



100,000 trees for genuine climate protection

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Environmental Award winner donates 250,000 € to BOS Deutschland e.V. for reforestation of peatland rainforest

Werner & Mertz owner Reinhard Schneider, this year's winner of the German Environmental Award from the German Environmental Foundation (DBU), is donating 250,000 EUR to the association BOS Deutschland (Borneo Orangutan Survival), which will use the funds for reforestation of the Mawas reserve in Indonesia. "It is important to me that my prize money is used to support real biodiversity activities. The greatest effect for climate protection comes from planting native trees in the rainforest which compensate for an enormous amount of CO₂," said Schneider.



DBU Environmental Award winner Reinhard Schneider presents the donation check in the amount of 250,000 EUR to Daniel Merdes, Managing Director of BOS Deutschland e. V.. The funds will be used for the reforestation of the Indonesia reserve Mawas. Copyright Photo: Werner & Mertz

The Mawas peatland must be saved



The Mawas conservation area is one of the largest peatlands in Indonesia. It is covered with a peat layer up to 15 meters deep where CO₂ and other greenhouse gases from the past 8000 years are stored. Mawas also is home to 2600 wild orangutans and 48 other critically endangered species (including a recently discovered frog).

In the 1990s as part of a gigantic government-planned construction project, 4000 kilometers of canals were dug to drain the swamp and clear the forest. The project was abandoned in 1998 and four years later the land was burned. What remains is a fire-threatened 70,000-square hectare area which continuously emits greenhouse gases.

With support from BOS, the Mawas damaged eco system is to be stabilized and further forest fires prevented. The plan calls for establishing the most valuable type of forest for the climate – a wooded peatbog – on the degraded wasteland. It should create a natural habitat for many endangered species, including orangutans, frogs and several types of plants. Among other things, the donation will go toward restoring 80 hectares of rainforest and planting 100,000 trees (e.g., *Dyera costulata*, *Shorea balangeran* and diverse fruit trees for the orangutan).

"The CO₂ emissions from the cleared peatland accounted for half of all Indonesian CO₂ emissions in 2015. With support from Reinhard Schneider and his company Werner & Mertz, we can make an important contribution to protecting the global climate and endangered animal species," said Daniel Merdes, Managing Director of BOS Deutschland.

Werner & Mertz enters long-term cooperation with BOS Deutschland

The reforestation project is only the beginning of extensive cooperation between Werner & Mertz and BOS Deutschland. In addition to donating 250,000 EUR, Schneider has signed a five-year cooperation agreement. Over the course of this long-term cooperation, Werner & Mertz will support the BOS orangutan rescue centers on Borneo and contribute to the reintroduction of rehabilitated orangutans and the monitoring of animals returned to the protected rainforests. The objectives of both partners are species protection on Borneo, the maintenance and expansion of the orangutans' habitat and reciprocal inspiration regarding palm oil and surfactants. The cultivation of trees that yield palm kernel oil places a burden on local rainforests and destroys valuable habitats. For that reason, Werner & Mertz has relied for years on European vegetable soils such as rapeseed and sunflower instead of controversial palm kernel or coconut oil for its laundry detergents and cleaners. That was just one of many aspects in the integrally sustainable corporate philosophy for which Schneider received the German Environmental Award.

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