendly agriculture, agroforestry, and fishpond management. By having NGOs develop alternative income opportunities together with the local people, the aim is that the inhabitants of the lake region themselves will strengthen their livelihoods and can help to preserve Lake Malawi as a biodiversity hotspot.



[www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes/threatened-lake-2022](http://www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes/threatened-lake-2022)

The dance of the cichlids: Under water, Lake Malawi presents itself with an exceptional variety of species. But the intactness of this unique ecosystem is under massive threat.



## A FLAT LAKE WITH RICH DIVERSITY

Dr Viktor Konitzer

The Northern German Lake Dümmer has an impressive and unique biodiversity. Similarly diverse, are the efforts of the people from around the lake to preserve this blue jewel. There are certainly enough challenges to overcome. Lake Dümmer is an excellent example for continuous conservation efforts at a water body still in good condition, which is why the GNF and the Living Lakes Network Germany have designated Lake Dümmer as “Living Lake of the Year 2022”.

### A paradise for birds, worthy of protection

After the Steinhuder Meer, Lake Dümmer is the second largest lake in Lower Saxony with a water surface of about 1,300 hectares. The entirety of this valuable ecosystem, which also includes adjacent wetland areas, extends over around 4,760 hectares. The lake, which was formed around 11,000 years ago during the last ice age, has an average depth of 1.10 metres, and a maximum depth of 1.40 metres. However, the lake still hosts an extraordinary diversity of species, including a number of rare bird species.

### A natural network

“Lake Dümmer is a perfect example of a fascinating natural network”, says Dr Thomas Schaefer. “For this reason, the title of ‘Living Lake of the Year’ is assigned to the lake itself, as well as the unique interconnection with other ecosystems such as the expansive surrounding wetlands. This small-scale connectivity is why Lake Dümmer is home to a particularly large number of bird species, some of which are classed as ‘endangered’. This includes Garganey, Shoveler and the Bluethroat.” The waterlilies on the lake provide a breeding ground for Lower Saxony’s largest colony of black terns, and ospreys and white-tailed eagles circle above the water, benefiting from the rich food supply in the lake.

### Keeping the lake alive

As part of the Living Lakes Network Germany, which is coordinated by the GNF, the ecological station Naturschutzring Dümmer e.V. is responsible for protecting this biodiverse wetland. Lake Dümmer faces some significant challenges. Over summer, thousands of day tourists represent a



huge pressure for the lake. High nutrient inputs come from the catchment area of the river Hunte, the main tributary of Lake Dümmer. Contrary to natural conditions, the water level is kept artificially high in summer, meaning that the reeds in the shore area lack the opportunity to regenerate.

The measures implemented so far include extensive population surveys of waterfowl, waders and reedbed birds. The Naturschutzring relies on a combination of palisade and fence construction to protect the reeds. On the one hand, this reduces erosion by wave action, and on the other, it protects areas in front of the existing reeds where the plants can spread again. Volunteers maintain the network of small water bodies around the lake. This allows birds, amphibians, fish and rare plants to continue to thrive on and in our “Living Lake of the Year”.



[www.globalnature.org/de/living-lakes/lebendiger-see-2022](http://www.globalnature.org/de/living-lakes/lebendiger-see-2022) (German)

Scenic idyll and habitat for rare plant and animal species between Osnabrück and Bremen, Germany: the Dümmer.



Dr Viktor Konitzer

Germanist, has been working as a Communication Manager for the GNF since 2019.

# BIODIVERSITY UNDER CLIMATE CHANGE

**Dr Thomas Schaefer**

In the end, our investigation turned out to be somewhat more than just a flashlight study. The results of our study on lakes and climate change, which we published in June 2022 with funding from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, covers almost 90 pages. In this report, we summarise the current knowledge about the impacts of climate change on biodiversity in lakes and wetlands in Germany.

## Water bodies under pressure

In recent years, the hot summers have shown how global warming affects the water balance of lakes and wetlands in Germany. Higher

water temperatures, longer dry periods, more frequent heavy rainfall events in summer, ice-free winters, and lack of water mixing in winter create stress factors for aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity. While writing this text in August 2022, drought is being discussed throughout Germany. Water and groundwater levels are at historic lows, even in water-rich federal states like Baden-Württemberg. The first municipalities are starting to enforce bans on water extraction from water bodies, navigation on the Rhine is only possible on a reduced scale, and companies are drawing up emergency plans for water shortages. One of the questions addressed by our flashlight study is what we need to be prepared for, as we work towards the conservation of national and international lakes and wetlands.

## What is the current situation?

Even without climate change, water bodies are seriously impacted by human activities and are stretched to the limit of hydrological and ecosystem capacity. According to the Water Framework Directive, three quarters of the assessed 732 lakes in Germany did not achieve good ecological status in 2015. Too many nutrients from agriculture are still entering our wetlands. Rising water temperatures and increased usage pose new challenges for the protection of water bodies. Good ecological status is crucial for the resilience of lakes to increasing occurrence of these extreme events.

## So what now? – Natural solutions

The findings show that agricultural impacts and recreational activities in and around lakes and wetlands must be significantly reduced, in order to prevent any further devaluing of previous successes achieved in the management of water bodies. It is important to significantly reduce pollutant inputs, restore the shoreline, and limit activities such as water sports within these ecosystems.

The German government has set out some important goals for the coming years, one of which is the promotion of nature-based solutions to climate change. As a part of one targeted programme, the carbon storage potential of organic soils is to be used to achieve Germany's climate targets. The restoration of peatlands and for-

mer marshlands (paludiculture) can reduce the immense nutrient discharge of nitrogen and phosphorus released by drained peatland soils. GNF and the Living Lakes Network Germany will work to ensure this programme is successful and like other environmental NGOs will be watching carefully to see if the political actors keep their promises for the protection of our natural resources.



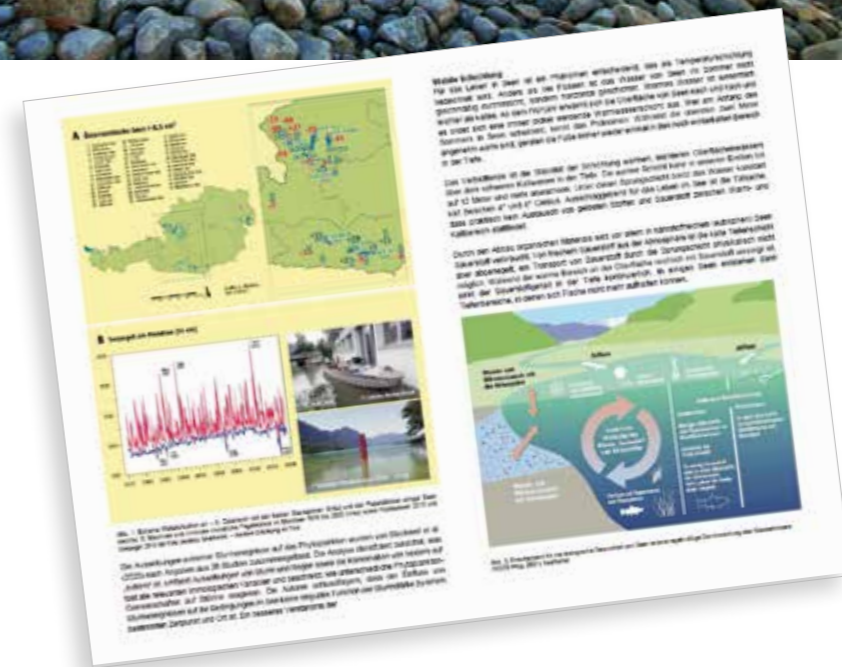
[www.globalnature.org/en/flash-light-study-lakes-and-climate-change](https://www.globalnature.org/en/flash-light-study-lakes-and-climate-change)



The home of the GNF is sitting on dry land: In the summer of 2022, persistent heat and drought also leave their mark on Lake Constance.

