



PRESS RELEASE

15 October 2012

Are companies responsible for the protection of biodiversity?

In 1992, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity acknowledged for the first time the conservation of biological diversity as a “common concern of humankind.”

The protection of biodiversity is now an integral element of business dialogue, but beyond the ubiquitous declarations of principles, **what concrete actions** do companies take to limit their impacts on life and prevent the degradation of ecosystems?

With a philosophy of partnership and exchange of information, **Vigeo** and **Humanité et Biodiversité** have collaborated on the production of a new study. Vigeo, offering its own expertise, analysed the integration **strategies for the protection of biodiversity of 127 European companies** in 9 different sectors. Humanité and Biodiversité sheds light on this work by way of its experience as an environmental NGO specialised in the many issues surrounding biodiversity today.

Among many discoveries, the study reveals:

- A majority of the businesses surveyed understand the risks in not communicating their philosophy on the protection of biodiversity: 74% of those surveyed refer to biodiversity in their publically available documentation.
- Engagement is limited and heterogeneous: out of the nine sectors evaluated, Construction Materials showcased the highest performance, although still “average” overall.
- A minority of businesses commit to reducing their negative impacts on biodiversity in a meaningful way: the majority focus their energy on particular issues related to their own effects on the ecosystem. Impacts related to controversial practices in certain sectors are rarely mentioned (GMOs, biofuels, etc...).
- Stakeholder influence heavily affects companies’ behaviour with regards to protecting biodiversity: the more a company finds itself subjected to allegations of bad behaviour, the higher the level of engagement in favour of improving its preservation efforts.

The study also lays out the innovative practices and managerial performances of the 20 most advanced companies in the protection of biodiversity.

Nicole Notat, President of Vigeo, says: «*The protection of biodiversity is a perfect example of a subject that calls upon companies' ability to think about their risks in the long-term, and to prevent them before market rules and laws force them to do so. But don't be misguided. The actions of civil society and the progress of rules and innovations initiated by some leading companies, though slight they may be, will raise the protection of biodiversity among the key corporate responsibility factors for companies and investors.*».

Hubert Reeves, President of Humanité and Biodiversité, adds: «*The interdependence between companies and life is obvious. This is the ultimate objective. Companies can be and must be a driving power for the development of another economic model integrating the finiteness of resources that proposes fair production and consumption modes in balance with the biosphere.*».

For any further information or in order to receive the complete study :

Press' contacts

VIGEO

PARIS	Anita LEGRAND (FR/EN)	+33(0)1 55.82.32.44	anita.legrand@vigeo.com
BRUSSELS	Jordi LESAFFER (FR/NL)	+32.2.206.11.17	jordi.lesaffer@vigeo.com
CASABLANCA	Zineb BELYMAM (FR)	+212.522.87.14.77	zineb.belymam@vigeo.com
LONDON	Lindsay SMART (EN)	+44 (0) 203.402.6401	lindsay.smart@vigeo.com
MILAN	Simonetta BONO (IT)	+39 02 27 72 71 40	simonetta.bono@vigeo.com

HUMANITE and BIODIVERSITE

PARIS	Justine ROULOT	+33(0)1.43.36.04.72	justine.roulot@humanite-biodiversite.fr
-------	----------------	---------------------	--

About Vigeo

Vigeo is the leading European expert in responsible performance. Founded in 2002 and headed by Nicole Notat, Vigeo measures the performances and risks of companies with regard to six areas of corporate social responsibility: environment, human rights, human resources, community involvement, business behaviour and corporate governance.

Vigeo offers two lines of services through two business brands:

- *Vigeo rating –the way to responsible investment-* offers a broad range of products and services to investors seeking a sustainable and responsible performance of their investments;
- *Vigeo enterprise –the way to responsible management-* conducts global CSR audits and benchmarks in organizations of all sizes, public and private, support teams and integrate CSR/SRI criteria into business functions and strategic operations.

Vigeo rating's research meets high quality standards and is externally certified to the CSRR-QS2.1 standard.

Vigeo is present in Paris, Casablanca, Brussels, Milan, London and Tokyo and has more than a hundred employees.

www.vigeo.com

About Humanité and Biodiversité

Humanité and Biodiversité, presided by Hubert Reeves, is a Non Governmental Organization under the French law « 1901 » (describing the terms of a nonprofit organization), certified by the French law "1976" on the protection of nature and recognized of public utility. Descendent from the former Ligue Roc, building on Théodore Monod's legacy, Humanité and Biodiversité aims at helping human beings understand their relationships with the diversity of life to which they belong and on which they depend, to reconcile the needs of both life and societies.

Humanité and Biodiversité through advocay, exposes the consequences of the erosion of biodiversity in society and drives solutions to address the challenges

The NGO makes recommendations to influence the decision-makers it ensures that laws are enacted and proposes amendments when necessary, it raises awareness actions for all age groups.

With its members, Humanité and Biodiversité works in tandem with a network to promote wildlife: the nature oasis.

For further information, please visit our community website : www.humanite-biodiversite.fr