

Always Committed to Climate Protection: Drees & Sommer Marks Its Anniversary Year by Becoming Climate Positive

Stuttgart, Germany, 8 April 2020. Climate positive by 2025 or 2030? Far too late, according to construction and real estate planning and consulting company Drees & Sommer SE. Based in the German city of Stuttgart, the company has implemented such extensive measures to reduce and compensate for its CO₂ emissions that it is now already climate positive. Although carbon credits still make a significant contribution to the partner-managed company's climate-positive status, they will be reduced step by step according to a clearly defined plan. At the same time the company is to subsidize the planting of 75,000 trees per year from 2020, regardless of its climate footprint.

Steffen Szeidl, Member of the Executive Board of Drees & Sommer, commented: 'We, our clients, and our entire sector account for around 20 percent of Germany's gross value added, and the real estate sector alone is responsible for more than a third of CO₂ emissions and 50 percent of resource consumption. We have a social responsibility to provide affordable housing, livable towns and cities, and properly functioning infrastructure. We are currently in a temporary crisis. For this reason it is now especially important to keep calm and continue to think long-term. Real sustainability, along with digital transformation to enable important innovations, was the right policy in the past, is right for today and will be right for tomorrow.'

Sustainable Energy Provision and Mobility as Important Levers

In line with this position, since 2019 Drees & Sommer's sustainability strategy has included keeping an account of the CO₂ emissions generated by the provision of energy to its locations and by company traffic and transport. The company's annual CO₂ emissions convert to around 3.75 tons per staff member. Business travel and the company vehicle fleet account for the largest proportion of the emissions, at more than 80 percent. The remaining portion is caused by the use of energy to operate the office buildings.

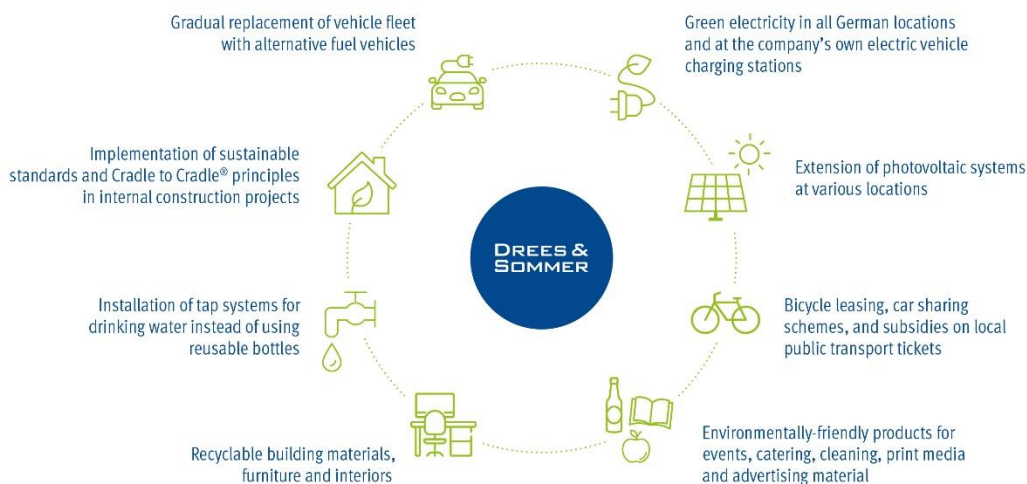
Drees & Sommer is now stepping up many of its measures to avoid and reduce fossil emissions generated by its operating processes across all corporate divisions. For instance, the electricity needs of all the German office locations and the company's own electric vehicle charging stations have been fully covered by renewable energy since 2012.

To make its business travel more climate friendly, last year the company also introduced a sustainable travel guideline which stipulates, among other things, that staff members have to travel by rail as an alternative to short-haul flights. The vehicle fleet is also being gradually changed over to alternative fuel vehicles, and use of environmentally-friendly cars is being encouraged by a CO₂ bonus. Drees & Sommer is also promoting climate-friendly mobility by offering local public transport subsidies as well as a shuttle bus, bicycle leasing and car sharing.

Sustainability Is More Than Carbon Offsetting – Payback Comes Quicker Than Expected

The majority of measures to become a climate positive company are also beneficial from an economic point of view. For instance, an investment of around EUR 35,000 to convert to a tap system for drinking water at the Stuttgart location instead of using reusable plastic bottles has already paid for itself after 18 months. Steffen Szeidl explained: ‘Many companies fear that environmental and climate protection will involve huge costs. But this is precisely why it is important for companies to invest now for the future. Most of the measures we take pay for themselves within a relatively short time. All in all, they result in better products and services, not to mention that they repair the reputational damage that many companies have suffered, as well as attracting well-qualified staff. So, economics and ecology always go hand in hand, rather than being mutually exclusive.’

SOME OF THE SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES ALREADY BEING IMPLEMENTED BY DREES & SOMMER



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Drees & Sommer now only uses organic and environmentally-friendly products for events, catering, cleaning, print media and advertising materials, and also in its staff restaurants. In refurbishments or new buildings, as well as at exhibitions and trade fairs, Drees & Sommer relies on recyclable building materials, furniture and interiors. At the recent international trade fair for property and investment, Expo Real, the company showed in its zero-waste fair booth, based on the Cradle to Cradle principle, how these concepts can be implemented.

New Trend in the Work Environment?

Steffen Szeidl also sees another trend which could play an increasingly significant role in the work environment in the future. He explained: 'The continuous investments we have made in digital communication, processes and methods in the past are currently proving very effective. For us, virtual meetings with clients and digital communication solutions work perfectly in most areas. More than 3,100 employees are currently fully equipped to work digitally at the same time and from home workstations. Carbon-intensive business trips are becoming less common. Whenever possible this must be maintained. There is much potential for us, and undoubtedly also many other companies, to cut down further on CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels in this area.'