## A few of the findings from the study:

- › Lakes respond directly to the effects of weather as a result of climate. Water temperatures in European lakes over summer have increased by almost 0.5°C every ten years since 1970.
- › The decrease in winter ice cover means that some lakes are no longer fully mixed in autumn and spring. This has a negative impact on oxygen concentrations in the deep water. However, this is where the nursery grounds of many fish are located, which are dependent on sufficient oxygen levels.
- › Long-term measurements at lakes show that heavy rain and the use of manure on the watershed promote algae growth. This often leads to an increase in toxic blue-green algae in shallow lakes.
- › In excessively nutrient-rich lakes, fish have been observed dying due to oxygen deficiency and high concentrations of ammonium and ammonia.
- › Fluctuations in water levels due to climate have a significant impact on the breeding and wintering conditions for water birds. In recent years, around 50,000 fewer tufted ducks have been recorded in winter surveys at Lake Constance.
- › Climate change and the associated increase in extreme heat events lead to a decline in water levels and drying out of wetlands. This exposes shore sediments and peat bogs, leading to the decomposition of organic material and the release of carbon dioxide. As a result, lakes become sources of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, increasing global warming.



A look inside: The flashlight study uses vivid graphics to show the extent to which water bodies are already showing the consequences of man-made climate change.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Crab fishermen in the Sundarbans, the largest contiguous mangrove area on earth between India and Bangladesh.

“ We promote respect and good communication with our partner countries in the Global South and take on central challenges we face worldwide. These are the climate crisis, overcoming poverty, gender justice, global health care and crisis prevention. If we make progress in these areas, much will be gained – not only for the developing countries but also for us in Germany, because even distant crises have a very real impact on us, given the global interconnectedness of our country.

German Development Minister Svenja Schulze  
in an interview with akzente – Das Magazin der GIZ,  
Issue 1/22, p. 20

## DEDICATED TEAM WORK FOR WATER RESOURCES AND MORE

### Udo Gattenlöhner

The global development projects carried out by the GNF are more important than ever in these challenging times. Existential threats, which unfortunately mainly affect the world's poorest people, are exacerbated by climate change and the dramatic loss of biodiversity. The problems in many developing and emerging countries have been further intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's attack on Ukraine, which is against international law. Civil society projects offer immediate help for disadvantaged population groups.

By creating long-term partnerships during our projects, GNF builds trust and fosters local capacities. The projects also work to ensure that women and girls have good educational opportunities, and that hygiene and health are improved. The key to success lies in decades of cooperation with our partner organisations, defining clear goals, diverse experience, and mutual respect. All projects are closely supervised by the GNF, which allows us to monitor the impacts of implemented measures and increase the efficiency of activities.

Water has always been a central issue for the GNF. It is a valuable resource that is becoming increasingly scarce due to global climate change, population growth and increased pollution of water bodies. Whether it is the restoration of wells and ultrafiltration for drinking water production in Africa or the purification of wastewater through sewage treatment by aquatic plants in the Middle East or Latin America, we demonstrate how the living conditions of the poorest people in the Global South can be improved with cost-effective, natural solutions. Geographically, the GNF development projects in 2022, were primarily located in Burundi, Angola, South Africa, Jordan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Columbia, and Mexico.

Country borders make little difference to issues such as air pollution, climate change, military conflicts, migration, and pandemics. In addition to our project work, GNF is therefore in communication with the German government and is an active member of the IUCN, the German Nature Conservation Council (DNR), the



Association of German Foundations, the Climate Alliance and other umbrella organisations to influence global policy development.

The corn harvest in Mucusso, Angola, was significantly improved thanks to “Conservation Agriculture” measures.

Despite the difficult past few years, the developmental work carried out by the GNF has developed very positively. In addition to individual donors and institutional supporters such as the EU Commission and foundations, the increasing support for our work from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMUV) in particular has opened up new opportunities for development.



### Udo Gattenlöhner

is an agricultural scientist and has been working with the GNF since 1999 and since 2001 as Executive Director. He coordinates various projects for sustainable development in the Global South.



## PROTECTION OF MANGROVES, THE ALL-ROUNDERS BETWEEN WATER AND LAND

Thies Geertz



Mangrove honey collectors, known as mowals, do their demanding work in Bangladesh.

Like a green ribbon, mighty mangrove forests line the shallow coasts of tropical and subtropical seas between 30° South and 30° North. Mangroves act as a protection against storms and tides that constantly gnaw away at the mainland, thus protecting the narrow coastal strip and settlements and fields behind it.

The 70 or so plant species in a mangrove forest all have particular adaptation strategies to thrive in the salt water of the tidal zone. With their dense stilt-like roots, the mangrove trees stabilise the coastal areas. In addition, the root system forms an extremely species-rich nursery for countless fish, molluscs and crab species. The sustainable use of mangrove forests provides the livelihood of millions of people who live in shallow coastal areas.

### Alarming developments

In recent decades, humans have unfortunately decimated the population of these productive all-rounders in the transition area between land and sea. Since the 1950's, a third of the world's mangrove habitat has been destroyed by reckless development policies that give priority to short-term economic interests over sustainable development. The main cause has been the expansion of shrimp and crab farming ponds to satisfy the gigantic global demand for these aquaculture products.

Another aspect is the emergence of countless tourist resorts on the beaches of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Caribbean. Sandy beaches look better in holiday brochures than mangrove swamps. In consequence, the costs of such massive environmental destruction are often borne by the poorest people in the Global South. Flooding of agricultural land by sea water, saltwater intrusion into drinking water

reservoirs, erosion of fertile soil and decline of coastal fish stocks are all direct consequences of mangrove deforestation.

### Women's groups and mangrove honey

The protection of the remaining mangrove forests as well as the sensitive afforestation has been a central focus since 2004. We are currently working on mangrove conservation and afforestation projects in India, Sri Lanka, the Dominican Republic and Bangladesh, which is particularly affected by climate change. Together with our partners in India and Bangladesh, we have planted a total of almost 50,000 mangrove trees in 2021.

The empowerment of women's groups plays a central role in the ecological restoration of mangrove forests. As part of the "Mangrove Stewardship Programme", we support women in developing additional income opportunities such as mushroom or poultry farming. This provides them with additional income and, in the long term, generates more participation rights in village decision-making.

In Bangladesh, we are systematically promoting the production and marketing of a high-quality mangrove honey in order to increase the value added from the sustainable use of the mangrove forest and thus create an incentive for the conservation of the forest. By the end of 2022, a bottling and packaging plant will be set up together with a local cooperative of mangrove honey collectors, where production will adopt up-to-date hygiene standards, helping to significantly increase the reach of the product.



[www.globalnature.org/en/mangroves-sri-lanka-india](http://www.globalnature.org/en/mangroves-sri-lanka-india)

Thies Geertz

is a biologist and programme manager at the GNF, working on integrated community development in various countries, where the consequences of climate change are already being felt.



