

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

Communication on progress as part of the engagement in the UN's Global Compact initiative

Reporting period April 2019 to March 2020



UN GLOBAL COMPACT

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

This is our **Communication on Progress** in implementing the principles of the **United Nations Global Compact** and supporting broader UN goals.

We welcome feedback on its contents.

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1 About zeb

Through entrepreneurial spirit, strategic thinking and, above all, its clients' trust, zeb has established itself as one of the leading strategy and management consultancy for the financial services industry in Europe. For more than 25 years, zeb, together with its clients, has been mastering the only constant—change.

We are partners for change.

We develop creative ideas as well as innovative strategies and implement them effectively and reliably. In projects, we work in partnership with our clients as a team. Our expertise and project experience span the entire value chain of European financial intermediaries. Our deep specialist knowledge, our innovativeness and not least our digital savviness allow us to “walk our talk” and successfully implement our concepts.

Our company was founded in Münster in 1992 by university professors Bernd Rolfes and Henner Schierenbeck. We currently employ more than 1,000 staff at 18 international locations.

Managing Director's introductory statement

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing this introductory statement at a time when the world is in a state of emergency.

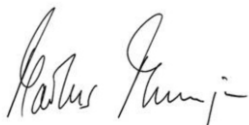
The coronavirus poses an unprecedented challenge for all of us: for our health, our economy and our society. In this situation, however, we are also experiencing an unusual degree of solidarity, a renaissance of values and a great sense of community despite contact restrictions and social distancing.

Our values as the company zeb are precisely what has, since April 2015, made us want to be part of the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest and most important network for corporate social responsibility.

We have committed ourselves to integrating the UN Global Compact and its ten principles from the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption into our corporate strategy, corporate culture and daily business.

In addition to incorporating the ten principles into the daily work of the zeb group of companies, we have committed ourselves to creating an annual progress report. This report is intended to make our efforts transparent to stakeholders and the general public. It includes the description of specific activities of the company to implement the principles as well as the measurement and evaluation of results by means of defined indicators.

Therefore, I am pleased to explain the details and results of our self-set goals and measures and to give an outlook on our further engagement in this fifth communication on progress.



Dr. Markus Thiesmeyer
Managing Director, zeb

2 CSR architecture

At zeb, we assume responsibility in many different ways. To achieve a thematic differentiation, using relevant stakeholders for orientation has proved to be a sensible approach. In a stakeholder analysis, four groups were identified: market, employees, society and environment. On this basis, a binding Code of Conduct (CoC) for the entire group of companies was developed. The responsibility assumed by zeb thus encompasses the partners necessary for business operations (market, employees) as well as other stakeholders (society, environment).

For external guidance, zeb uses the UN Global Compact with its four topics: human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. The table below shows the correlation between the ten principles of the UN Global Compact and zeb's CSR architecture.

No.	UNGC principle	UNGC field of action	zeb topic	zeb field of action
1	Businesses should respect and support internationally-proclaimed human rights.	Human rights	Market	Ethics
2	Businesses should ensure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.	Human rights	Market	Ethics
3	Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.	Labor	Employees	Employer attractiveness
4	Businesses should strive for the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor.	Labor	Employees	Employer attractiveness
5	Businesses should strive for the effective abolition of child labor.	Labor	Market	Ethics
6	Businesses should strive for the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.	Labor	Employees	Employer attractiveness
7	Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.	Environment	Environment	Procurement
8	Companies should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.	Environment	Environment	Mobility
9	Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.	Environment	Environment	Energy
10	Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.	Anti-corruption	Market	Ethics

Table #1: CSR architecture

Each of the chapters dedicated to a specific target group encompasses three fields of action. The presentation of the activities within each field of action starts with a voluntary commitment. This



is followed by a key performance indicator (KPI), which is exemplary for the reporting period, in combination with the target achievement. Afterwards, various measures, projects and activities that concern the field of action are described. Each chapter ends with statements on the goals for the next reporting period.

3 Market

zeb operates as a European consulting company with a focus on the financial sector. In addition to specialist expertise, professional conduct and a relationship of trust with clients and suppliers are prerequisites for sustainable business relationships and economic success.

As a market player, zeb takes its responsibilities seriously. In this context, its CSR activities are focused on three fields of action concerning ethics, transparency and auditing. They correlate with the UN Global Compact themes of human rights and anti-corruption.

3.1 Ethics

Our commitment:

Compliance with all laws and rules of fair competition

Target	Target achievement
Compliance with all legal requirements applicable to zeb; target in 2019: 100%	The target was fully achieved during the reporting period.

Table #2: Target achievement in 2019—ethics

Code of Conduct

Compliance with directly applicable law as well as ethically and morally impeccable conduct are a matter of course for zeb. zeb’s [Code of Conduct](#) defines the necessary rules for this.

They are binding for all of zeb and its subsidiaries in all dealings with clients, business partners and colleagues. As an internationally operating consultancy, the following applies at zeb: if stricter provisions than defined in the CoC are applicable in another country, those provisions have to be adhered to.

The CoC is specified in all relevant areas by means of guidelines (e.g. for data protection, information security or business travel). These guidelines provide indications as to the correct behavior in cases of doubt. They are stored on the Intranet and accessible to everyone at zeb.

The CoC defines the standards for the ethical fields of action such as preventing corruption, fighting child labor and ensuring data protection.

Due to the high importance of the CoC for client and supplier relationships, all relevant contacts have been informed about the introduction, contents and scope of the CoC. In addition, the CoC is regularly reviewed and updated.

Data protection

All employees are placed under the obligation to ensure data protection in line with country-specific requirements. The topic of data protection is managed by a competent external Data Protection Officer, who is provided with support by an internal data protection coordinator. Contact details are available on the Intranet so that issues can be addressed directly and quickly. All employees are trained at regular intervals in data protection as well as in implementation measures for IT security. New recruits are also instructed in data protection measures.

In addition, the following measures were carried out in 2019:

- Raising awareness for the issue of data breaches. What is a data breach? Who has to be informed? What deadlines must be met?
- Raising awareness on how to handle queries from affected persons. What rights do affected persons have? What deadlines must be met?
- Review of data processing contractors

In order to continuously optimize compliance with the applicable data protection regulations and ensure effective protection of the data entrusted to us, zeb seeks external advice and regularly reviews the technical and organizational security measures.

