

ENGAGING BUSINESSES WITH BIODIVERSITY

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL
BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS



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INTRODUCTION

Since the signing of the Convention on Biological Diversity over ten years ago, a number of developments within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan have proven to be key in helping to stem the loss of biodiversity and facilitate its recovery. One is the proliferation and development of Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) - whose work at community level with different sectors of society has been crucial for developing and delivering action plans across the UK. Another is the commitment by the UK Government to engage all sectors of society, including businesses, in achieving the mission set out in the UK BAP.

Globally, the need to involve businesses has been acknowledged through inter-governmental processes, such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as well as industry driven initiatives such as the Energy and Biodiversity Initiative (www.theebi.org). While there are already businesses contributing positively towards biodiversity conservation, many more companies could become involved. The challenge is how to encourage them to use natural resources sustainably, manage their landholdings and activities in a way which will minimise their ecological impacts and contribute to the conservation and restoration of biodiversity.

Local Biodiversity Partnerships can play a key role in moving biodiversity conservation up the business agenda and instigating pro-active approaches to managing biodiversity related activities. However, while many LBPs are experienced in engaging with different stakeholder groups, their work to date with businesses has often been minimal. Many LBPs have felt that their capacity to approach and work with businesses is limited, and have focused on other priorities. However, as a number of reciprocal benefits which can be derived from working in partnership with businesses are emerging, more LBPs are expressing an interest in engaging businesses in biodiversity.

This publication has been prepared by Earthwatch Institute (Europe) as part of the Business and Biodiversity Resource Centre which is supported by DEFRA's Environmental Action Fund and a number of businesses. Earthwatch has over ten years of experience of working with the business sector, engaging a variety of different companies in a wide range of biodiversity related activities, from research to education, enabling us to contribute towards achieving a sustainable environment. This booklet presents a summary of workshops, discussions and research, along with our own experience of engaging businesses and provides LBPs with an overview of the reasons for, approaches to, and the challenges of engaging with businesses.



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I. ENGAGEMENT



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By working with businesses, Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) can help to develop and implement strategies to reverse the trend of declining biodiversity. The potential benefits of engaging businesses are vast and varied – ranging from developing capacity of the partnerships through to gaining access to sites and resources. Many LBPs which have worked with the business sector have reported positive outcomes for the Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) in their region.

Businesses are increasingly recognising that positive and visible involvement in biodiversity conservation can provide them with many opportunities and reduce their risks. Working with LBPs allows a company to keep informed of local issues and become involved in the community where it operates. LBPs provide companies with efficient and effective means through which to engage with biodiversity and realise a number of different business benefits.

This section outlines many of the benefits which LBPs have gained through engaging with businesses and, conversely, which businesses have derived from their work with LBPs. Many collaborative efforts generate similar benefits for all parties concerned, providing opportunities for exchanging ideas, obtaining fresh perspectives on issues, and accessing new information and networks. By being associated with each other, companies and LBPs can gain credibility and publicity, potentially extending long-term benefits far beyond the biodiversity outcomes.

BENEFITS TO LBPs

Access to Key Land-holdings

Many businesses own or control significant land holdings and can influence wide areas of biodiversity through the interactions they have with other companies such as their suppliers.

Achieving LBAP Targets

Working with businesses provides numerous opportunities to help achieve LBAP targets, from conserving specific species on company sites to reducing potentially negative impacts on the biodiversity of entire habitats.

Skills and Knowledge

Companies can increase LBP capacity, not only because they bring fresh skills and expertise to a partnership, but through their operations. For instance a company may help with marketing, communicating and organising an event. Unique opportunities exist for the LBP to access additional personnel and also to 'shadow' business professionals.

Exposure to and training in business skills such as finance, marketing and project management offer a fresh outlook on how to run and manage an LBP and its activities.

Resources

The granting of financial support and resources by a company is an obvious bonus for LBPs. Businesses can also provide access to other resources, such as the use of equipment, premises and even staff time.

Engaging Society

Working with companies can help to raise understanding of biodiversity and promote behaviour which seeks to minimise negative and maximise positive impacts on the environment. Through the association with businesses, the wider community, such as family or friends of employees, can be engaged, leading to lifestyle decisions that may foster stewardship of biodiversity.