## INTERVIEW

“Customers and employees are not the only ones demanding corporate responsibility for people and the environment – more and more investors are doing so, too



**Elisabeth Viebig,**  
Head of Corporate  
Citizenship & Member-  
ship at Mercedes-Benz  
Group AG

this, it is particularly important to us that the goals in terms of society and environment are jointly determined, and that targets and key figures are clearly defined. The GNF has been particularly good and professional in implementing this.

Elisabeth Viebig, Head of Corporate Citizenship & Membership at Mercedes-Benz Group AG, which sponsors mangrove and coastal protection projects implemented by the GNF, in conversation with GNF Communication Manager Dr Viktor Konitzer.

**Mrs Viebig, the Mercedes-Benz AG supports the mangrove projects of the GNF as a longstanding partner. Why do you dedicate yourself so intensively to this topic?**

Sustainable environmental protection is an integral aspect of our corporate citizenship strategy, which is part of the holistic business strategy of Mercedes-Benz Group AG. The protection and restoration of carbon sinks, such as mangrove forests, is a significant contribution to climate regulation. What makes the projects stand out, however, is their holistic approach. In addition to the contribution to climate change mitigation and biodiversity protection, the local population is closely involved in developmental projects and alternative income opportunities, such as the vegetable cultivation and ecotourism initiatives. By implementing environmental education measures in schools, the necessary knowledge of ecological connectivity is passed on to the next generation, effectively making the projects future-proof. This approach ensures that the measures can contribute to the successful preservation of these critical ecosystems in the long term.

**Worldwide there are a multitude of NGOs and conservation projects. Why does Mercedes-Benz AG value their cooperation with the GNF?**

We have a longstanding partnership with the GNF, which has always been professional and transparent. During a collaboration such as

**The concept of corporate social responsibility, whereby companies take responsibility for both social and ecological issues, seems to have become more important in recent years. How do you perceive this development?**

Customers and employees are not the only ones demanding corporate responsibility for people and the environment – more and more investors are doing so, too. We have been implementing a holistic, sustainable business strategy for some years now. The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations are an important point of reference for us.



Healthy mangrove forests store more carbon than any other forest – up to 1,000 tons per hectare.

## A SUCCESSFUL DECADE FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Laura Maeso Velasco



Precious resource: water in the Jordan Valley.

One of the most important strategies implemented by the Global Nature Fund is to establish long-term partnerships with our partner organisations. This also means that we do not just concentrate on individual projects but are committed to joint long-term goals. One example of such a collaboration is our partnership with EcoPeace Middle East, a unique organisation that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmentalists with the aim of promoting sustainable development and peace in their region.

EcoPeace Middle East was founded in 1994 as the first cross-border environmental organisation in the Middle East. It aims to join forces and better include environmental issues in regional development. Numerous campaigns, research and regional development measures in the Jordan Valley show noticeable positive changes. EcoPeace has received several international awards for their work, including the Green Globe Award, the Eurosolar Award, and the Energy Globe Award.

**Laura Maeso Velasco** is an environmental scientist and has been part of the GNF since 2017. She is working on the topics of drinking water, water treatment, as well as protecting biodiversity.



### Joint projects around the Jordan River for water body conservation and energy security

EcoPeace and the GNF have been working together successfully for more than ten years. The development of a so-called Master Plan for the Jordan Valley is just one example of this successful collaboration. This project was funded by the EU for the period of 2012-2015 and resulted in a commitment to increased environmental protection from all municipalities in the Jordan Valley. At the end of 2021, we successfully completed another complex project in Jordan. As part of this, a photovoltaic system was built for a wastewater treatment plant in Tal Al-Mantah, which covers 90 percent of the electricity demand. In addition, new equipment was provided to analyse water quality. We also built a pilot plant-based wastewater treatment facility in the Jordan EcoPark, which demonstrates how wastewater can be treated cost-effectively using innovative natural methods. All these measures have convinced local actors and political decision-makers. Prince Hassan ibn Talal of Jordan and his wife also visited the project to see the measures on site. The project was supported and funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Wilo-Foundation and Kärcher.

We are now continuing our cooperation with EcoPeace Palestine in a new project supported by the BMZ, the Foundation Chances for Children, and Kärcher. A solar and a water treatment plant provide energy and ensure environmental quality at three schools in Palestine and thus improve the educational conditions for 2,600 students in the Jordan Valley.



[www.globalnature.org/en/wastewater-treatment-plant-jordan](http://www.globalnature.org/en/wastewater-treatment-plant-jordan)

## INTERVIEW

“Our partnership with the GNF has helped us get closer to what we envisioned for the region in both theory and practice



**Yana Abu Taleb** (Left)  
Director EcoPeace Middle East Jordan

**Nada Majdalani** (Right)  
Director EcoPeace Middle East Palestine

Yana Abu Taleb and Nada Majdalani in conversation with Laura Maeso Velasco.

**You are based in a complicated region, both environmentally and socio-politically. What challenges do you see for the region in which EcoPeace works?**

Many! The instability of the region complicates decision-making processes because there are many competing demands, both at national and regional level. Finding a good balance between urgent needs in an area of conflict and long-term sustainable solutions requires a dynamic approach to promoting both peace and sustainability, and realistic expectations of what can be achieved in this situation.

**In 2021, you presented your plan for the "Green-Blue Deal", a strategy for the region that focuses on educational programmes, increased use of solar energy and restoration of the Jordan River. Despite the challenges you mentioned, is there any progress to report on?**

Yes, there is. An important milestone was a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Jordan and Israel at the end of 2021, which enabled EcoPeace's collaboration with international partners to set up solar panels in Area C of the West Bank, which enhances water supply and sanitation in the Gaza strip. The electricity will be routed through the Israeli grid. This is also a step towards resolving

the urgent issue regarding Palestinian water rights. Another goal is to make more water available in the Lower Jordan Valley through the use of sustainable desalination technologies.

**EcoPeace and the GNF have been working together for ten years now. Is there anything you would like to highlight from this decade?**

We are very grateful for the successes we have accomplished together with the GNF. The publication of the first Master Plan for Sustainable Development in the Jordan Valley continues to be an important reference for solutions in the region. Currently, EcoPeace is establishing a trust fund in cooperation with the World Bank to finance and implement selected projects from the Master Plan. The joint project in Jordan furthered the use of solar energy. We are now looking forward to the third joint project in Palestine with a focus on solar energy. The partnership with the GNF has been instrumental in getting closer to the peaceful future we had envisioned for the region, in both theory and practice.

The Green Filter built by the GNF and EcoPeace Middle East in Jordan EcoPark.



# BUSINESS & BIODIVERSITY

**Businesses can make an important contribution to the preservation of natural habitats. This is not always possible without cost, but investing in the environment pays off economically in the long run, as the GNF demonstrates with their projects.**

Richard Schreiner from Kirchheimer Hof is committed to biodiversity and insect conservation at the landscape level with his farm in our insect-responsible Bliesgau region.

## TOWARDS BIODIVERSITY-FRIENDLY BUSINESS IN GERMANY AND WORLDWIDE

### Stefan Hörmann

How can we combine business and the protection of biodiversity? The GNF has been working towards answering this question for 15 years through the Business and Biodiversity programme. At the beginning of 2022, the World Economic Forum in Davos published its annual Global Risk Report. This report defines the failure of climate mitigation measures and extreme weather events as the greatest global risks of the next ten years. The loss of biodiversity ranks third, ahead of social issues. The experts rated this risk very high because there is still a lack of serious efforts to protect biodiversity.