Human rights

As a consulting company, zeb provides services for the financial industry, mainly in Germany and in other crisis-free European countries. This means that problems with regard to human rights are unlikely due to the type of work and the work environment, and none were identified during the reporting period.

Anti-corruption

As a European consultancy, zeb is in competition with other consultancies for consulting mandates. We are convinced that a functioning consultancy market requires all market players to act fairly and comply with the rules. Therefore, zeb will only obtain mandates through fair competition as well as place orders only according to this principle and complies with all applicable legal requirements to ensure this.

Since corruption and financial crime cause serious economic damage, zeb actively fights any form of corruption and bribery.

As an additional anti-corruption measure, zeb set up a corruption reporting office in 2018 and encouraged all zeb employees to report any indications of corruption via this channel. This office is managed by an external service provider. Reports can be made anonymously in order to provide whistleblowers with maximum protection. The external service provider assesses criticality as well as options for action and escalates cases to the Chief CSR Officer, if required. No reports were received during the reporting period.

In addition, zeb has defined clear rules regarding the acceptance of gifts on the part of clients and suppliers and communicated these to all zeb companies as part of the zeb Travel Expense and Events Policy.

Child labor

zeb condemns any kind of forced or child labor, also with regard to its clients and business partners. As zeb operates in the European financial services sector, where child labor is highly unlikely, the possibilities of directly influencing the prevention of child labor in the provision of its own services is minimal.

Future goals

zeb will continue to act in accordance with the applicable legal provisions at all times.

3.2 Transparency

Our commitment:

All CSR-relevant information is made available both internally and externally.

Target	Target achievement
Updated sustainability report that covers all relevant fields of action; target in 2018: publication by 05/2019	UN Global Compact Communication on Progress was published on the UN Global Compact website in May 2019.
In addition, zeb aims for a declaration of compliance with the German Sustainability Code in 2019.	The declaration of compliance with the German Sustainability Code was not prepared, as this objective was reprioritized in the reporting period.

Table #3: Target achievement in 2019—transparency

At zeb, CSR communication takes place in various formats. The communication formats used are aligned with the respective target group (internal and external target groups), general or event-driven, and either distribute information or enable a dialog. The aim of all CSR communication is to combine maximum transparency with up-to-dateness and relevance.

Internal CSR communication

Apart from the means of communication that were already in use, such as regular employee information by e-mail, zeb has set up several communication tools to make CSR information generally available, independent from new or recent items. CSR content can be accessed via the zeb Intranet (zeb.insight). For various levels of detail there are tools available to promote the distribution of information and the discussion of responsibilities in the four fields of action (market, employees, society and environment):

- zeb.insight (general CSR information)
- zeb.SharePoint—zeb.insight page for specific details (detailed CSR information, process descriptions, additional documents such as the zeb CoC and certifications such as the EcoVadis assessment)
- zeb.Circle (dialog platform for an internal exchange of thoughts and opinions)

Since 2018, in addition to online communication, zeb has also been using the Office Academy—a dialog format where business topics are presented and discussed as hypotheses at various office locations and in small groups to encourage CSR discussions and obtain feedback on measures carried out or planned.

External CSR communication

External CSR communication is intended to make CSR measures transparent to all stakeholders (e.g. clients, suppliers, general public). Especially the topics of sustainability and responsible actions are communicated externally. The following communication initiatives were implemented:

- Designation of a CSR contact person in the company
- New zeb CSR website
- Publication of an annual sustainability report in accordance with the UN Global Compact

- CSR video on the zeb YouTube channel
- Client communication in connection with calls for tenders and the annual exchange with the central procurement departments
- Communication with suppliers within the framework of regular supplier surveys
- Integration of CSR information in proposal presentations

Future goals

Publication of the next sustainability report (reporting period 04/2020–03/2021 to 05/2021).

3.3 Audit

Our commitment:

Independent audit performed by an internationally recognized rating agency

Target	Target achievement
External evaluation; target in 2019: GOLD rating (top 5%)	Review by EcoVadis was postponed to 2020, as extensive preparatory measures could not be completed in the reporting period.

Table #4: Target achievement in 2019—audit

For zeb, the regular, independent audit of the CSR management system is an important basis for credibility and ongoing process optimization. Therefore, zeb has its CSR management system audited by the internationally acknowledged rating agency EcoVadis on a regular basis (usually every two years). EcoVadis reviews

- policies,
- measures and
- reporting.

Additionally, completed CSR measures are assessed and optimization potential is identified. In consequence, this assessment process leads to an audit of the entire CSR management system and to numerous activities concerning quality improvement.

As a result of the latest rating in the fall of 2017, zeb was awarded the GOLD Rating. With this rating, EcoVadis confirms that zeb has a CSR management system which is among the top 5% in the world. The following areas were assessed:

- Environment,
- Labor Practices,
- Fair Business Practices and
- Sustainable Procurement.

Future goals

Completion of an external audit performed by EcoVadis with the aim of achieving the GOLD Rating (Top 5%) in 2020.

4 Employees

Management consulting is a “people business”. The service provided to clients is 100% dependent on the employees’ qualification, motivation and interaction. Therefore, it is important for zeb to be an excellent employer. This is the only way to attract, retain and develop the most suitable staff. The measures taken in this field of action promote employer attractiveness, support individual careers and foster diversity.

4.1 Employer attractiveness

Our commitment:

zeb is an excellent and highly responsible employer.

It is zeb’s ambition to be an excellent employer. This is made possible by providing a working environment that is aligned with employees’ objectives and preferences. Therefore, zeb offers a safe work environment and conditions that exceed the legal requirements. Other highly relevant factors are attractive remuneration, room for creative potential, career options, further training options and support in dealing with challenging life situations.

Targets

zeb regularly takes part in employer attractiveness competitions and openly and transparently deals with rating portals such as “kununu” and “glassdoor”. On kununu for example, every review of the company or the application process is commented on by the Head of Recruiting.

Target	Target achievement
For 2019, we set ourselves the target of achieving above-average kununu and glassdoor employer ratings: more than 4 points and a recommendation rate >90%.	kununu and glassdoor ratings were consistently >4.0 during the reporting period; recommendation rates were between 81% and 99%.
Pilot alternative consulting models and, if successful, introduce them across the entire company	Piloting was carried out and models that had proven themselves in practice were implemented.