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CASE STUDY: BP REMOTE OPERATED VEHICLES

Following the lead of its operations in Mexico, BP's 'Developing Business Unit' came up with an idea which would not only prove to help biodiversity conservation through contributing to scientific research, but also provided an exciting new way for employees to become involved. The primary purpose of the company's Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) is to install and maintain equipment on the seabed, but the SERPENT project makes further use of them as tools to photograph marine life. Linking with the University of Aberdeen and Southampton Oceanography Centre, the project provides scientists with a regular supply of photographic data, as well as access to the vessels from which the pictures are taken. Since the project began, in June 2002, three scientific papers citing new findings in deep water marine biology have already been published.

For more information on SERPENT (Scientific and Environmental ROV Partnership using Existing iNdustry Technology) please go to: www.serpentproject.com

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Manage risks

Biodiversity presents both risks and opportunities to many companies. By demonstrating real commitment to and delivery of biodiversity programmes, companies can manage the risks associated with their biodiversity impacts.

Legal Compliance

Knowledge and expertise gained from working with an LBP can help a company prepare for and comply with new legislation and regulations. The EU Environmental Liabilities Directive, due to be integrated into national law by 2007, specifically implements the 'polluter pays' principle, through which companies will be liable for damage to the environment. Forthcoming regulation in the UK will require companies to produce an Operating and Financial Review that identifies environmental risks to the company and their impacts on others, including biodiversity risks.

Reputation

A company's reputation rests on a number of different factors which can include its own environmental record as well as its relationship with different stakeholders - such as LBPs. Establishing a positive reputation can help a business improve consumer, shareholder and community satisfaction and relations.

Attract and Retain Staff

Many conservation activities provide a variety of learning and development opportunities for staff, such as team building and problem solving. They are often fun, taking people out of their daily work environment and encouraging new, creative ways of looking at things.

By engaging with LBPs, companies can build their own staff morale and attract and retain new staff.

Financial benefits

Biodiversity gains can be realised without necessarily expending huge sums of money – and can also be associated with strategies which cut costs (or increase profits!). Legislative compliance avoids fines, while gaining 'green' credentials can enhance sales opportunities and shareholder value.

LBPs can provide companies with indirect savings through the information networks and advice which they offer.

Gain and Retain Investment

Increasingly investors and banks are considering a company's biodiversity risks when they assess them for investment purposes. The risk for those companies that are not managing their biodiversity exposure adequately is that capital will be harder to access or will increase in cost.

License to operate

Delays in obtaining permission to build or operate can be extremely costly, with knock on effects on sub-contractors and contractors. Making sure that applications are fully researched and communicated to the relevant stakeholders, reduces many of the costly barriers to obtaining licenses and permits.

Secure sustainable supply chains

Biodiversity supplies businesses with essential ingredients and services, such as natural resources and clean water. Managing natural resources sustainably is key to securing ongoing supply of these



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inputs at affordable prices, thus ensuring the company's own sustainability.

Demonstrate commitment to CSR

Biodiversity is embedded within Corporate Social Responsibility. Biodiversity action involves engaging with a wide group of

stakeholders and is a process that can serve to absorb businesses into wider sustainability issues. Demonstrating an interest and willingness to help biodiversity issues can help a company improve its overall social, environmental and financial performance.

BARCLAYS CREDIT RISK

Barclays uses environmental credit risk assessment policies and procedures to factor environmental issues, including biodiversity into loan risk profiles, upon which structuring and pricing decisions are based. A senior risk manager at Barclays told F&C Asset Management, "Barclays would not make a loan if we were not satisfied that significant biodiversity risks were being managed properly."

II. MODELS OF ENGAGEMENT



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Companies today face the scrutiny of a whole range of stakeholders who increasingly expect companies to act in responsible ways and contribute to the general well-being of society. These expectations extend beyond philanthropic gestures to demonstratable evidence that businesses are preventing, or at least mitigating the negative effects that their operations may have on the environment. Responsible companies are understood to develop and implement policies and strategies which reflect the concerns of their stakeholders.

Engagement therefore means more than simply fundraising in order to carry out work which is important to society, but often unrelated to the funder's main line of work. It involves building relationships and trust between the parties through dialogue and compromise, in order to meet the needs and aspirations of all those involved.



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The process of engagement takes time and effort. For Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) this can represent a significant commitment of resources, and therefore requires planning and thinking about not only the levels and type of engagement, but what the desired outcomes and benefits will be.

The following pages provide an outline of the different ways in which an LBP can engage with businesses. A summary and quick check list for LBP engagement with businesses which compliments this section is found in the Tools section, **Tool 4**.