### Insect-responsible regions

In three regions across Germany, we are working together with stakeholders from agriculture, nature conservation, local communities and private companies on insect conservation measures in landscapes, with support from the EU LIFE programme. Individual biodiversity action plans already exist for 20 farmers, which include a variety of measures to protect insects and habitats; whether that be flower strips, old grass strips or the establishment of orchards. All participating farmers have already started to implement measures.

### Biodiversity in global agricultural supply chains

In a joint global project with GIZ, our Business and Biodiversity working group illustrates how companies can support initiatives in Colombia and Ecuador that demonstrably improve biodiversity in the cultivation of coffee, cocoa, bananas and palm oil. The aim is for food traders and processing plants to source raw materials from plantations and cooperatives that practice biodiversity-friendly cultivation in accordance with clear criteria. One example of such a product is a chocolate spread made from cocoa and palm oil, which are cultivated without destroying valuable natural habitats. The focus is rather on protecting and restoring ecosystems.



### Fairtrade Rubber

Natural rubber can be found in many products we use on a daily basis, such as tyres, household gloves, fitness bands or flip-flops. In terms of quantity, the largest consumer is the automotive industry. Rubber production in Asia is clearly linked to forest loss. Small farmers who tap rubber often live in poverty. This is the reason why the GNF has been part of the Fair Rubber association since 2017 and has been coordinating the main office since 2021. The aims of Fair Rubber e.V. are to improve the working and living conditions of primary rubber producers by applying the principles of Fair Trade, and to support the environmentally friendly production of natural rubber.

Somkid Chargen has been a rubber farmer in the Surat Thani region of Thailand for 36 years. He benefits from the Fair Rubber bonus, as does his son Sharon, who produces the rubber using organic farming methods.



### Stefan Hörmann

is an administration scientist and leads the Business & Biodiversity department at the GNF, as well as our office in Bonn. He has been working with the GNF for the protection of biodiversity for more than 20 years now.

## UBI – MOTIVATING BUSINESSES FOR BIODIVERSITY

Stefan Hörmann



Bringing nature conservation and business together: The GNF was represented at the dialogue forum "Business and Biodiversity" in Berlin in June 2022.

As part of the new project Unternehmen Biologische Vielfalt – UBi, the GNF supports companies in the environmentally friendly use of resources. However, since different sectors have very different frameworks and production conditions, it is necessary to develop not only cross-sectoral but also sector-specific instruments for the protection of biological diversity. For example, the supply chain of the fashion industry is completely different from that of the construction industry.

Over the coming years, the GNF and the Lake Constance Foundation, together with the Biodiversity in Good Company Initiative, the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce Service GmbH, and the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production, will aim to make the conservation of biodiversity a global possibility as quickly as possible. Financial support for this comes from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funds from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).

### Many good reasons for managing biodiversity

There are many incentives for companies to commit to the protection of biodiversity. Only on healthy soils can agricultural raw materials still be cultivated sustainably in 20 years' time. Customers are increasingly paying attention to the ecological responsibility of companies, especially when it comes to animal welfare and nature conservation. Where economic success is a result of environmentally damaging practices, companies also increasingly lose their attraction as employers for motivated, qualified staff. Additionally, the legislative requirements are growing. In future, economic actors will not only have to prove that their business does not impact on biodiversity, but they should actively contribute to the restoration of ecosystems.

Ideally, more and more companies will look at the issue of biodiversity in the context of climate change. One important approach here is nature-based solutions for climate protection. Green roofs on company buildings not only create habitats for animals and plants, but also promote a natural temperature balance in favour of lower costs for heating and cooling at the workplace.



[www.globalnature.org/en/themes---projects/business---biodiversity/unternehmen-biologische-vielfalt---ubi](http://www.globalnature.org/en/themes---projects/business---biodiversity/unternehmen-biologische-vielfalt---ubi)

## IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL DEFORESTATION, OUR ELAN PROJECT HAS BEEN FRUITFUL

Steffen Kemper

Supply chains that are free of deforestation are a hot topic. Since the EU Commission's proposal for a regulation against imported deforestation, the issue is no longer only attracting interest among the so-called "front-runners", i.e. companies that already have strong voluntary commitments and know their supply chains and trading partners inside out, but also among those who have not yet dealt with the issue. Opting out is no longer an option. It is now time for confident action and preparation for the upcoming due diligence obligations. Since 2021, the GNF has been offering companies support on this as part of the project "ELAN Deforestation-Free Supply Chains – An Online Atlas for Corporate Sustainability".

### Counteracting a Europe-wide problem

Huge areas of forest are lost every year due to the cultivation and extraction of so-called risk commodities, particularly in the Global South. The production of agricultural raw materials is the main driver of global deforestation, especially cattle farming and the production of palm oil, soybeans, cocoa, rubber, coffee and wood fibre. The conversion of forest land into pastures for cattle farming causes by far the greatest deforestation globally. Between 2008 and 2018, almost 22 million hectares were destroyed for pasture creations alone, which is more than the area lost due to all other mentioned raw material cultivation together. EU countries are sadly at the forefront of deforestation. Imports are responsible for almost one fifth of the global deforestation risk related to the raw materials mentioned.

### A comprehensive online portal for businesses

The EU regulation on deforestation-free supply chains as well as our planned online atlas took time to come about. As part of the ELAN project, the GNF and the tropical rain forest foundation OroVerde worked tirelessly throughout 2022 to implement an informative digital platform. As of 2024, this platform will offer valuable information and support – espe-

cially to small and medium-sized companies. We have already created a variety of content for the platform, including fact sheets on raw materials and information on certifications and standards. Additionally, we have created a questionnaire for companies to assess status quo and carried out an analysis of ten selected anti-deforestation tools.



With its online atlas, the GNF supports companies in shedding light on the aspects surrounding the issue of deforestation.

The aim of the ELAN project team is to prepare the information that is important for companies according to their needs and offer it in an intuitive portal to access when necessary. In addition to the technical content, the team has also worked intensively on the right structure for the atlas and consulted companies to find out their information needs. A successful start was a workshop held in June 2022, which was attended by 30 employees from 27 companies, illustrating that the topic of deforestation-free supply chains is now receiving a great deal of attention.



[www.globalnature.org/en/deforestation-free-supply-chains](http://www.globalnature.org/en/deforestation-free-supply-chains)



**Steffen Kemper**

holds an M.Sc. in agricultural sciences and started working with GNF as a programme manager in the Business & Biodiversity department in 2021.

elan!

## FOOD FOR BIODIVERSITY – A STRONG ALLIANCE FOR SPECIES RICHNESS



### Dr Viktor Konitzer

In March 2021, the Food for Biodiversity association was founded and recognized as a non-profit organization. Since then, it has grown to include 26 members and has picked up full speed. Representatives of companies, associations and standards from the food industry have set an ambitious goal, which consists of making a substantial contribution towards the protection of biodiversity and take a stand against species extinction, thus helping to overcome the greatest crises of the 21st century.

The agricultural industry is highly dependent on the environment. Without biodiversity there is no fertile soil, without water or pollination there is no harvest, without microclimates there is no compensation for

increasingly extreme weather events. But, while the trend is alarming, it is not too late to reverse it. By making the right decisions, the agricultural and food sectors can help to preserve biodiversity and habitats for the long term.

The promotion, restoration and conservation of biodiversity are at the heart of Food for Biodiversity's work. Food producers, traders, standards and others involved in the food industry, as well as scientific institutions and environmental organisations come together to reach one common goal. They are committed to implementing measures that embed the protection of biodiversity in the food industry and the associated supply chains. Part of this includes testing comprehensive base sets of biodiversity criteria for various agricultural commodities within pilot projects.