Table #5: Target achievement in 2019—employer attractiveness

For a number of years, zeb has been listed in Focus Business national employer rankings. In the past few years, zeb occupied the following positions in the consulting sector category and in the overall ranking of Germany’s top 1,000 employers:

Year	Place (sector ranking)	Place (top 1,000)
2020	3	41
2019	4	161
2018	9	233
2017	11	281
2016	21	444

Table #6: Overall ranking of Germany's best employers

The ranking shows constant improvement in the company's perceived attractiveness as an employer. By combining subject-matter expertise with a friendly and respectful atmosphere, zeb offers an exceptionally attractive corporate culture which it continuously develops further.

Health and safety in the workplace

zeb carries out all legally required assessments to provide a safe workplace to its employees. In addition, we are involved in a regular and project-based exchange with the occupational health and safety committee, which develops and implements measures for maintaining the physical and mental health of our employees, e.g.:

- Driver safety training: zeb offers regular driver safety trainings, for example for those eligible to use a company car.
- Stress prevention: zeb conducts training courses on stress reduction as well as on time- and self-management and offers management training courses on "healthy leadership" and "mindfulness in leadership".
- zeb.life: With the introduction of an "Employee Assistance Program", zeb provides life situation coaching that is accessible via a 24/7 hotline on an anonymous basis.
- zeb.wellfit: In order to support consultants working on client premises even better in maintaining their health, zeb has introduced company-wide health days and individual preventive measures as part of corporate health management.

Modern workspaces

To allow employees to work with a maximum of comfort and concentration, zeb does not just provide a healthy workplace, but also an environment they enjoy being in. Various measures and offerings contribute to this, for example:

- Office layouts that are tailored to employees' requirements: both quiet spaces and space for creative exchange and collaborative work, e.g. Design Thinking workshops (TABULARAZA)
- Modern and efficient video conferencing systems
- Free hot and cold drinks
- Fresh fruit
- Modern communication and work equipment

Support offerings

zeb is aware of the pressures consultants face, such as permanent business travel, working from various locations, and long hours. To relieve some of these burdens, zeb supports its employees through various offerings, such as the following:

The Employee Assistance Program offers pragmatic help in their daily lives. [The external service provider](#) that zeb cooperates with helps employees search for suitable childcare, offers advice on care for elderly family members or suggests household-related service providers.

Employees with small children or teenagers face particular challenges. How can they fulfill their tasks as consultants and meet the demands of their role as mothers or fathers? The WorkingParents@zeb initiative organizes networking events for parents, develops support offerings, ensures

company-wide communication and has initiated a “parents’ coffee morning” as a format for informal exchange.

Reporting point

zeb does not condone any kind of harassment of employees or bullying. The persons concerned have a right to be heard and taken seriously by their executives.

- Therefore, zeb has implemented a process and trained specific contact persons who can deal with any occurring cases safely and in confidence.
- Furthermore, the Chief Compliance Officer confidentially accepts indications of possible criminal issues or other (internal or external) breaches of rules and protects the identity of the person providing the indication. The process is set up in a way that allows anonymous reporting at any time.

Working models

In the course of a person’s working or personal life, circumstances can change considerably. This can be caused by a wide variety of reasons: a career leap, the birth of a child, caring for a family member, a personal crisis situation or the wish for some time off. zeb strives to be an attractive employer in all stages of life of its employees. Therefore, we have developed individual working time models that offer a high level of flexibility. In addition, new technologies offer options for fast, collaborative working across office locations:

- Working from home
- Mobile working
- Part time models
- Alternative working time models
- Sabbatical
- Time4you (working time accounts)
- Company pension
- Insurance offers

Collaboration

zeb works in heterogeneous working groups. It brings together employees of varying Practice Groups, professional expertise, seniority, nationality and gender. This enables a broad view of solutions and projects and promotes acceptance. Important decisions are always checked for feasibility and prepared with a selected part of the target group which acts as a sounding board. Road shows are held to present strategic repositioning or general changes and facilitate direct exchange between employees and the board.

zeb takes employees’ wishes, ideas and questions very seriously. They are the basis for innovations, efficiency and thus ultimately also for the satisfaction and appreciation of all colleagues. The Social Intranet implemented by the company contains collaboration tools for optimized teamworking and thus promotes and supports collaboration.

zeb.Uni is another offer to be mentioned. Here, the employees from all locations get together once a year to talk about their project work, present innovations and discuss current and future topics.

The program is complemented by external keynotes, the digital showroom where digital innovations are presented, and numerous booths offering information on various initiatives.

zeb offers an internal reporting office to ensure that in cases of unequal treatment employees find a discrete and trustworthy contact who will handle their concern fairly. zeb can check how fairly employees feel they are treated by tracking the number of reported complaints. Over the last few years, fortunately no relevant cases occurred.

Future goals

For 2020 we have set ourselves the goal of achieving above-average kununu and glassdoor employer ratings: this means more than 4 points and a recommendation rate of at least 90%.

We also want to expand the range of alternative working time models and increase their acceptance.

4.2 Individual career

Our commitment:

Support for learning and development

zeb wants to enable its employees to achieve their full potential. According to individual talents and interests, everyone should enjoy an environment in which they can develop ideas and are supported in their personal development. Collaboration and entrepreneurship are important values at zeb and form the basis of our company’s growth. To allow employees to grow individually, zeb provides each consultant with their personal career coach (Career Development Counselor, CDC).

Target	Target achievement
100% of new CDCs will participate in the qualifying training offered as part of CDC.fit.	All new CDCs have participated in the training courses.
50% of employees use the new digital learning platform.	>50% of employees have taken advantage of the new digital learning opportunities.

Table #7: Target achievement in 2019—individual career

CDC trainings

To make sure that the role of the Career Development Counselor can be optimally fulfilled, zeb launched a quality initiative. After all active CDCs were trained in 2018, the CDC criteria were revised, and a mandatory qualification training called “CDC.fit” was introduced for all new CDCs.

In addition, regular exchanges of experience take place where internal experts provide impulses and colleagues give case advice. zeb thus ensures that the CDCs support their mentees in the best possible way and promote their personal development.