AWARENESS RAISING

The process of engagement begins with gaining acknowledgement of, and interest in, biodiversity issues. Although LBPs target many sectors with educational or awareness raising programmes, businesses are often left out. Just like the other sectors, businesses need targeted messages with concrete suggestions which are simple and easy to implement as an 'entry point' to engaging with biodiversity. Try to be clear about what businesses can do for biodiversity and how such involvement will benefit the businesses. **Tools 1 and 10** may be of help here.

There are opportunities to raise awareness of biodiversity issues and provide advice; educating people about wildlife, plants, ecology and the British landscape in general; as well as about sustainability. Some of the ways in which you can guide a company to involve its clients, tenants, employees, their families and investors directly in biodiversity include:

- Running competitions involving staff and families.
- Providing wildlife and plant information and check-lists to employees and visitors to a site.
- Involving employees and their families and friends in conservation tasks on the company's site or on the sites of partner organisations.
- Keeping clients, suppliers, investors or tenants informed about actions and explaining why these are being undertaken through newsletters, e-mail circulars or websites.
- Sponsoring employees to take part in conservation related work, such as Earthwatch or BTCV projects, and to apply what they learn to their communities or place of work

- Developing and implementing standards and guidelines for contractors and suppliers and providing them with training to help them comply with these standards.



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PROVIDING ADVICE

One way in which an LBP can easily help support a company's engagement with biodiversity is to provide information and advice. This may be information about specific habitats or species, about the LBAP process itself or about other resources and expertise which a company can turn to in an area. Most companies will not be familiar with how the LBAPs, Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) or Site Action Plans (SAPs) operate and interact, nor of the way in which they contribute to biodiversity conservation. By explaining the process and demonstrating the ways in which a company can become involved, LBPs can make important contributions to increasing the number of businesses engaged in the UK BAP process.

Many LBPs which find that they do not have the resources available to actively work with companies find that acting as conduits of information provides them with a credible approach to working with businesses. Advice can be provided generically, for example, through your web site or through the use of information sheets on biodiversity. (See **Tool 1**)



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PROVIDING SPECIFIC SERVICES

LBPs will often be composed of organisations which can provide specific services to companies - such as carrying out surveys, providing advice, consulting on specific planned activities or reviewing development proposals. The LBP can provide a link

between these services and the requirements of local businesses.

WORKING ON A COMPANY'S SITE

Working on a company's site allows access to land which can be incorporated into wildlife corridors and wider habitat action plans. Site level work can involve any number of activities, from one-off conservation projects such as planting trees or erecting owl or bat boxes, to longer term relationships where an LBP becomes involved in various stages of implementing a company's biodiversity strategy.

The recommended way for a company to carry out site level biodiversity work is through the development and implementation of Site Biodiversity Action Plans (Site BAPs). Separate plans should be drawn-up for each site, and be linked with local and national biodiversity priorities as well as the overall Company BAP (CBAP). Further opportunities may also exist to work on a company's suppliers' sites. (See **Tool 3**)

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement encompasses a wide range of ways in which people are supported or encouraged by their employers to become involved in conservation activities. Some companies allow staff to take paid leave to become involved in community based projects, while others set up specific programmes to carry out projects or programmes.

Employees will often be a fundamental part of a CBAP, responsible for ongoing biodiversity activities such as monitoring and recording (See **Tool 5**)

PARTNERSHIPS

Involving companies can form the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation, with partnerships offering opportunities to combine resources and skills, enhance the credibility of results and drive change. The multilateral nature of LBPs allows for involving business as members of the partnership or even the Steering Group. Bilateral partnerships with businesses offer opportunities for opening dialogue and establishing relationships with a particular company.

CAUSE RELATED MARKETING

'Business in the Community' defines Cause-Related Marketing as "a commercial activity by which businesses and charities or causes form a partnership with each other to market an image, product or service for mutual benefit". An example of a successful Cause-Related Marketing strategy was run by Unigate Dairies on their doorstep milk deliveries. Among the many successful outcomes was £100,000 raised for the NSPCC, promotion of recycling and improved milk sales. Opportunities may exist for LBPs to form mutually beneficial relationships like this.