Climate Positive Building Made in Stuttgart

Construction projects for Drees & Sommer's own use are also an important part of its sustainability strategy and its investments for the future. A new office building currently in construction at Drees & Sommer's headquarters in Stuttgart is designed as a net plus energy building which, when in operation, will generate more energy than it uses. The new building will thus have a positive energy footprint. The energy concept is based on photovoltaic and green elements in the façade and the use of geothermal energy. In order to minimize or completely avoid resource consumption and waste, the company also applies the Cradle to Cradle principle. This involves the use of industrially prefabricated, modular construction elements on construction sites.

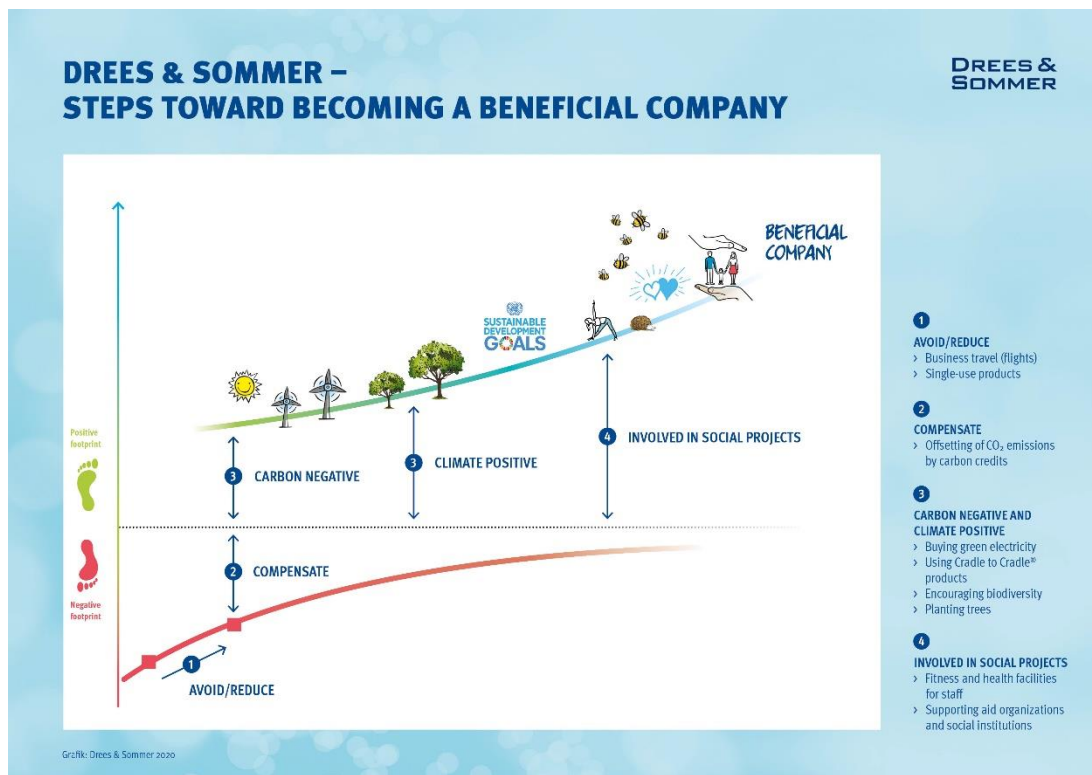
Active Role in the Environment and Society

By implementing all these measures, Drees & Sommer is continuously reducing its carbon footprint and increasing its contribution to global climate protection. To achieve a positive climate footprint, the company is also financing the planting of 75,000 trees per year by the global children and youth initiative *Plant-for-the-Planet*, which will result in the absorption of an additional 15,000 tons of CO₂

per year. Drees & Sommer’s support will also enable young people to be educated and supported as ambassadors for climate justice.

Becoming a *Beneficial Company*

Dr Peter Möhle, Partner at Drees & Sommer SE and Managing Director of the environmental consulting institute EPEA GmbH, commented: ‘In addition to climate protection, we are also increasing our involvement in social projects. This year, for instance, to celebrate our 50th anniversary we are supporting 50 social and sustainable projects. Our long-term goal is to be a *beneficial company*. By this we mean a company which, in addition to its success as a business, also benefits the environment and society as much as possible. By promoting forward-thinking and innovative concepts such as Cradle to Cradle and our *Blue City* approach and implementing them ourselves, we are spreading our vision of a positive and sustainable future, not just in our projects but also as a company.’



Becoming climate positive is just the first step. Clear measures for further reductions in CO₂ emissions are also defined in Drees & Sommer’s *blue way*. These include social and societal involvement in order to make a positive contribution also in this area. It is therefore very important

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to simply get on with it. Only when companies in all sectors have successfully taken these steps – in other words, when they are on the way to becoming a *beneficial company* – the world will be prepared for the next generation.

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Drees & Sommer: Your Innovative Partner for Consulting, Planning, Construction and Operation

The leading European consulting, planning and project management enterprise, Drees & Sommer has supported private and public clients and investors for 50 years in all aspects of real estate and infrastructure – both analog and digital. Through future-oriented consulting, the enterprise can offer solutions for successful buildings, high-return portfolios, powerful infrastructure and livable cities. The company's 3,700 employees in 43 locations around the world work in interdisciplinary teams to provide support for clients from a wide variety of sectors. All the services provided by the partner-run company take into consideration both economic and ecological concerns. Drees & Sommer calls this holistic approach 'the blue way'.

For more information, please visit our website at: www.dreso.com.

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