Evaluation

To give consultants broad and objective feedback on their performance, zeb has developed a performance management system based on 270° feedback. Neutral evaluators provide employees with objective feedback that is aligned with their goals and the performance of the respective peer group. Based on these neutral as well as highly detailed observations and assessments of past

performance, the consultants are provided with excellent impulses to plan their further personal and professional development.

To ensure an ongoing optimization of these processes, a Review Team monitors the annual process and develops both improvements and support offers.

Via an internal SharePoint and other communication measures, comprehensive and transparent information regarding all relevant points is ensured.

Promotion

At zeb, employees are promoted based on defined promotion criteria and the decision of a neutral evaluation committee. There is a principle that those who, based on their evaluation, fulfill the criteria for the next career level are actually promoted to that level. zeb thus offers an objective system which appraises and rewards performance fairly.

Personnel development

Numerous training offers support zeb employees in their learning and career ambitions. In addition, individual requests are covered with the help of external providers. The digital learning platform introduced in 2019 also provides a wide variety of contents.

Future goals

Completion of the pilot phase for the project manager feedback system.

4.3 Diversity

Our commitment:

Support for diversity and inclusion

zeb expects all its employees to treat clients and business partners fairly and to respect rights and privacy. zeb does not tolerate unequal treatment based on gender, race, disability, origin, religion or philosophy, age or sexual identity.

Target	Target achievement
25% share of women in consulting by 2023	Long-term target—not yet relevant for 2019

Table #8: Target achievement—diversity

zeb is convinced that diversity within the workforce has positive effects on the work climate and the quality of the work results. Therefore, zeb aims to become more diverse, attract a wide variety of people and integrate them into the company.

Both the consulting industry and the financial sector are dominated by men. To promote diversity, zeb consciously offers all employees an attractive work environment. A particular focus is on fostering women. It is our aim to attract more women into consulting and to create a work environment that allows them to stay with the company long-term and increases the share of women in leadership positions.

To examine the status quo and the development of diversity at zeb, personnel data is regularly analyzed on an anonymous basis. It was determined that there is no topic (e.g. salary, career development) in which women are disadvantaged at zeb. Nevertheless, networking offers have been

developed for women in order to strengthen them in dealing with the challenge of working in a male-dominated environment.

German Diversity Charter (“Charta der Vielfalt”)

By actively supporting the German Diversity Charter ([Charta der Vielfalt](#)), zeb documents its attitude towards diversity and promoting diversity in the company.

women@zeb

The internal zeb initiative “women@zeb” encompasses a wide range of measures. There are three pillars which stand for the main fields of action: recruiting, fostering and retention.

Various offerings and measures in the individual pillars support the overall objective. Here are a few examples.

Cross-mentoring

By cooperating with “Kompetenz im Management” ([KIM](#)) and the “[Initiative Women into Leadership](#)” zeb fosters female talents and executives in a targeted manner. Both initiatives aim at supporting highly qualified women in their professional development. Through cross-mentoring, the broad network which spans the economy, academia and society offers expert support and a continuous exchange of experiences beyond individual companies. Both programs run for one year respectively—zeb is represented in both associations with one to two mentees each.

Female buddy program

The female buddy program at zeb is meant to support new female recruits. Their personal female mentor (“buddy”) serves as a confidante who facilitates their onboarding process and supports them in getting to grips with their new tasks.

Sales coaching for women

A sales coaching offer specifically tailored to women supports female consultants in reaching the required acquisition targets.

Girls’ Day

Encouraging young women (school or university students, etc.) to take up STEM professions (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) is another goal that is close to zeb’s heart. zeb supports this goal by actively taking part in the “[Girls’ Day](#)”. Under the motto “Get IT! – mit Wirtschaftsinformatik mehr als Programmieren” (Get IT!—Business informatics for more than programming), zeb employees introduced twelve female school students to the world of IT consulting.

Future goals

Achieving a 25% share of women in consulting by 2023.

5 Society

zeb was founded in Münster in 1992 by university professors Prof. Dr. Bernd Rolfes and Prof. Dr. Dres. h. c. Henner Schierenbeck as a company with a strong scientific background. Due to this heritage, supporting children and adolescents is especially close to zeb’s heart. We therefore strive to be a reliable partner to school and university students and to people with educational responsibility. We believe that education and research on all levels (school, vocational training, university, scientific community) make major contributions to the global economic development of the 21st century, also in the area of finance. Therefore, as part of our engagement for society, we are actively involved in the context of education and have defined three topic areas: training, university support and corporate volunteering.

At our headquarters in Münster, zeb offers the vocational training program “Kaufmann/Kauffrau für Bürokommunikation“ (Office Communication Manager) as well as integrated vocational training / an integrated degree program in business informatics.

zeb continues to maintain extensive networks and contacts with universities and other educational institutions. With the zeb.business school, zeb itself founded a scientific institute at the Steinbeis University Berlin to promote studies integrated into working life and also to realize research projects. Besides Bachelor’s and Master’s programs, the zeb.business school also offers a PhD program. Additionally, zeb is an active partner of various student organizations, academic chairs and other university cooperation partners.

The corporate volunteering program also supports our focus on education. In cooperation with “JOBLINGE”, zeb reaches young people and provides sustained support in the fight against youth unemployment.

5.1 School students

Our commitment:

zeb is a company that takes on trainees and offers school leavers an attractive vocational training program.

Target	Target achievement
Fostering digital skills of trainees	The goal was achieved by numerous additional modules with digital content.
Intensifying school cooperations	School cooperations were continued.
Further development of our online offering for trainees	Additional modules as part of the blended learning approach are available to trainees too.

Table #9: Achievement of objectives 2019—school students

Vocational training / integrated degree program

As part of its social responsibility, zeb headquarters in Münster takes on two trainees per year in the “Kaufmann/Kauffrau für Büromanagement” vocational training program on office management and three students of Business Informatics completing an integrated degree program (B.Sc.).

Even before the start of their training / integrated degree program, the new zeb trainees and students are invited to a welcoming event. This is where all zeb trainees get to know each other and meet their trainers, mentors as well as coaches.

After successfully completing their Bachelor's degree in 2019, the integrated degree students were inducted into the zeb.bachelor welcome program. They will now work full-time for one year as Analysts in customizing directly at the clients' before starting a Master's program which is sponsored by a zeb scholarship.