OTHER

Other ways in which companies can become engaged in biodiversity include:

- Mentoring other companies or providing them with advice
- Supporting schools by providing them with resources or bringing them on site
- Sponsoring conservation organisations
- Becoming members of organisations or forums

BENEFITS OF ENGAGING EMPLOYEES

Employers benefit by demonstrating their support for biodiversity conservation, conferring reputational gains and assimilating new skills and knowledge into the company through staff who become exposed to new ideas.

Employees can learn new skills, make contact with a wide range of people either from other departments within the company or from different organisations and may feel more motivated in general through working for an important cause.

An LBP or partner organisation can gain access to people's time, resources and skills plus have a platform through which to practically show what can be done to help manage biodiversity.

- Giving presentations or hosting events
- Becoming Steering Group members of their local biodiversity partnership.

CASE STUDY: DURHAM BIODIVERSITY WEEK

In 2002 the Durham Biodiversity Partnership organised a 'Biodiversity Week', aimed at companies, in order to raise biodiversity awareness, deliver easily accessible information to businesses and show how business can take a more active role in helping to deliver improvements for threatened wildlife in the region. A mail-out to over 500 businesses providing information on biodiversity culminated in a Business and Biodiversity Challenge, where a number of the region's high profile companies were invited to deliver specific wildlife conservation projects.

Each company team was given three weeks to prepare for a single day's concerted effort to complete their specific "challenges". In a single day, staff from companies such as GSK, Electrolux, SITA and Walkers rose to their challenge and built over 150 nest boxes, constructed 95 metres of timber boardwalk, maintained a 300 metre strip of meadowland and created wildlife corridors linking important habitats.

The concrete biodiversity outcomes of these efforts included the conservation of butterflies, barn owls, spotted fly catcher, tree sparrows and sand dune rabbits. Additionally the Durham Biodiversity Partnership gained a unique insight into how companies work. According to Keith Bowey, Durham LBP officer, "The biggest gain of the B&B Challenge has been the exchange of skills and learning with businesses".

CASE STUDY: TETRA PAK BUILDING FOR THE COMMUNITY

At its Wrexham manufacturing site in Wales, Tetra Pak is maximising the ecological value of the site grounds. Working alongside Wrexham County Borough Council and Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire, it is working to assess the biodiversity on-site and develop a three-year biodiversity programme. A wide range of species have been identified and a programme designed to maintain and improve existing habitats. Through this project Tetra Pak hope not only to generate employee and stakeholder involvement, increase awareness and improve on-site environmental performance, but also to create a valuable resource for local schools and community groups.

III. OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



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While there are numerous benefits of working with businesses on biodiversity, it is not always easy to put the process of engagement into practice. Many challenges, stemming from a combination of issues, arise at different stages during the development of a relationship and the individuality of each situation makes it difficult to formulate a single set of guidelines. The following section presents a summary of the most common challenges encountered by LBPs when working with businesses, along with suggestions on how these can be addressed and managed.

The **Tools provided at www.businessandbiodiversity.org** supplement this section.

DEFINING THE LBPs ROLE

The first step in devising a programme for working with businesses involves defining the role an LBP will play. The level of involvement with any company is often driven by the aims and capacity of each partner. Some LBPs act as sources of information and advice for biodiversity related issues, while others become more actively involved in company site management. Defining the role of an LBP also helps identify areas which the LBP will not become involved with. An LBP may choose to direct companies to other competent bodies that have greater capacity or expertise, for example for development of an environmental strategy, to which the LBP can contribute (See **Tool 4**).

A written policy which clearly defines the role of an LBP in terms of business engagement can help set realistic expectations among partners within the LBP as well as the businesses with which it engages (See **Tool 8**). The policy is usually drafted and agreed with the LBP Steering Group, and can be incorporated into the overall LBAP.

IDENTIFYING TARGET BUSINESSES

LBPs need to narrow down potential companies to engage with in the local area. The criteria for selecting companies should take into account the following:

- The LBPs objectives - including priority species and habitats.
- The capacity of the LBP in terms of resources, time and budget.
- The area of land held by a company, and the potential for land management within the property.
- Entry opportunities into the company. For example,

some companies will have environmental managers who are likely to be aware of biodiversity issues and open to approaches from LBPs.

Selecting business areas to target is an important part of prioritising, and it may be helpful to start by identifying which industries or business sectors are particularly prevalent in your area.

Information about businesses in your area can be found from a number of sources, such as the Chamber of Commerce, local Sustainability Forums and local business directories.

