

Management spotlight: Leonie Schreve, ING

Posted by [Steven Wilding](#) [1] on Jan 24, 2013

Translate sustainability into business opportunities

Leonie Schreve is head of sustainable lending at Dutch bank ING. She currently holds the position of chair for the Equator Principles. She is a former winner of the Financial Times chairman's award for leadership in sustainable project finance.

Schreve says that banks need to get sustainability integrated in their commercial strategy, and is developing a new team at ING to do just that.

Ethical Corporation: *"Head of sustainable lending" – that sounds like an interesting role. What does it involve exactly?*

Leonie Schreve: At the moment, it involves setting up a new team within the commercial side of ING focused on integrating sustainability in our commercial business model, as a business opportunity. My aim is to enable us to make a portfolio shift, to do more business with sustainable companies. My team is also working on developing new sustainable markets where we expect growth opportunities.

Ethical Corporation: *What's the biggest issue you think you will face in the year ahead?*

Leonie Schreve: I think the biggest issue is really making steps towards translating sustainability into business opportunities. That's true not just for ING. It's true for most companies. At a personal level, my biggest issue is to build my new team and to make a difference within the bank. Ultimately, we want to fully integrate sustainable business opportunities within ING's business model.

Ethical Corporation: *What do you see as the most interesting opportunities for a bank such as ING?*

Leonie Schreve: The main opportunities are in those companies that are proactive in addressing issues of resource scarcity and sustainability. We're looking to allocate our efforts towards those companies. I see big potential in water, waste and energy. We will be looking to develop new markets in these areas. There is a lot of development going on in terms of clean energy in China, just to cite one example.

Water is a particularly interesting sector for us. The potential impact that climate change can have on water supplies makes it a really critical area. Water security is set to have a big impact on business operations. I think this will become increasingly evident in the coming years. The issue of water touches on all sectors, after all. As an industry sector, water still needs a lot of development but we see a lot of business opportunities there as well.

Ethical Corporation: *Climate change – adaptation or mitigation?*

Leonie Schreve: Adaptation.

Ethical Corporation: *A government to watch on sustainability?*

Leonie Schreve: China.

Ethical Corporation: *Corporation tax – higher or lower?*

Leonie Schreve: I would say more balanced!

Ethical Corporation: Shared value or sustainability?

Leonie Schreve: Sustainability is shared value.

Leonie Schreve will be speaking about “Sustainability as a market strategy: a detailed insight on the business case from a lender’s perspective”, at this year's [12th Annual Responsible Business Summit](#) [2], 7-8 May 2013.

Links:

[1] <http://www.ethicalcorp.com/users/steven-wilding>

[2] <http://events.ethicalcorp.com/rbs/index.php>