School cooperations

At the [Pascal-Gymnasium](#) in Münster, a zeb student assistant has been offering a robotics group for girls for several years now. She found out that girls feel more comfortable and make faster progress "among themselves". Over the entire school year, girls have fun applying programming languages in modules that are built on one another.

At Marienschule, a catholic girls' school in Münster, the senior students are prepared for potential assessment centers in a two-hour workshop organized by zeb recruiting managers. Through group work, presentations, role play and some tricky tasks they get a good overview of selection processes—all the while gathering important information on choosing a career.

Rotary-Berufsdienste-Award

The Rotary Club in Münster organizes a competition where school students in Münster can submit papers on any topic of their choice. The best students (first or second place of each school) are then invited to zeb and take part in an exclusive applicants' training. During the training, all major tips and tricks for job applicants are presented and, what's more, can be experienced (group tasks, case studies, role play, cognitive performance tests, simulation of job interviews, CV check).

Internships

School students from year 9 onwards have the opportunity to get to know zeb and our activities through internships—be it just for one day or over several weeks. These options are available in our IT/Software Development and in the support departments in Münster.

Future goals

Fostering trainees' digital skills.

Continuation of the school cooperations.

Further development of our online offering for trainees.

5.2 University students

Our commitment:

Reliable partnership with academic chairs and student organizations

Target	Target achievement
Intensification of research and teaching at the zeb.business school	The research projects were expanded in terms of both topics and volume.
Continuation of the cooperation with student organizations, university networks, academic chairs,	The cooperation with corresponding organizations was continued and in some cases intensified.

Target	Target achievement
talent sponsorship organizations and elite networks	
More than 30 teaching and learning events with university students per year	In the reporting period, 34 learning events were conducted with university students.

Table #10: Target achievement in 2019—university students

Promoting research and scientific talent

In 2018, zeb joined the [Stifterverband](#), thus actively supporting education, science and innovation.

zeb is the only European consultancy which, in cooperation with Steinbeis University Berlin, has established its own university-level [Business School](#) that both conducts research and teaches students.

In university courses integrated into and supplementing regular jobs, young talents are jointly trained by zeb and its clients, and scholarships are granted on a regular basis.

In this context, 77 dissertations have so far been published.. Currently, 11 doctoral candidates are organized in a corresponding zeb program.

In projects funded by federal and state ministries, zeb investigates for example the use of new media in education and the correlation between diversity management and innovation management.

To develop new university courses, offer the latest contents and utilize modern didactics as well as in summer schools, the zeb.business school cooperates with leading universities in Europe, the USA, India and China.

The zeb.business school was part of the jury of one of the largest global DeepTech startup competitions, IPIEC GLOBAL, and at the end of January 2019 presented an AI study conducted using the latest AI methods to, amongst others, members of the German Bundestag’s Study Commission “Artificial Intelligence”.

Cooperation with student organizations

In 2019, zeb organized numerous lectures and a total of 25 complimentary trainings for students, which did not form part of recruiting measures. Rather, zeb consultants got involved as presenters in workshops, in case studies and in seminars on specialist and management topics. In particular, zeb supports the advisory activities of the “Bundesverband Deutscher Studentischer Unternehmensberatungen” (the German association of student consultancies, [BDSU](#)) and of the umbrella organization of the “Börsenvereine an deutschen Hochschulen” (stock market clubs at German universities, [BVH](#)) as well as the activities and further development of the [ICNetwork](#), the second large association of German student-organized management consultancies. Additionally, zeb supports pro-bono projects, such as the student-organized 180 Degrees Consulting initiative.

Cooperation with academic chairs and university associations

In 2019, zeb once again donated money to various academic organizations and provided funding for academic chairs and (international) university initiatives. The financial support we provide, however, is far exceeded by our varied academic and practice-oriented cooperations. For example,

zeb collaborates with the [Research Center Finance & Information Management](#). We have a particularly intense cooperation with the international program “Master in International Management” from the Cooperation of European Management Schools ([CEMS](#)). All over Europe, zeb as a corporate partner of CEMS participates in the organization of workshops, seminars, business projects and lectures on topics such as globally responsible leadership and corporate volunteering.

Furthermore, zeb offers scholarships and prizes for outstanding results of IT students at the universities of Münster and Mannheim.

Cooperations with talent sponsorship organizations and elite networks

zeb invests strongly in academic talents. As a member of the sponsors’ club of the “Studienförderwerk Klaus Murmann”, zeb supports the “Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft” (Foundation of German Business, [sdw](#)). sdw scholarship students benefit from seminars and trainings offered by zeb which they receive as part of their immaterial sponsorship from the partnering businesses—also from zeb. In addition, the Head of Recruiting assumes the voluntary position of “sdw-Vertrauensmanager” (sdw manager of trust) for the regional group Münster/Osnabrück.

As a corporate partner of the career network [e-fellows.net](#), zeb ensures, amongst other things, the support of the scholarship and offers e-fellows scholarship students numerous opportunities for professional and personal development.

zeb intern and talents program

zeb offers up to 150 internships in consulting per year as well as numerous student assistant posts, thus enabling students to gain an insight into management consulting.

The zeb.talents program offers exceptionally good interns an opportunity for in-depth exchanges even after the end of their internship. As part of the zeb.talents program, the talents benefit from the advantages of the zeb network as well as various training measures.

Support for theses and dissertations

Students who plan to write their Bachelor’s or Master’s thesis in cooperation with a company are very welcome at zeb. zeb will provide them with a thesis mentor who also acts as a subject-matter coach.

zeb.bachelor welcome program

With the zeb.bachelor welcome program, zeb supports the transfer of Bachelor graduates into consulting. The program combines one year of working at zeb as an Analyst with a scholarship for a Master’s program on sabbatical and the subsequent return as a Consultant.

Future goals

Intensification of research and teaching at the zeb.business school.

Continuation of zeb’s cooperation with student organizations, university networks, academic chairs, talent sponsorship organizations and elite networks.

Completion of more than 20 teaching and learning events with students per year.

5.3 Corporate volunteering

Our commitment:

Supporting young people in their integration into the working world

Target	Target achievement
Supporting children and adolescents in their financial education	Due to a change in cooperation partner, the target is no longer relevant.