ENGAGING SMES

Small and Medium sized Enterprises comprise over 95% of UK businesses, and often are the dominant form of business in local communities. The group covers a hugely diverse range of companies, which makes it particularly difficult to identify a single strategy for engaging SMEs. For many forms of engagement activities, it may be easier and more appropriate to approach SMEs as part of a sector based strategy rather than as one homogenous group. On the positive side, with fewer stakeholders and smaller companies, an LBP is likely to get a faster response and may find it easier to contact the appropriate person for decision making.

FINDING A COMMON LANGUAGE

Many organisations outside of the conservation sector find the 'language' of biodiversity difficult to understand. Organisations which successfully engage businesses are able to communicate with different stakeholders in a way to which they can relate. Similarly, LBPs need to develop an understanding of business language and culture in order



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to successfully communicate biodiversity objectives and issues in a way which is relevant to businesses (See Section 4 - 'Understanding Businesses'). Ideas for improving your knowledge of business include:

- Inviting company representatives to give a presentation about their business to an LBP.
- Asking existing partner companies for advice. For example, to edit written material or present to other companies.
- Including companies in an LBP steering group.
- Employing a specialist Business and Biodiversity Officer.
- Attending or holding a workshop on working with businesses.
- Talking to other LBPs or NGOs working with businesses.

In addition to these activities, company-specific research will help identify any particular issues or jargon relevant to a company or sector.

GAINING ACCESS TO A BUSINESS

Effective ways of widening contact with the business community include networking, presenting to groups of businesses, gaining referrals through other contacts and using the local press. A sample presentation for businesses is provided in **Tool 10**.

It can often be difficult to identify the right person to approach within a company. Responsibility for environmental issues may lie with different departments or positions within companies. Some companies relegate biodiversity to their external communications or public relations departments, while in others specialised roles may

exist within Environment, Health and Safety or other operational divisions.

In order to gain long term commitment to biodiversity, top level support is important. While some enthusiastic contacts will actually have very limited authority, they may be able to introduce you to someone who yields wider influence within an organisation.

There are numerous forums which can be used to reach business representatives. The obvious ones include clubs such as the Rotary Club, and sustainability or environmental forums. There are also business publications and sections in newspapers which can be used to disseminate news and information about biodiversity in an area. Alternatively, LBPs may choose to carry out a targeted mailing to company representatives.

There is no substitute to company research in order to help get a foot in the door. Useful information sources include company web sites, company social or environmental reports, and the business and biodiversity web site (www.businessandbiodiversity.org).

RESOURCES

Engaging businesses can be time consuming and costly. Given the limited amount of resources available to LBPs, finding the time, people, materials, equipment and funding to engage with businesses and build sustainable relationships can often be difficult. Making overly ambitious commitments can be damaging to an LBP's reputation, as well as to the wider NGO and environmental community. To deliver successful biodiversity projects with businesses, LBPs should set priorities and try to match these to available resources. (See **Tools 6, 8 and 9**)



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RECONCILING TIME SCALES

Businesses and LBPs will often work to different time scales. While businesses are driven by short term targets, many of the outcomes sought by conservation activities can take time to show visible outcomes. Breaking the wider picture down into smaller, short-term deliverables can help demonstrate progress towards a project's long term goals and maintain the interest of the affiliated company. For example, choosing an indicator that responds quickly to environmental changes such as the diversity of dragonfly species, can demonstrate habitat improvements within a year or two.

In some cases business time-frames will be longer than those of the LBP. This may cause problems if, for instance, an LBP has secured short-term funding and consequently finds it difficult to await the outcomes of lengthy decision-making processes within companies. It is therefore important to have clear time-scales and to communicate these with partner companies. Good communication will help identify both agreeable targets for the LBP and indicators of success for the business. (See **Tool 3**)

LOSING BUSINESS COMMITMENT

Long-term projects where outcomes are hard to identify can discourage companies and result in waning interest from employees and other stakeholders. The problem can be accentuated when the project structure changes, for example, if a staff member leaves the company or LBP organisation. Engaging and maintaining multiple points of contact with different members of staff and other stakeholders can help to secure continuity, especially during times of organisational change. Equally,

securing high level commitment and a written statement or Terms of Reference can help sustain relationships during times of organisational change. Good communications characterised by maintaining regular contact, honesty and transparency, can help to build trust and secure long term relationships with businesses.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Choosing which companies to work with – or not work with – can pose a particular challenge to LBPs. Should an LBP seek only to engage with those companies which have a good environmental reputation – thereby excluding those companies which could improve their impacts on biodiversity? On the other hand, is it acceptable to work with a company which has a good environmental reputation but has a poor track record on other social issues? These questions are important for an LBP to consider as part of role definition (see Defining the LBPs Role above).

BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP

In order to ensure that differences between organisations do not come between partners, setting common goals and objectives is crucial for ensuring ongoing cooperation. Service Level Agreement/Terms of Reference are a useful tool for clarifying a partnership's aims and the roles of various partners, while regular dialogue facilitates an open relationship which can help to ensure collaboration works smoothly (see **Tool 9**).

A professional approach is vital for working successfully with businesses. It is particularly important to ensure meetings are managed efficiently and tightly. Other factors involved in building solid partnership foundations include:

INDICATORS OF THE QUALITY OF WETLAND HABITATS

One of the world's biggest problems today is related to freshwater resources, both their quality and quantity and currently almost 40% of the world's population experience serious water shortages. Healthy wetland ecosystems store water and reduce flooding, therefore they are vital for people and wildlife alike. Dragonflies (Odonata) are ideal indicators of wetland health because their larvae develop in water and include a full array of ecological types. This means that they can be used as indicators to monitor both positive and negative habitat changes. (www.iucn.org)



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- Opening feedback channels
- Ability to compromise
- Honesty and openness
- Flexibility
- Sharing rewards

- Empathy.

Finally, it is worth noting that many companies are driven to participate in partnerships through a desire to manage their reputation. This forms a critical asset for companies which a partnership should respect.

IV. UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS

Divergent views, values and motivations are often cited as major challenges in seeking to forge working relationships between the business and conservation sectors. The language of biodiversity can be mystifying to people outside of the ecological profession. At the same time, the focus on financial outcomes and obligations to company shareholders are sometimes perceived to be at odds with environmental concerns such as biodiversity. Despite what may initially appear to be disparate perspectives and approaches to the environment, many commonalities actually do exist between businesses and LBPs. Where there are differences, these are often reconcilable through dialogue which builds on common interests and goals.

It may help LBPs working with companies to understand some key business concepts and to start 'thinking like a business'. This section outlines some of the key concepts within which biodiversity is aligned and can be presented in a way to which businesses can more easily relate.



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KEY CONCEPTS IN BUSINESS THAT ARE APPLICABLE TO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Companies today are judged not only by their products and services alone, but by the way in which they conduct their business. Elements of “Corporate Responsibility” or “Social Responsibility”, including health and safety, employee labour rights, community relations and environment, influence a company’s operational performance and reputation, and are ultimately reflected through a company’s financial performance.

Companies which recognise that financial success is closely linked to environmental and social performance are incorporating the triple bottom line into their thinking. The triple bottom line corresponds to the foundations of sustainable development as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) three objectives (see figure 1).

Recent reports by the investment sector highlight the clear relationship between biodiversity and businesses through the impacts which companies have on biodiversity and, conversely, which biodiversity can have on them. Biodiversity risks for companies are associated with their access to land, reputation, access to capital, security of supply, relations with regulators and liabilities. Furthermore, biodiversity impacts and their associated risks can have financial consequences for

companies if they are not properly addressed (Figure 1).

Issues linked to the financial performance of a company – termed **material** issues – form the main basis for decision making in a company. These reasons for doing something or taking a particular action are called **drivers**, which for biodiversity are often grouped under the following headings:

- Law and regulation
- License to operate (access to land, permits, relationship with regulators)
- Reputation and image (brands/market image)
- Law and regulation
- Security of supply
- Stakeholder relationships
- Employee motivation and productivity
- Financial gains/cost benefits (attracting investors)
- Sustainable development and CSR.

Together, these form the business case for a particular course of action. As with other environmental issues, the drivers for the business case for biodiversity can be understood in terms of risks and opportunities. The position of a company in the market-place as well as its profitability will be affected by the way in which it

Figure 1 - Sustainable Development, CSR and the CBD.