### INTERVIEW

“*We aim to be recognised as the voice of biodiversity*”



### Ralph Dejas

holds a diploma in geography and is a programme manager in GNF's Sustainable Development unit. Additionally, he coordi-

nates the Food for Biodiversity association. Dr Viktor Konitzer talked to him about the association's work.

### A lot is already being done to protect biodiversity. Why do we need a new organisation, Ralph?

That is true. There are already numerous very good initiatives and projects. Politicians have also recognized the urgency and acknowledged that something has to change in terms of species conservation. Over the past 25 years,

the GNF has also carried out many projects with a focus on biodiversity and worked with many stakeholders from the food sector and standards. Now was the right time for us to institutionalize this network by founding an association. The aim is to make our voice heard even more and get more involved politically.

### What exactly does this association do?

The association's board consists of four members that have quarterly meetings. Of course, a lot of coordination between the various members was necessary at the beginning. There are three working groups (WGs) in which members can participate. The Pilot Projects WG focusses on agricultural raw materials and framework conditions relevant to biodiversity. This working group evaluates which proposals from members will be implemented in pilot projects. The Communication & Awareness group focusses on internal and external communication.

The main focus here is on the exchange and dissemination of information, as we have the impression that there is still too little knowledge about biodiversity among the general public. We want to help change that. In the third working group, Monitoring, we focus on the collection of data on biodiversity, because the monitoring of implemented biodiversity measures is crucial for their success.

### What are the future plans of Food for Biodiversity?

Food for Biodiversity is a strong alliance. We already have 26 members and aim to grow further. That is why we are in talks with additional companies and associations and are continuously developing our expertise. The findings from completed pilot projects will be incorporated into a basic set of biodiversity criteria. Our association aims to be recognised as a voice for this important topic. The aim is that our work results in an improvement in standards, and that findings are taken into account in revisions to guidelines or legislation. In the founding year, we have already organized two very well attended conferences

and plan to hold more at regular intervals. Our members disseminate information on this topic, as well as our solutions on many occasions. This leads to important multiplication effects.



[www.globalnature.org/en/food-for-biodiversity-association](http://www.globalnature.org/en/food-for-biodiversity-association)



A change is taking place: In some orchards, special seedings now provide the insect world with flower food where previously no "noxious weeds" were tolerated.



The Fulda conference "Biodiversity in the Food Trade" in October 2021 with 60 participants was an important signal for the promotion of biodiversity in the food sector.

# NATURE CONSERVATION

The meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held in 2021 in Marseille showed that our community-based projects are models of success. They are projects of hope that, together with local people, help to conserve valuable biodiversity.

Unique nature at Lago de Atitlán in Guatemala: Together with regional partners, the GNF department of Nature Conservation is committed to finding solutions to the deforestation problem that threatens it.

## GNF-STYLE NATURE CONSERVATION: EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES TO GREAT EFFECT

### Dr Thomas Schaefer

Due to the pandemic, we were unable to visit our partners in northern Mongolia and the Caribbean for two years. Project support trips unfortunately had to be postponed again and again. As of 2022, partner meetings in these regions are finally possible again. Guatemala, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Mongolia were the first destinations we could go to. We were very happy to see that all partners were well. We were delighted to find that nearly all measures could be implemented as planned despite COVID. Our friends around the globe restored nearly 200 hectares of mangroves and tropical forests during the pandemic and trained hundreds of people to sustainably use ecosystems. These projects are slowly coming to an end, and we plan to launch follow-up activities.

Unfortunately, large-scale habitat restoration projects fail all too often. Projects that involve local people, on the other hand, are more often successful. This was the conclusion of several panel discussions at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) meeting held in 2021 in Marseille, confirming our strategy of relying on the knowledge and skills of our local partners. Many billions of euros are available from governments, large foundations and companies for habitat restoration. The aim must be to use this money more efficiently by involving local people at the core of initiatives.

### Success through Biodiversity Action Plans

Some of the methods that we established with many of our partners years ago are still considered innovative and sustainable today. This applies to mangrove restoration projects, as well as biodiversity checks and Biodiversity Action Plans. Of the latter, we have now implemented more than 500 with companies in various sectors. In Europe, Central America, Thailand, West Africa and India, the use of these action plans leads to improved biodiversity management and also reaches large agricultural areas via the companies' supply chains.



Successful collaboration with sustainability standards in the food sector also has a major leverage effect. Currently, the so-called Biodiversity AddOn of the GlobalG.A.P certification system is in the pilot phase and will then be available to more than 100,000 agricultural businesses. We have also been able to have a significant positive impact on the criteria of many standards independently of add-ons. Our greatest success is the first measurable improvement in the Sustainably Grown Standard (SGS). The SGS is administered by the U.S. state of California and enables us to reach corn farmers in the Great Plains of the USA for the first time.

You can't do it without partners and local know-how: Alena Hayer and David Marchetti with colleagues from ecoDevshilt and a waste collection vehicle near Lake Hovsgol, Mongolia.

## BIODIVERSITY CHECKS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE CARIBBEAN

Laura Maeso Velasco



The dream locations of the Caribbean correspond to the vacation ideal of many tourists. The GNF wants to make sure that the destinations also convince in terms of sustainability.

Unfortunately, the expansion of tourist infrastructure in countries of the Global South often leads to the destruction of large natural areas. In the Dominican Republic, coral reefs and beaches are suffering alongside mangrove forests. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of booked overnight stays worldwide fell by 73 percent. The Caribbean nation saw a drop from 7.1 million visitors in 2019 to 1.9 million in 2020, which was associated with loss of income and jobs. The impact of the pandemic has highlighted problems that have been known for a long time, explains our Head of Nature Conservation Dr Thomas Schaefer. He also says that travel in general is nothing bad but that we need to re-evaluate how we travel. The tourism industry now can take advantage of the upswing after several waves of COVID-19, to enhance ecological and social aspects of products, such as those located in the Dominican Republic. The enhancement and recovery of tourism, while practicing environmental and biodiversity protection, should be used as a lever for local sustainable development.

### A new opportunity for tourism in the Dominican Republic

In response to this, the GNF has revised their "Biodiversity Check Tourism Destination" for the Dominican Republic and added various aspects to the criteria. The main focus is on circular economy (waste management and recycling, alternatives to plastic, measures against food waste, energy efficiency, efficient water use), creating sustainable food systems supported by tourism, and increasing the resili-

ence to the impacts of climate change at the destinations. As part of the project in which the GNF developed this Biodiversity Check, we also offer training modules for tourism advisors, destination managers or staff of NGOs and ministries. These modules encourage the involved parties at the vacation destinations to rethink and consider sustainability, especially regarding biodiversity, as well as climate change mitigation and protection of resources. We are convinced that the "Biodiversity Check Tourism Destination" will become an important tool for tourism development in the Dominican Republic in the coming years.

### Biodiversity Check

By offering this function-orientated Biodiversity Check, the GNF helps various companies analyse the importance of biodiversity for their business. Based on this analysis, a biodiversity action plan can then be developed, which identifies measures to improve corporate biodiversity management. The Biodiversity Check Tourism is part of the GNF initiative Business and Biodiversity, which was launched in 2011 and comprises numerous projects to raise awareness among companies and provide practical methods and tools that facilitate the integration of biodiversity into corporate strategies.