Table #11: Target achievement—corporate volunteering

zeb demonstrates its social commitment, among other things, through a corporate volunteering program aimed at children and young people. In the past, the My Finance Coach initiative was a cooperation partner of zeb. As My Finance Coach ceased to operate on April 12, 2019, alternative cooperation possibilities were evaluated in order to continue the service to society.

Since the end of 2019, zeb has been cooperating with the JOBLINGE initiative. The aim of this cooperation is to reintegrate long-term unemployed young people into the labor market through mentoring. zeb employees offer job application workshops, for example, and are involved as mentors.

Future goals

Continuation and nationwide expansion of the cooperation with JOBLINGE.

6 Environment

Our business operations in the consulting industry require the use of energy and natural resources. zeb has set itself the target of actively minimizing the negative effects and, wherever possible, to initiate measures to avoid them altogether.

We continuously strive to improve our ecological efficiency through various steps: economical and ecologically reasonable use of energy, water and paper; green IT and the use of renewable energies; the use of e-Mobility or even the complete replacement of business trips by audio and video conferences.

zeb employees are encouraged to reduce our carbon footprint through their behavior in their day-to-day work.

In 2019, zeb conducted its regular external energy audit. The results of the audit form the basis for further measures to improve the company's energy footprint.

As part of the UN Global Compact, zeb commits itself to continuous sustainable development and the implementation of national and international standards on sustainability.

As a classic consultancy, zeb is first and foremost a service provider for other companies. zeb has set itself the target to act as environmentally and climate friendly as possible and thus to minimize our impact on the environment by reducing the consumption of energy and resources.

6.1 Procurement

A major element of sustainable, social and environmentally or climate friendly behavior is the procurement of goods and services for the zeb group. Therefore, we have committed ourselves, wherever reasonable and feasible, to support suppliers who source their products and services from local, fair and sustainable production not involving child labor.

Our commitment:

Support of local, fair and sustainable production not involving child labor

Target	Target achievement
Increase the share of suppliers who commit to zeb's Code of Conduct to 80%.	In 2019, 79% of suppliers committed themselves to zeb's Code of Conduct.
Increase in the procurement of products and services from local, fair and sustainable production not involving child labor	In 2019, once again products from local, fair and sustainable production were procured wherever possible.

Table #12: Target achievement in 2019—procurement

Use of suppliers who accept our Code of Conduct

Compliance with directly applicable law as well as impeccable actions from an ethical perspective are a matter of course for zeb and its employees. As a binding guideline for the behavior of zeb employees, the Code of Conduct defines the basic rules required to achieve this. We do not just expect our employees to comply with these basic rules, but also our suppliers. Suppliers are therefore informed about the Code of Conduct on a regular basis and a questionnaire is used to find out

the current implementation status of various aspects of the Code of Conduct. This applies to suppliers who achieve a total annual turnover of more than EUR 50,000 with the zeb group.

Regional procurement of sustainable products

For supplying our office locations with groceries, such as coffee, fruit and beverages, we rely on regional, sustainable and organic products. We try to implement this policy consistently at all zeb locations.

In addition, the zeb office locations are equipped with water dispensers. Besides the environmentally friendly production, this also saves transport journeys, bottles and packaging material. Other beverages are, as far as possible, sourced from regional drinks suppliers in returnable glass bottles only. Because of its good recyclability, glass is a very environmentally friendly packaging material.

Coffee is procured from a regional coffee roaster in accordance with the quality standards of the Deutsche Röstergilde and taking fair trade into account. At all locations, care is taken to ensure that coffee is sourced from organic production.

Milk and other dairy products are also sourced regionally and largely from organic production. The milk offered at our headquarters in Münster for example is produced and processed without the use of genetic engineering, but using solar energy. [The milk](#) is pasteurized only and neither homogenized, nor separated; thus it is a largely natural product.

Reduction of paper consumption

zeb has set itself the goal to reduce the consumption of paper in the company and thus to protect the environment in addition to the sustainable purchase of paper from responsibly managed forests (FSC certification).

Due to various measures, such as the digitization of invoicing wherever possible, the consumption of paper is continuously decreasing despite corporate growth. As an important measure, the complete digitization of our employees' travel expense accounting should be mentioned in this context. Across the entire company, no physical or paper-based receipts are required any longer for travel expense reporting. Thus, the dispatch of invoices and receipts by mail has also been eliminated. Additionally, we have started to digitize invoicing wherever legally possible in order to further reduce the consumption of paper. As far as possible, we also avoid sending paper documents by mail.

Finally, supplier invoices have also been processed digitally since the beginning of 2020.

	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018–2019
Paper consumption	9,908	9,068	7,257	-19.97%

Table #13: Company-wide paper consumption (in kg)

All measures lead to a reduction in paper consumption, paper recycling and mail transport throughout the year.

	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018–2019
Paper recycling in Germany	9,945	8,255	9,620	+16.54%

Table #14: Germany-wide data protection compliant paper recycling (in kg)

The increase in recycling figures is due to disposal measures for legacy documents that have now been digitized.

	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018–2019
Paper recycling at foreign locations	–	–	517	– %

Table #15: Data protection compliant paper recycling in Luxembourg, Poland, Russia and Austria (in kg)

For the first time, this report also covers the non-German zeb locations. In the coming years, it will therefore be possible to show the development of the figures.

Separation and avoidance of waste

As far as possible, the zeb offices follow strict waste separation rules for paper, plastic, biological and residual waste. The toner cartridges of copiers and printers as well as defective electrical devices are properly recycled by regional disposal companies.

When purchasing stationery, we also consciously avoid unnecessary packaging. At zeb headquarters in Münster, this is achieved by having paper delivered in returnable boxes by local service providers. In Münster, office supplies are also delivered in an environmentally friendly manner by electric transport bicycle rather than by car. In addition, we place a lot of value on natural, reusable writing materials as well as refillable products.

Environmentally friendly parcel and letter dispatch

While paper consumption cannot be entirely avoided, the remaining letters and parcels are dispatched in an environmentally friendly way. The service provider selected for parcels is certified according to the [Carbon Neutral Protocol](#) and compensates carbon emissions through various projects.

Furthermore, zeb is an official customer of the carbon-neutral [GOGREEN Service](#) for letters, thus actively contributing to climate protection. This service provider also balances the carbon emissions they generate through numerous climate protection projects.