	<i>Biodiversity (CBD)</i>	<i>Sustainable Business (CSR)</i>	<i>Sustainable Development</i>	
<i>Environment</i>	<i>Biodiversity Conservation</i>	<i>Environmental Protection</i>	<i>Environmental Protection</i>	<i>Planet</i>
<i>Economy</i>	<i>Sustainable Use</i>	<i>Economic Growth</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>	<i>Profit</i>
<i>Society</i>	<i>Equitable sharing</i>	<i>Social Equity</i>	<i>Social Development</i>	<i>People</i>

manages its risk. These risks can, on the other hand, be turned into opportunities benefiting both biodiversity and businesses alike.

Some of the risks and opportunities stem from the way in which biodiversity is used during the process of developing, manufacturing and selling products or services. Examples include wood products such as furniture or paper.

Other risks and opportunities arise when biodiversity is affected by the operations of a business. These impacts may be direct or indirect. Direct impacts result from activities such as agriculture, quarrying and construction, which lead to habitat destruction and other changes in the natural features of the landscape. Indirect impacts include the effects of making certain investment and purchasing decisions.

There is a difference between one-off philanthropic gestures to support projects and long term strategic commitments. The latter is more sustainable because it is driven by a conviction within the company that it is acting in a way which is important to its business. Increasingly, stakeholders are seeing through tokenistic gestures which do not actually address the impacts or risks that the company incurs. The ways in which a company can take a strategic approach to biodiversity are outlined below and described in the Tools section of these guidelines (See **Tools 1, 2 and 5**).

SUMMARY OF 'GENERAL FRAMEWORK' FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

Many companies have followed a similar framework which has helped them move from gaining an understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues and how it affects their business, through to implementing plans to help reduce the loss and encourage an improvement in the state of biodiversity. It is important that the biodiversity goals and priorities of a company fit into local and regional strategies. Consulting with local employees, communities, experts and other stakeholders, can help to identify priorities and see where these fit into local and national biodiversity targets. Many companies find that they can actually begin to reap benefits from biodiversity related activities after investing only small amounts of time and money. The next section outlines seven steps which provide a road map for businesses to engage with biodiversity. These steps may overlap and need not occur in a sequential manner. A checklist summary for business engagement with biodiversity can be found in **Tool 5**. A sample biodiversity management planner which may be one of the major outcomes of the seven steps is detailed in **Tool 3**.

Senior Level Commitment

Companies which successfully take biodiversity forward almost always have a senior-level supporter backing any initiatives. A senior level champion can help to drive forward activities by making commitments, securing resources and demonstrating the needs and benefits to others within a company.



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Making the Business Case

In order for a company to be able to raise issues regarding biodiversity to the attention of its employees, managers or board of directors, they need to identify what drivers are applicable to its business. Some drivers, such as the need to be legislatively compliant, apply to all businesses. Other drivers will depend on the type of business it is, the sector that it belongs to and the specific risks and opportunities.



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Before embarking on the road to biodiversity action, your LBP needs to make clear to the company what biodiversity means for it, its employees and its surrounding community. This process can include finding out and informing employees about biodiversity and looking at the business' activities to see which ones impact on biodiversity or can be tailored to make a positive contribution to biodiversity. Getting an invitation from a company to give a talk about biodiversity in the area is a good way to introduce the subject. Another way is to promote one business linking up with other businesses, through forums or by simply contacting them.

Drawing-up and Publicising a Policy or Statement of Intent

Clear policy statements on biodiversity allow objectives to be set and for biodiversity to become integrated into a company's management systems. Often existing management systems do not have the room or capacity to deal with biodiversity adequately, in which case companies may develop a dedicated Company Biodiversity Action Plan, or at site level, a Site Biodiversity Action Plan. Once a policy has been developed, it needs to be communicated to all stakeholders – this includes employees, contractors, suppliers, investors and others. (See **Tool 7**)

Impacts and Actions

With the help of an LBP or professional (ecologist/conservationist), companies can look at their overall operations and impacts and prioritise areas of action. Indirect impacts may outweigh direct ones, especially in cases where a company does not manage or have access to land. Instead of working on land management related issues, such companies can address issues such as their supply chain or supporting other organisations.

Some of the following steps may be useful for LBPs and the business to look at systematically:

- List sites and any conservation status or important features.
- List existing and past initiatives. If past initiatives have been discontinued, ask why?
- List existing and past contacts or partnerships.
- Look at the company's operations and assess direct and indirect impacts.
- Reduce risks of non compliance by familiarising them with existing and potential legislation.
- Collect information / stories from employees, other businesses you work with, biodiversity partnerships and the community about other biodiversity activities in the area.