[www.globalnature.org/en/themes---projects/nature-conservation/references/transfoming-tourism](http://www.globalnature.org/en/themes---projects/nature-conservation/references/transfoming-tourism)

## FREEING A NATURAL PARADISE FROM WASTE

Alena Hayer

In the summer of 2022, David Marchetti and I had the opportunity to travel to Central Asia and visit one of the most pristine places we had ever seen. Lake Hovsgol is considered one of the oldest and cleanest lakes in the world. This lake is completely embedded in permafrost and freezes over completely for six long months every year when the air temperature at the lake drops to minus 40 °C. The locals even use it as a road at this time of the year. Lake Hovsgol is home to traditional nomadic families who have lived here for centuries.

### Lake Hovsgol in Mongolia: big attraction and big challenges

In the summer months, life returns to the lake and with temperatures around 30 °Celsius, it becomes a hotspot for national and international tourism. Visitors experience the beauty of the lake, the vastness of the tundra and the silence of the Siberian larch forests, they go horseback riding and hiking along the lakeshore. The number of tourists last recorded reached up to 140,000 per season before the Corona pandemic curtailed travel. Both professional tourist camps and the "ger camps" run by local nomad families, where you can stay overnight in traditional yurts called "Gers", benefit from the upturn.

### Targeted measures for less waste – and with the support of the embassy

The measures start right at the entrance of the national park, where we could observe one of the project activities. The initiative ecoDevshilt distributes rubbish bags for a deposit of 5,000 Mongolian Tugrik (approx. 1.50 Euro), which tourists have to bring back to a collection point. This not only helps ecoDevshilt to dispose of the waste without transport costs, it also raises awareness in visitors. The impressive commitment and creativity shown by our partners – who are all women – during the following days in the park makes us optimistic that the establishment of a waste management system for Lake Hovsgol by the end of 2023 is realistic.

Before our departure from Mongolia, we spoke to Deputy Ambassador Regina Rutenberg at

the German Embassy in Ulaanbaatar. In 2021, Ambassador Jörn Rosenberg had already visited Lake Hovsgol and our project, which is funded by the BMZ. It is important for us to continue to communicate closely with the German government and to demonstrate together how significant the implemented measures are, thus contributing to the protection of one of the most beautiful lakes in the world.



[www.globalnature.org/en/hovsgol-national-park-management](http://www.globalnature.org/en/hovsgol-national-park-management)



Toilogt, a tourist camp at picturesque Lake Hovsgol.



**Alena Hayer**

is a geocologist and geographer and supports the GNF since 2021 as a programme manager in the areas of Nature Conservation as well as Living Lakes & Water.

## MEXICO AND GUATEMALA: TWO LAKES AS GATEWAYS TO LATIN AMERICA

David Marchetti



David Marchetti with colleagues from the Instituto Corazón de la Tierra at the tree nursery in Mezcala, Mexico, ...

One of the great privileges of project work at the GNF is the opportunity to travel to remote places and see the impacts of our joint commitment first hand. My project trip to Latin America in 2022 took me to Mexico and Guatemala, where we are working with some long-standing Living Lakes partners to preserve essential natural resources.

### Lago de Chapala: Too little water for the people around the lake

In Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico, I met with the staff of our partner organisation Instituto Corazón de la Tierra. From their offices, they coordinate activities, including measures at Lake Chapala, the largest lake in the country. Together we drove from Guadalajara to the Sierra de Mezcala to see our project activities on site. The project is being implemented at Chapala in the communal area of the two indigenous villages Los Guayabos and Mezcala. In many communities around Lake Chapala, disrupted groundwater accumulation leads to limited access to clean drinking water. Large-scale deforestation of precious primary forest also contributes to serious negative changes in the regional water balance.

The indigenous residents are already among the poorest people in Mexico. Their living conditions are precarious, and the lack of water at the lake exacerbates the situation. It is a vicious circle: lack of resources leads to the use of inefficient agricultural techniques and overgrazing, and ultimately to a dependence on agrochemicals. This in turn lowers soil fertility and increases production costs. Ultimately, this reduces the income of the people in the region.

Our partner organisation Instituto Corazón de la Tierra is implementing various measures to protect the precious soil in the Lake Chapala watershed in close cooperation with local parties. The construction of terraces reduces the progressive erosion and enables the reforestation of the area with native plants. The community of Mezcala is also participating. It has set up a tree nursery as part of the project, which plays a central role in the reforestation. Instituto Corazón de la Tierra trains local farmers in more environmentally friendly cultivation techniques and in the Milpa system, thereby making them more resilient to the effects of climate change and diversifying production.

### Lago de Atitlán: diverse activities around the volcanic idyll

More than 95 percent indigenous people of Mayan background live in the province of Sololá at Lake Atitlán in Guatemala, which I was able to visit next. Despite the unique nature at the picturesque lake in the crater of a former supervolcano, the situation on the ground is very difficult. The local economy is mainly based on agricultural products, but these have declined sharply in recent decades. Reasons for this are the intensive use of agrochemicals and monoculture cultivation on local plots, resulting in soil degradation. The loss of traditional agricultural knowledge also plays a role in the decline of the regional agricultural sector. This is exactly where our project activities come in, which we implement in Guatemala together with our partner Asociación Vivamos Mejor. Together we are

reintroducing the traditional agroforestry system mentioned above, the so-called Milpa, which dates back to the Maya. Basically, it is about cultivating different plant species on the same plot of land, e.g. in home gardens, in coexistence. The main crops used are maize, beans, broad beans, güicoy squash and fig-leaf squash (chilacayote). The Milpa system is complemented by various edible herbs, medicinal plants, fruit and fruit-bearing shrubs and trees. Due to its diversity, the Milpa system offers smallholder farmers an opportunity to increase the resilience of their cultivation against the effects of climate change. It also helps prevent soil degradation and thus secures food for farming families.

During my stay in Guatemala, our friends from the Asociación Vivamos Mejor introduced me to an impressive variety of initiatives in which hugely committed people are working to preserve the unique nature of their homeland. I could expand on the measures to avoid deforestation, creative techniques of mushroom cultivation as a supplementary agricultural product, or the commitment of the young fire fighters that our project provided with new equipment to support them in their life-threatening work at the end of the dry season. However, one aspect particularly impressed me: beekeeping.

I visited a local apiary run by the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Apícola la Miel (ADIAM, "Association for the Integral Development of Beekeeping and Honey"). Here I was even allowed to get involved myself. Our host, Mrs Bernabela, explained to me the huge potential beekeeping and honey production has in providing local communities with additional income. The Asociación Vivamos Mejor trains newcomers, supports beekeepers with modern technology and helps them sell the honey directly to consumers. Mrs. Bernabela now maintains 35 hives that help feed her family. It is a showcase example of how versatile and at the same time successful project work in nature conservation can be.



[www.globalnature.org/en/roots-of-life](http://www.globalnature.org/en/roots-of-life)



[www.globalnature.org/en/agriculture-guatemala](http://www.globalnature.org/en/agriculture-guatemala)



... and in full gear at the beekeeping in our project in Guatemala.



#### David Marchetti

joined GNF in 2019 to advance our work as a programme manager in the areas of Nature Conservation and Living Lakes & Water.



## NICE THAT AT LEAST YOU WERE HERE – YOU MADE MY DAY

1.60 meters of Drinking Cups for Drinking Water: Anja Kutzke with a small part of the donations that fans of Hannover 96 leave at the stands in the stadium during a home game of their "Reds".



