

### **Pollen enable greater sustainability**

The Stuttgart planning and consulting company Drees & Sommer has entered into a cooperation with the Belgian startup company *BeeOdiversity*. The aim is to use bees and ultra-modern technology to preserve and promote biodiversity and the natural variety of species. As the first pilot project, the two partners are studying the biological diversity around the Drees & Sommer campus on the Stuttgart industrial estate of Vaihingen/Möhringen. In the long term, this cooperation also aims to benefit the real estate sector because the data obtained in the project can also be used as an ideal basis for the development of sustainable buildings, neighborhoods and cities.

The story of the flowers and the bees is old and familiar. After all, it tells us about the origins of life. However very few people are aware of the enormous impact which this small insect has on the everyday life of human beings. Wild bees and honey bees have a key role to play in the ecosystem and are the main reason for good harvests and biological diversity. But the survival of these little all-rounders is at risk, and the number of bee colonies has been in severe decline worldwide for many years. In order to draw attention to this topic, many even refer to the physicist Albert Einstein: 'If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man.' Einstein was probably never the author of these lines, but the relevance of honey and wild bees for an ecological balance is undisputed.

### **Collecting habit of the honeybees as a source of information**

The Belgian startup *BeeOdiversity* has devoted itself fully to this subject. *'Our goal is to use innovative strategies and digital solutions to preserve the biological variety of species, and at the same time to achieve a long-term reduction in the pollution caused by industry and agriculture,'* says Michaël Van Cutsem, CEO of *BeeOdiversity*. In addition to digital technology, the startup enterprise mainly relies on the collecting habit of the honeybees. They serve as 'natural drones', because when they fly to a variety of different blossoms, they collect many grains pollen and thus large amounts of information, which can be used to monitor the plant diversity and pollution on large areas of land. This is possible because of a special characteristic of pollen which can be used to detect environmental pollutants or other substances such as pesticides.

### **Experience flows into real estate projects and neighborhood developments**

To contribute to the protection of the environment on the Stuttgart industrial estate of Vaihingen/Möhringen, Drees & Sommer has started a pilot project together with *BeeOdiversity*. From April to October, pollen is regularly taken from two Drees & Sommer beehives and analyzed. Whereas the company's hobby beekeepers, who include civil engineers and technical planners, work together with professional beekeepers from the region to look after the bees, *BeeOdiversity* analyzes the information obtained from the various bio-indicators and stores it in digital format. On this basis, a detailed report can be compiled with information about the status of biodiversity in the area studied and with recommendations for action. *'With targeted measures, such as green façades on buildings or special mixtures of blossoming flowers for green areas, we can take positive action to promote biodiversity in our location, and thus contribute to the protection of the environment,'* says Sebastian Beck, hobby beekeeper and Senior Team Leader Smart Infrastructure at Drees & Sommer.

In future, Drees & Sommer intends to use the experience gained in its pilot initiative project to benefit the company's real estate and infrastructure projects. The aim is to promote the development of sustainable buildings, neighborhoods, or even whole cities in which biological diversity is assured. *'Here, the real estate industry has a special responsibility because building work covers up large areas of the soil, uses high amounts of raw materials and is the cause of about 30 percent of the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, it is high time for projects like this to be integrated as an integral part of real estate and urban development projects,'* comments Dr. Peter Möhle, Partner at Drees & Sommer SE and Managing Director of EPEA GmbH – Part of Drees & Sommer.

### **Fulfilling social responsibility**

Especially local companies and stakeholders in the real estate sector should benefit from such innovative projects. Preserving biodiversity can increase the attractiveness of a location, and it can also have a positive effect on the well-being of residents and people working in the area. In addition, such a project would underline the economic and ecological commitment of the participants, and consequently convey the message that they recognize their sense of social responsibility to the region and the potential tenants and purchasers.

Drees & Sommer is also committed to work for both ecological and social goals. The pilot project with *BeeOdiversity*, for example, is just one element in the Drees & Sommer 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign in which the company is implementing 50 ecological and social projects. In combination

with other sustainability projects, such as the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and reforestation projects, Drees & Sommer is pursuing the target of being recognized as a 'beneficial company'. These enterprises have an exemplary function because they return more to both the environment and society than they take out. In addition to the associated economic success, the focus is especially on achieving the greatest possible benefit for future generations in cities and towns worth living in.

For further information, please visit [www.50years.dreso.com](http://www.50years.dreso.com) and [www.beeodiversity.com](http://www.beeodiversity.com).

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### ***BeeOdiversity***

*BeeOdiversity is a cleantech and environmental consulting company specialized in biodiversity enhancement and pollution reduction to create value. It advises corporates and public entities at a strategic level to integrate biodiversity in their activities and implements projects on-site. Through nature-based solutions, it monitors and acts on +150,000 acres/year for various client segments (water producers, real estate, industrial, CSR, smart cities etc.) in several EU countries and the USA. Biodiversity regeneration projects can create value at different levels: differentiation, quality and attractiveness of a building, relationship with local stakeholders, pollution reduction etc.*