Environmentally friendly cleaning agents and consumables

Ecological and sustainable cleaning agents are used at most zeb locations. The cleaning agents used are certified with the “EU Ecolabel” and the “Blue Angel”, the German environmental label. Consumables such as paper towels, soaps and toilet articles are purchased from sustainable and recycled materials. In cooperation with the cleaning service providers at all zeb locations, zeb would like to switch completely to sustainable and environmentally friendly cleaning agents and consumables.

Future goals

Regular surveys of suppliers and their agreement to the zeb Code of Conduct.

Further increase in the procurement of products and services from local, fair and sustainable production.

Reduction of total paper consumption by 50% through digitization of invoicing.

Complete switch to sustainable, environmentally friendly cleaning agents and consumables.

6.2 Mobility

Our business model requires that our employees undertake numerous national and increasingly international business trips to our clients’ sites. These trips should be planned and carried out in an environmentally friendly manner as far as possible and reasonable. We always review the use of digital collaboration tools as an alternative to undertaking business trips in order to keep our ecological footprint as small as possible.

Our commitment:

Raising awareness regarding all possibilities to reduce greenhouse gases

Target	Target achievement
Full compensation of CO ₂ consumption when using air travel	90% of the CO ₂ consumption in air travel was compensated.
Reduction in CO ₂ consumption by shifting business trips to train travel	The number of business trips by rail has increased—due to a general increase in business trips, no reduction in CO ₂ consumption could be achieved.
Modernization of the company car fleet with optimized engines and expansion of e-mobility	The regular replacement of the vehicle fleet with optimized engines has been carried out.

Table #16: Target achievement in 2019—mobility

zeb arrangements for working from home

As a matter of principle, all employees of the zeb group have the opportunity to work from home within the framework of an individual “home office” arrangement. This saves daily car journeys that can often not be substituted by public transport due to a lack of direct connections. 53% of zeb employees already have a “home office” arrangement in place.

Audio and video conferencing

On the way to completely avoiding business travel, the use of audio and video conferencing is gaining increasing importance. For this purpose, the zeb office locations (from a minimum of ten employees onwards) are equipped with a SMART Room System (a solution for conference rooms based on Skype for Business). At zeb, all PCs are equipped with a Skype for Business profile. By linking the stationary SMART Room Systems with the video and telephone conferencing systems installed on all zeb computers, collaborative working is possible without traveling or functional restrictions, regardless of location. In addition, all new purchases are reviewed for their suitability with regard to the usability of digital collaborative tools.

Moreover, we integrate external video conferencing systems (e.g. our clients' systems) into our Skype meetings by using our Meeting Hub. This is a gateway for conventional video conferencing systems to our Skype meetings.

The systematic expansion of collaborative work tools, such as the use of SharePoints, is another means of reducing business travel. When using SharePoints and Office 365, several people can simultaneously work on documents regardless of where they are.

Free choice of office location

A further optimization of travel is achieved by the fact that zeb consultants can freely choose their office location. Depending on where they live, consultants can select the most suitable office location in terms of traveling distance.

Travel policy

For 2020 as well, the zeb-wide agreed and binding travel policy will be continuously adjusted to the changed traveling behavior of our employees in order to optimally support them in terms of environmental, cost and benefit aspects and selecting the best possible mode of transportation, be it flights, public transport including trains, rental cars, company cars, taxis, car sharing, car pool vehicles or using our company bicycles. One example to be mentioned here is the use of car sharing options offering electric cars in large cities to get from the airport to the client's or to the zeb office. zeb employees may use all sharing offers available: car, bike, electric scooter, etc. Due to the generally limited travel activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, an overall lower travel volume can be expected in 2020.

Sustainable business travel

There are several routes which have binding rules for the use of public transport instead of cars—or train travel instead of flights. As a result of the measures taken, the number of passenger kilometers traveled by rail per zeb employee in 2019 increased by more than 8% compared to the previous year. By using the [bahn.business program](#), all zeb employees travel entirely on green energy and 92% of all train journeys made are carbon neutral. This is confirmed by a green electricity certificate awarded to Deutsche Bahn each year.



	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018–2019
Passenger kilometers by rail per zeb employee	8,357	8,392	9,115	+8.62%

Table #17: Calculation: total number of passenger kilometers divided by number of zeb employees (based on the month of December of the respective year)

Optimization of the company car fleet

The zeb fleet of company cars consists mainly of vehicles that were recently built and are thus equipped with the latest technologies regarding fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions. On top of that, the company continues to promote e-mobility. For internal zeb business trips, an electric car is used. Furthermore, two hybrid vehicle types will be tested in a pilot phase in 2020. Based on this, zeb intends to drive the electrification of the company car fleet forward.

A precise look at any reduction in CO₂ emissions is not possible due to a new method of calculating CO₂ emissions introduced in 2019. In the following table, the figures from 2017 and 2018 represent zeb in Germany. Since 2019, all vehicles of the entire zeb group have been included.

	2017	2018	2019
CO ₂ consumption of the vehicle fleet in kg	844,560	767,350	1,225,000
CO ₂ consumption per vehicle in kg	4,080	3,690	4,730

Table #18: Detailed overview of the CO₂ consumption of the company car fleet

Overview of CO₂ consumption in kg

	2017	2018	2019	Development 2018-2019
Flights	1,988,929*	2.9 million*	2.6 million*	-10.34%*
Train travel (regional)	52,370	34,513	35,731	+3.53%
Rental cars	166,084	190,989	185,553	-2.85%
Hotel	–	703.800**	687,800**	-2.27%**
Total	2,207,383	3,829,302	3,509,084	-24.65%

Table #19: CO₂ consumption (*according to DEFRA protocol; **according to CO₂ calculation coefficients per country of travel)

The airlines Lufthansa, Swiss, Austrian, Air France, KLM and Delta Air Lines fully compensate the CO₂ consumption during air travel. This means that more than 90% of all zeb air travel is compensated.

CO₂ consumption in regional train travel in 2019 increased by 3.53% compared to 2018. The slight increase is attributable to increased travel activity. Since January 2020, zeb has been using 100% green electricity in regional public transport too and has thus been completely climate-neutral in this segment.

The CO₂ consumption of rental cars has fallen due to the increased use of regional and long-distance train travel.

