The Danube needs more business friends

Your company is invited to join the “Business Friends of the Danube Fund”.

The Fund, established by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), offers companies the opportunity to enter into mutually beneficial partnerships that will help to preserve and protect the incredible Danube, its tributaries and environment.

As a partner, you will assist governments while benefiting residents, unique plant species and animal and riverine life.

You will not only make a meaningful contribution to a vitally important environmental protection programme, but also participate in activities that enable your own business to further develop in an economically sustainable manner.

On the following pages, you will learn more about the mission and objectives of the ICPDR, valuable work that has been undertaken with businesses and ways in which you can realize some of your own corporate goals through participation in a truly worthwhile undertaking.

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The Danube is one of Europe’s most incredible rivers. Stretching 2,880 km from Germany to the Black Sea, it is the main artery of a “river basin” covering over 801,000 km² of land. Including parts of 19 countries and a population of 81 million people, it is the world’s most “international” river basin.

The Danube provides valuable resources and services such as drinking water, hydropower, irrigation and routes for navigation. Its wide range of habitats support countless animal and plant species, many endangered or only found in the Danube Basin. Unfortunately, past human use resulted in significant environmental damage. Further threats include pollution and damage to wetlands, floodplains and critical habitats.

In 1994, 13 countries and the EU signed the “Danube River Protection Convention” to improve conditions and prevent adverse impacts. To coordinate Convention work, and help fulfil EU legislation, the “International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)” was founded in 1998 with its Secretariat based in Vienna.

Since then, the ICPDR has been highly successful in promoting and coordinating equitable water management, conservation, the rational use of waters and raising public awareness.
The Helpful Role of Business

Business, as a key stakeholder in the Danube Basin, can either make problems or contribute to solutions. While it must comply with laws, business can implement additional actions to demonstrate its corporate social responsibility (CSR) – closely linked with sustainable development.

Many businesses with operations or markets in the Danube Basin have already embraced the need for CSR by voluntarily assisting the ICPDR and Danube countries.

As participating partners, they have attended ICPDR workshops and negotiations to voice their concerns and solutions and cooperate with other stakeholders. As good environmental managers, they have improved their operations. As innovators, they have developed new, practical solutions and technologies. And as funders, they have supported ICPDR activities.

Two main, long-term contributors are Coca-Cola Hellenic and The Coca-Cola Company which started the “Green Danube Partnership” with the ICPDR. Results include support for annual “International Danube Day” celebrations, the “Danube Box” – an environmental educational toolkit for teachers, and voluntary agreements to reduce the negative environmental impacts of their own corporate activities.
The "business Friends of the Danube Fund"

To make the most out of new opportunities for businesses and the ICPDR to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, the ICPDR launched the "business Friends of the Danube Fund". The Fund's key objective is to help protect the Danube Basin, its resources and ecosystems through long-term and stable partnerships with selected businesses. Potential partners are those, like your organisation, which are dedicated to the pursuit of sound ecological practices and possess a strong desire to demonstrate respect and support for responsible and sustainable development. This holds true especially in communities in which you operate, and for the people receiving your products and services.

As a partner, your business would similarly be in a position to take up the concerns of the people and the Danube and its ecosystems, and to make an active contribution to the vision of healthy ecosystems and landscapes. As a partner, you would similarly be in a position to demonstrate your commitment to responsible and sustainable development.

This would involve activities such as:

- Developing and implementing an environmental management system and environmental policy for your business.
- Promoting environmental awareness and good practice among your employees and stakeholders.
- Engaging with local communities to understand their needs and concerns.
- Collaborating with other businesses and organisations to address common environmental challenges.

By joining the "business Friends of the Danube Fund", you would be eligible for a range of benefits, including:

- Increased visibility and recognition for your contributions to the protection of the Danube Basin.
- Networking opportunities with other businesses and organisations involved in the Fund.
- Access to information and resources on best practices for environmental management.

Joining the "business Friends of the Danube Fund" is an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to responsible and sustainable development, and to contribute to the protection of the Danube Basin and its ecosystems.
FUN OBLIGATIONS

When a business becomes a new partner, both the ICPDR and the business acquire specific obligations to each other.

Obligations for businesses include:
• A minimum "partnership donation" of 25,000 Euros for at least two years (possibilities for in-kind or project-related donations may also be considered)
• Responsible water use in company operations (if not already, then progress toward this goal through the partnership)

Obligations for the ICPDR include:
• Reporting on how the Fund contributions are used, along with the results of expenditures
• Provision to the business partner of the use of the Fund name, logo and brand for business CSR visibility
• Joint communications (e.g. press event, website content, communication of funded projects to ICPDR audiences)
• Organization of one annual event for partners
There are a number of opportunities available to both sides of the partnership. These should support ICPDR efforts in implementing the Danube River Protection Convention and EU legislation, through sustainable river basin management, environmental protection, nature conservation, pollution reduction, emergency preparedness and/or disaster relief.

Examples of possible activities, projects and opportunities include:

• Raising public awareness and participation through public events (e.g. Danube Day), educational materials (e.g. Danube Box) and publications (e.g. Danube Watch magazine)
• Improving scientific knowledge through research projects, expeditions and training
• Improving the knowledge and capacity of water managers

On becoming a partner, together with the ICPDR, you will be able to make a difference for the Danube and for your own CSR activities.

Please contact us for more information. We can tell you more about what we have done, are doing and our future ambitious plans. We can also talk about why we need your help, how we can help you and how we can make a difference together – to ensure that the Danube Basin is one of the best managed and protected in the world.
CONTACT

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www.business-friends-of-the-danube.org

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