

Bonde: Exceptional dedication to climate protection

The DBU German Environmental Prize awards climate economist Prof Dr Edenhofer and the Trappmanns, entrepreneurs in the field of metal packaging – the Honorary Award goes to entomologist Dr Martin Sorg

Osnabrück. Climate economist Prof Dr Ottmar Edenhofer (59) and the siblings Annika (28) and Hugo Sebastian (37) Trappmann, Managing Directors of the Blechwarenfabrik Limburg, will receive this year's German Environmental Award of the German Environmental Foundation (DBU). "We are presenting two awards for exceptional efforts in the fight against climate change," says DBU General Secretary Alexander Bonde. Furthermore, Dr Martin Sorg (65) will receive an Honorary Award. As a leading scientist at the Entomologischer Verein Krefeld, he scientifically demonstrated massive declines in insect populations with the "Krefeld Study". As it stands today, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will present the awards in Hannover on 25 October 2020.

Internationally renowned pioneer in the economics of climate change

With EUR 500,000 in prize money, the DBU's German Environmental Award is the most prestigious independent environmental prize in Europe for outstanding, pioneering work in the field of environmental protection. With his scientific problem-solving approach to setting a price on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, Edenhofer, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, revitalised German climate protection policy and decisively influenced the discourse on financial incentives as an instrument for greater climate and environmental protection, says Bonde. "And the Trappmann siblings demonstrate how small- and medium-sized companies can use high-tech digitalisation to shake things up in a climate-friendly context while at the same time increasing profits."

Edenhofer is receiving the prize, among other reasons, because his carbon dioxide pricing proposal has helped establish a consensus within the German government in terms of the climate programme. Bonde: "He is one of the world's most influential pioneers of the economics of climate change."

Thanks to his "excellent research, science-based political consulting and his dedication", he is able to use an economic approach to offer solutions to

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climate change that also address social justice issues. "His science-based recommendations allow government representatives to determine a political action framework so that sustainable innovations in the interest of climate protection can succeed on the market," says Bonde. Edenhofer will receive EUR 250,000 in prize money.

Achieving a great deal with novel ideas and company-wide dedication

Siblings Annika and Hugo Sebastian Trappmann demonstrate why it makes sense from the economical point of view to evaluate an entire company in the interest of climate and resource protection. With a staff of 320, the Blechwarenfabrik Limburg has been one of the leading, sustainability-oriented companies in Germany for more than 10 years. Bonde: "The company raises the bar in terms of energy and resource efficiency." Through consistent action, the company has reduced its annual CO₂ emissions by around 2,600 tonnes and saves around 100 tonnes of tinplate a year. "That means a decisive achievement in terms of climate and resource protection," says Bonde. Around one-third of the electricity used comes directly from the plant's roof. The power generated by the company's solar modules is equivalent to the annual consumption of 450 households. The transformation process was supported by digitalisation: the company has established a business intelligence system. Bonde: "The company demonstrates that you don't have to rely on standard solutions. You can achieve a great deal with novel ideas and dedication." The Trappmann siblings will also receive EUR 250,000 in prize money.

National and international media response

Entomologist Dr Martin Sorg will receive the Honorary Award, which comes with EUR 10,000 in prize money. Sorg is responsible for coordinating the research of the Entomologischer Verein Krefeld (the Krefeld Entomological Society), which triggered a major response in the media and the field of scientific research, and resulted in numerous citizens' movements, says Bonde. "The Society's findings have roused, or even shaken, our society, politics and economy from their slumber." This is because the scientifically backed research demonstrated that "over the past 30 years, the total volume of flying insects in the regions studied has dropped by a dramatic 76 per cent. Now more than ever, this must serve as a wakeup call for all of us," says Bonde. Scientists' main concern: food chains and ecosystems could be at risk. "Thanks to Dr Sorg's efforts, our society is now paying attention to scientists' warnings about mass extinction of insects and species," says Bonde. With the Krefeld Entomological Society, Sorg has demonstrated "that through persistent, profound commitment, each and every one of us can contribute to this important debate concerning our future."