A shift in the modes of transport used can be attributed to the location of the individual project sites.

For the first time, zeb is able to report the CO₂ consumption of worldwide overnight stays in hotels in 2019. In comparison with the 2018 reporting year, a decrease of 2.27% can be recorded.

Future goals

Reduction in CO₂ consumption through targeted travel management

Shifting more air travel to rail travel.

6.3 Energy

Our commitment:

Support of emission-free energy

zeb is aware of its corporate responsibility to protect the environment and climate and makes an important contribution for the current and future generations through sustainable economic activities.

Target	Target achievement
Supply of zeb office locations outside of Germany with sustainably produced electricity	90% of the power supplied is sustainable
Reduction of power consumption by using energy-optimized electronic devices	No demonstrable reduction due to one-off effects of business expansion
Recertification according to DIN EN 16247-1	The planned recertification has taken place

Table #20: Target achievement in 2019—energy

Energy audit

zeb is certified according to DIN EN 16247-1. Based on the results of the audit, we are continuing to implement various measures. These include, for example, replacing lighting with LED technology or installing motion detectors in all zeb locations. By doing so, a large share of the energy that is otherwise consumed for lighting can be saved. For new buildings, modifications or replacements, energy consumption is given particular attention by making sure that equipment and light bulbs of efficiency classes A++, A+ and A are purchased. The audit revealed various weaknesses in the audited locations Berlin, Munich and Münster.

In 2020, various measures such as the integration of hot and cold thermal storage in combination with in-house combined heat and power plants or photovoltaic systems are to be discussed in cooperation with the landlords and implemented where possible. In addition, systematic communication measures will be implemented in 2020 to raise awareness among colleagues for increased sustainability and energy savings using the communication tool zeb.insight. By jointly developing measures regarding energy efficiency and climate protection, colleagues are motivated to adopt a more sustainable behavior.

Energy certification of zeb locations

zeb does not own any real estate. Rented office buildings have differing certifications or labels. For example, a sustainability guideline for the building was developed at the zeb location in Frankfurt. This is implemented in the public areas and in the rented areas. In addition, we support landlords in the sustainable modernization of existing buildings. This is evidenced by upcoming renovations and refittings in various locations.

zeb location	Building certification
Amsterdam	Vivaldi label
Berlin	DGNB certification (in 2020)
London	BREEAM certification (in 2020)
Luxembourg	BREEAM certification

zeb location	Building certification
Moscow	BREEAM certification
Warsaw	LEED Certification—Platinum

Table #21: Building certifications of the zeb office locations

Green electricity

zeb attaches great importance to supplying its offices with green electricity. Since 2016, all German offices have been supplied with green power from renewable energies. That means that power is supplied on a CO₂-neutral basis. In 2019, we also reviewed the power supply of other locations and switched to green electricity where necessary and feasible.

	2016	2018	2019	Change 2018-2019
Berlin	39,308	38,461	41,475	+6.31%
Frankfurt	100,380	89,958	93,671	+4.13%
Hamburg	21,732	21,848	27,174	+24.38%*
Luxembourg	–	–	7,893	–
Munich 1	25,960	24,304	26,162	+7.64%
Munich 2	–	–	6,297**	–
Münster (HQ)	643,129	552,664	556,039	+0.61%
Vienna	–	–	30,733	–
Zurich	–	–	18,227	–
Total	830,509	727,235	807,671	–

Table #22: Electricity consumption (in kWh) [*Conversion of a previously unused area for event purposes; **Consumption from May 1, 2019]

Due to varying calculation modalities, invoicing periods and the integration of additional zeb office locations, a valid evaluation of all zeb locations is not yet possible in this report.

A reduction in electricity consumption is expected in 2020 through the implementation of various energy-saving measures, further replacements with more efficient devices and by raising awareness among employees.

Supporting the future of renewable energies

By purchasing certified green electricity ([Münster:natürlich](#)) and thus supplying GSL (Grüner Strom Label) funding, zeb makes another contribution for the environment and climate protection. It is an investment into green energy projects and building new eco-friendly power plants. The generation of the certified green electricity is low in CO₂, or even carbon neutral. All German office locations as well as the zeb offices in Luxembourg, Austria and Switzerland are supplied with certified green electricity.

Future goals

Systematically expanding the supply of zeb office locations with sustainably produced electricity.



Continuous reduction of power consumption by using energy-optimized electronic devices.

Further expansion of the infrastructure for e-Mobility at the zeb locations.

7 Future goals

zeb topic	zeb field of action	Targets for the next reporting period
Market	Ethics	zeb will continue to act in accordance with the applicable legal provisions at all times.
	Transparency	Publication of the next sustainability report (reporting period 04/2020–03/2021 to 05/2021)
	Audit	Completion of an external audit performed by EcoVadis with the aim of achieving the GOLD Rating (Top 5%) in 2020
Employees	Employer attractiveness	For 2020, we set ourselves the target of achieving above-average kununu and glassdoor employer ratings: more than 4 points and a recommendation rate >90%. We also want to expand the range of alternative working time models and increase their acceptance.
	Individual career	Completion of the pilot phase for the project manager feedback system
	Diversity	Achieving a 25% share of women in consulting by 2023
Society	School students	Fostering digital skills of trainees, continuation of the school cooperations, further development of our online offering for trainees
	University students	Intensification of research and teaching at the zeb.business school, continuation of the cooperation with student organizations, university networks, academic chairs, talent sponsorship organizations and elite networks, completion of more than 20 teaching and learning events with students per year
	Corporate volunteering	Continuation and nationwide expansion of the cooperation with JOBLINGE
Environment	Procurement	Regular surveys of suppliers and their agreement to the zeb Code of Conduct, further increase in the procurement of products and services from local, fair and sustainable production, reduction of total paper consumption by 50% through digitalization of invoicing, complete switch to sustainable, environmentally friendly cleaning agents and consumables
	Mobility	Reduction of CO ₂ consumption through targeted travel management, shifting more air travel to rail travel
	Energy	Systematically expanding the supply of zeb office locations with sustainably produced electricity, continuous reduction of power consumption by using energy-optimized electronic devices, further expansion of the infrastructure for e-Mobility at the zeb locations

Table #23: Future goals

8 Cooperations and initiatives

Market



Employees



Society



zeb



PIM&CEMS



Environment



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