**One success story to share is the initiative "Drinking Cups for Drinking Water", through which Hannover 96 football fans have been supporting GNF projects in Africa since 2009. The simple idea is that visitors can donate their cup deposit at home games of the "Reds". More than 450,000 Euros have been collected since the start of the initiative. The money has supported and continues to support water projects in Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa and Ivory Coast. Clean water on site ensures the health of the people in the village communities and gives many girls, who previously had to walk long distances to the nearest water point, time to play and go to school. This success is only possible through the long-term commitment of many volunteers. Anja Kutzke is one of them and has been leading the initiative in Hannover for several years. GNF Communication Manager Dr Viktor Konitzer had a chat with her.**

**"Not only on good days, when the sun shines", are the lyrics of the club anthem "Alte Liebe". This is also a fitting slogan for you and the other volunteers who have been**

**taking every opportunity to collect cup deposits in the stadium for years. What motivates you?**

We work as a team. Our circle of helpers is also an extended circle of friends. Most of them have been with us for a long time. You meet nice people, both in the group of volunteers collecting cups and the people donating cups. We have interesting conversations and are supporting a good cause. Unfortunately, Hannover 96 is not always so strong in terms of football that you get your money's worth in the stadium – even as a fan. But it's always a lot of fun to create added value beyond the sport with our campaign.

**Thrilling matches or goal-less games in sub-zero temperatures: Is there a connection between the gameplay or result, and the number of donated cups?**

Sure, if it rains, it's cold and Hannover 96 plays badly, people drink less, don't feel like it anymore and go home earlier. Conversely, when we win, you feel a positive boost, the people are euphoric and are happy to donate. By the way, if 96 had a really bad day, we sometimes hear a particular chorus in the stands: "It's nice that at least you were there – you made my day." It's a wonderful feeling to be such an anchor for people with our campaign.

**How can "Drinking Cups for Drinking Water" be classified? Is your campaign unique or are there comparable initiatives in other stadiums, at other clubs?**

FC St. Pauli from Hamburg has long supported the great "Viva con Agua" campaign. However, I still see our initiative as a pioneer, especially with regard to the use of the deposit system. We have already supported SV Darmstadt 98 in establishing a system for returnable cups in the stadium, whereby the deposit can also be donated to a good cause. Delegations from other clubs have been to visit, and we have demonstrated what our work in the stadium actually looks like. Of course, there are other projects in Hannover that are also supported by Hannover 96 in which we are not directly

involved, but which are also very important, such as the refugee aid or support of the homeless.

**You don't just work in the stadium but also support our drinking water projects with other activities. What else do you do?**

We take part in charity runs, such as the runs here in Hanover at the Maschsee. We take part in marathons and various other runs, both to collect donations and simply draw attention to the fact that the Drinking Cups for Drinking Water campaign exists. A lot of people approach us, especially when we are running away from home asking about the drinking water initiatives. We have been to Dublin, Budapest, and Amsterdam, and people are always interested in who we are and what we do. This leads to wonderful conversations that draw attention to our cause. During the COVID-19 lockdown, we also went plogging, i.e. collecting rubbish in nature together with many helpers.

**Has your team ever been to visit the project area?**

In 2019, we flew to South Africa at our own expense to see the effect of the drinking cup donations. We were scheduled to play a football match against a team from the Gumbi communities, where the project is based. However, there was obviously a communication error because the Gumbi players trained as if they were possessed because they thought the Hannover 96 team from the second Bundesliga was coming. But it was us, the fans, who came! They were a bit disappointed at first, but in the end it turned out to be a wonderful day. The match was a lot of fun, even though the Gumbi players gave us a good beating. Overall, we received an incredibly warm welcome. The people there are really grateful that people from Germany support their interests.

**For us at GNF it is a huge gift that there is this connection between our projects and Drinking Cups for Drinking Water – can you say something about how it came about?**

At the beginning, there was a CSR project that the tour operator TUI, at that time the main sponsor of Hannover 96, wanted to implement in 2009. TUI made contact with the GNF, whose



drinking water projects were to benefit from the cup donations. Actually, the campaign was only meant for one, maybe two match days, but it went so well that we thought we could run it for a whole season. Now we have been involved for more than thirteen years and people are still supporting us. After a few years, TUI left and I took over the management. The Deputy Executive Director of the GNF, Stefan Hörmann, who joined the Rote Kurve fan association at that time, is more or less part of the family. He is a fixed runner in the marathon relay. Project partners became friends thanks to Drinking Cups for Drinking Water.



[www.globalnature.org/en/drinking-cups-for-drinking-water](http://www.globalnature.org/en/drinking-cups-for-drinking-water)

Two women with a pump financed by donations in the village of Dantomba in Ivory Coast.

Manuela Uhde

### Fundraising

Smaller foundations without a membership structure and without substantial assets are particularly dependent on donations and grants to finance their valuable project work. In addition to grants from the public sector, especially from the two federal ministries BMUV and BMZ, private donations and grants from the private sector form the basis of financing GNF's measures and projects. Without this essential support, the work of the GNF would not be possible to this extent. Therefore, we would like to specifically express our gratitude to all the people and institutions

that have supported us in the past year and those who continue to support us.

### Use of funds

In 2021, our team of 24 employees implemented around 30 projects in more than 25 countries around the world. Our work focused on the central challenges of our time, including the protection of biodiversity, sustainable management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the preservation of basic needs, such as healthy food and clean water. We are not afraid to seek dialogue with companies in order to achieve these socio-political goals. We would like to thank all our project partners within and outside of our Living Lakes network that help us fulfil these tasks.

### Transparency

Our annual report provides detailed information about the development of our project work and finances. We have voluntarily submitted to an audit of our annual financial statement by an independent auditor. Both a profit and loss account and a balance sheet are prepared in accordance with the German Commercial Code and foundation law. The preservation of the foundation's assets and the use of the foundation's funds in accordance with the statutes are essential criteria. The audit results are documented in a detailed audit report and disclosed to the responsible authorities. We also comply with the publication requirements of the Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft (ITZ) by making our activity report and statutes available on our website. Current donors receive our annual report by post. Of course, the relevant documents can also be obtained via download at any time, and the GNF can also be contacted directly.

One of the GNF donation mailings 2021



**Manuela Uhde** has been an employee of the Global Nature Fund since 1998 and has helped shape the foundation since its beginnings. She is the head of the GNF's Finance & Administration department and is the contact person for private donors.

## WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR SPONSORS AND COOPERATION PARTNERS:

### Public Funds – Germany



### European Union



### Other European Donors / Supporters



### Foundations / Associations



### Business Cooperations



### Standards



### Further Cooperation Partners



This year again, we have worked with a variety of project partners around the world in a spirit of trust to achieve our goals for international nature conservation and environmental protection.

Learn more about our partners here:  
[www.globalnature.org/en/cooperations/project-partners](http://www.globalnature.org/en/cooperations/project-partners)

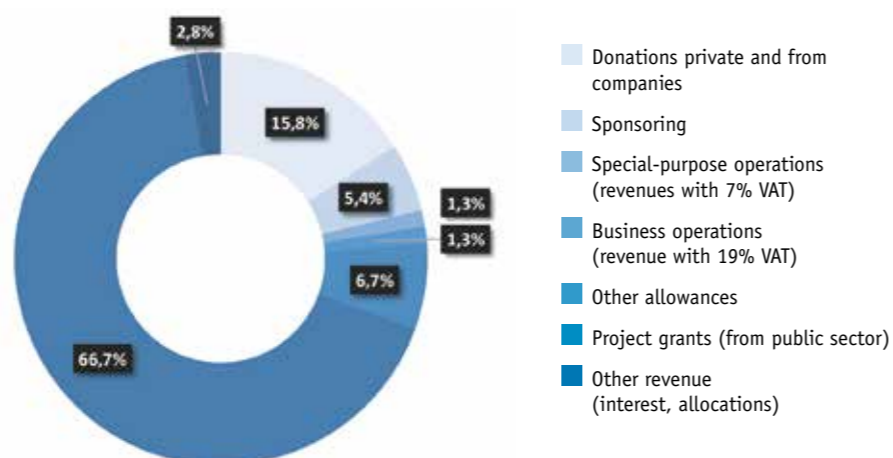


## PRESENTING THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

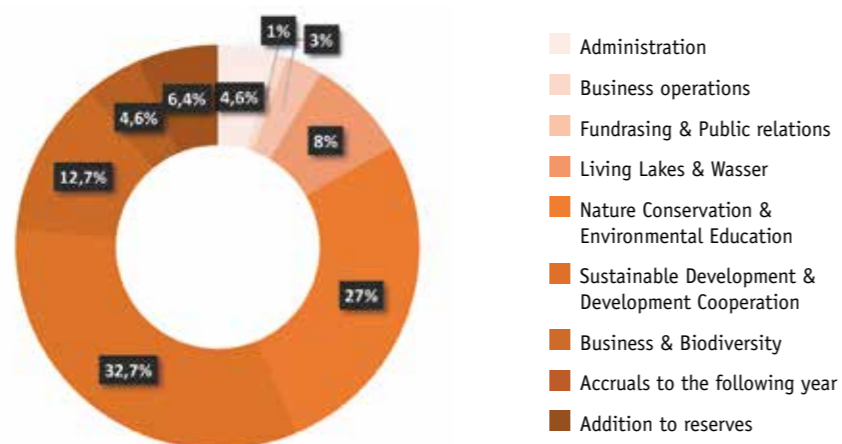
### Explanatory note on the fiscal year

For the fiscal year of 2021, the Global Nature Fund received a full detailed certificate from the independent auditing company Koch & Eicken GmbH. The results of the audit are presented in the audit report on the end of year accounts, as well as the explanatory report.

The total balance on the 31st of December 2021 was 6,528,580.43 Euros (5,028,252.17 Euros in the previous year). The income according to the profit and loss statement was 3,451,144.75 Euros. There is thus an excess of 378,921.85 Euros (excess in the previous year was 339,656.72 Euros). After calculating the necessary accruals of 157,749.39 Euros, the addition to the reserve funds thus amounts to 221,172.46 Euros (withdrawals from the reserve funds in the previous year were 227,566.59 Euros). The free reserves on the 31st of December 2021 thus amount to 596,010.29 Euros (373,456.61 Euros in the previous year). The overall foundation balance remained unchanged at 437,638.04 Euros.



Budget 2021 – Revenues	Euros	Percent
Donations private and from companies	546.601,14	15,8
Sponsoring	185.650,00	5,4
Special-purpose operations (revenues with 7% VAT)	44.631,02	1,3
Business operations (revenues with 19% VAT)	46.405,25	1,3
Other allowances	229.815,90	6,7
Project grants (from public sector)	2.301.754,86	66,7
Other revenue (interest, allocations)	96.286,58	2,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.451.144,75</b>	<b>100,0</b>



Budget 2021 – Expenses	Euros	Percent
Administration	159.764,35	4,6
Business operations	33.169,71	1,0
Fundraising & Public relations	102.451,83	3,0
Living Lakes & Water	280.540,55	8,0
Nature Conservation & Environmental Education	930.093,55	27,0
Sustainable Development & Development Cooperation	1.128.186,89	32,7
Business & Biodiversity	438.016,02	12,7
Accruals to the following year	157.749,39	4,6
Addition to reserves	221.172,46	6,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.451.144,75</b>	<b>100,0</b>

## BALANCE SHEET 12/31/2021

ASSETS	12/31/2021	Previous year
<b>A. FIXED ASSETS</b>		
<b>I. Tangible Assets</b>		
Operating and Office Equipment	394,08 €	1.775,30 €
<b>II. Financial Assets</b>		
Financial investments	306,78 €	306,78 €
<b>B. CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>I. Stocks</b>		
Ongoing projects	4.599.506,94 €	3.127.566,59 €
<b>II. Receivables and other assets</b>		
- Receivables from deliveries and services	112.376,09 €	10.150,00 €
- Other receivables and assets	70.136,87 €	539.905,50 €
	<b>182.512,96 €</b>	<b>550.055,50 €</b>
<b>III. Cash on hand and bank balances</b>		
Cash on hand	98,45 €	278,78 €
Sight deposits	1.282.774,22 €	348.231,80 €
Time deposits	453.433,93 €	993.236,85 €
	<b>1.736.306,60 €</b>	<b>1.341.747,43 €</b>
<b>C. ACCRUED ITEMS</b>	9.553,07 €	6.800,57 €
<b>TOTAL OF ASSETS</b>	<b>6.528.580,43 €</b>	<b>5.028.252,17 €</b>

*Marion Hammerl*

Marion Hammerl  
President

Radolfzell, 20 July 2022

LIABILITIES	12/31/2021	Previous year
<b>A. EQUITY CAPITAL</b>		
<b>I. Foundation Capital</b>		
Endowment Capital	86.919,62 €	86.919,62 €
Increase in Endowment Capital	350.718,42 €	350.718,42 €
	<b>437.638,04 €</b>	<b>437.638,04 €</b>
<b>II. Reserves</b>		
Free Reserves Balance carried forward on 01/01/2021	373.456,61 €	601.023,20 €
Addition/Withdrawal	221.172,46 €	-227.566,59 €
Release of longer-term restricted reserve	1.381,22 €	0,00 €
<b>Balance 12/31/2021</b>	<b>596.010,29 €</b>	<b>373.456,61 €</b>
<b>B. NOT YET CONSUMED DONATIONS AND ALLOWANCES</b>		
- Not yet used donations and allowances	0,00 €	0,00 €
- Long-term donations and allowances	394,08 €	1.775,30 €
	<b>394,08 €</b>	<b>1.775,30 €</b>
<b>C. PROVISIONS</b>		
- Provisions for pensions and similar obligations	0,00 €	0,00 €
- Tax provisions	2.101,00 €	0,00 €
- Other provisions	38.555,01 €	54.633,90 €
	<b>40.656,01 €</b>	<b>54.633,90 €</b>
<b>D. LIABILITIES</b>		
- Advance payments received on projects	5.300.360,18 €	3.716.355,84 €
- Liabilities from deliveries and services	17.844,03 €	10.263,52 €
- Liabilities from allowances	0,00 €	0,00 €
- Liabilities from donations and grants not yet consumed for the intended purpose	54.422,63 €	8.737,23 €
- Other liabilities	81.255,17 €	425.391,73 €
	<b>5.453.882,01 €</b>	<b>4.160.748,32 €</b>
<b>E. ACCRUED ITEMS</b>	0,00 €	0,00 €
<b>TOTAL OF LIABILITIES</b>	<b>6.528.580,43 €</b>	<b>5.028.252,17 €</b>

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**Living Lakes & Nature Conservation**

**Business & Biodiversity**

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Radolfzell, December 2022



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SO WE CAN HELP OTHERS!**

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