For companies with significant land holdings or impacts on biodiversity, it is advisable to provide expert ecological advice in order to ensure legislative compliance as well as to properly survey a site for biodiversity.

Some of the biodiversity impacts may already be known because a business case will have been together, but is this all? At this stage, collect more data to help

inform priorities and actions. This can be a resource-intensive process for both you and the company, but it is an essential part of the framework.

Drawing up a Plan of Action (Company BAP and Site BAP)

A Company Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) covers a range of different opportunities and issues - from raising awareness to running activities. CBAPs help to provide a focus on biodiversity, gaining understanding of, commitment to, and resources for, biodiversity related issues and activities. An overview of the process of planning for biodiversity and carrying out a plan is available from www.businessandbiodiversity.org. Key steps include assessing impacts, identifying priorities and a base-line survey of what is currently available. As with any management plan, developing SMART targets is an important part of planning and subsequent monitoring. Targets need to be appropriate not only to the company, but also to biodiversity in general. This can be best achieved by ensuring that a company's BAP links in to the Local BAP (see below).

Businesses owning or responsible for land-holdings, such as farms or quarries, will be able to plan activities for managing this land in ways which encourages biodiversity. Site BAPs are often prepared on a site by site basis. The Earthwatch leaflet Developing Site Biodiversity Action Plans provides an overview of this process but additional guidance should come from you and other local Biodiversity Partners.

Some companies include biodiversity in their existing management systems, covering issues such as environment, human resources, procurement or facilities management, rather than developing separate plans. The drafting and implementation

of a company's Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) can be directed towards creating a positive impact on biodiversity. Once biodiversity actions have been planned and are being implemented - either through a separate BAP or as part of their EMS - companies may wish to gain third party verification of the quality of these plans. While the Wildlife Trust's Biodiversity Benchmark has been specifically developed to address biodiversity, currently ISO 14001, BS8555 and EMAS do not explicitly cover biodiversity.

Smaller businesses which do not wish to proceed down the certification road may find awards, grants and local business development schemes provide equivalent guidance on developing systems and processes for managing biodiversity and other environmental issues. Many of these schemes also provide opportunities for training and networking with other organisations, both of which can lead to improved biodiversity in the overall community.

Monitoring and reviewing

The company and LBPs will need to put in place systems for tracking the implementation of biodiversity plans and assessing whether targets and overall biodiversity outcomes are being met. There are two broad approaches to assessing performance:

- Monitoring and evaluating activities against the plan assesses the process of managing biodiversity activities. For instance, the results of employee awareness-raising initiatives would be an indicator of the success of a process rather than actual biodiversity outcomes.
- Monitoring outcomes of specific activities involves ascertaining and determining



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actual biodiversity indicators. Such outcomes can be difficult to assess, mainly because the very nature of biodiversity is that it fluctuates naturally over time and seasons, and many species are obviously mobile. Also, there remains much which is unknown about nature and so absolute numeric indicators may not be useful if a company is faced with new discoveries about a species either on its site or elsewhere. However, monitoring performance is useful for specific aspects. For instance, Scottish Power has set itself a Key Performance Indicator relating to aviary hit (bird strikes on wind turbines) which it monitors daily.

Targets will need periodic review as conditions change and it is important that the outcomes of monitoring exercises are shared with the LBP and other groups.

Reporting

By reporting on its activities, a company can help ensure transparency and gain recognition for what it is doing. There are essentially three routes to reporting what a company is doing on biodiversity:

- Becoming certified through an acknowledged scheme such as ISO 14001 or attaining the Wildlife Trust's Biodiversity Benchmark
- Following a framework for reporting, such as the Global Reporting Initiative or responding to one of the indices on environmental performance, such as the Business in the Community Index of Corporate Responsibility (including the BiE Index of Environmental Responsibility)
- Developing an independent reporting mechanism, such as a web site with information about the company's biodiversity activities or the results of on-site biodiversity surveys.

LBPs can help to ensure that a company's reporting is complete and meaningful.

Another important way of reporting how you are engaging businesses with biodiversity is through publicity. If the company has done a good job, why not recommend that it presents the action for biodiversity as part of promoting its business!

V. TOOLS

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with a set of Tools which have been developed by Earthwatch and are available from www.businessandbiodiversity.org/LBP_Guidelines. These include:

- Tool 1: Handout on Overview of Business and Biodiversity
- Tool 2: Handout: Business and Biodiversity Action Questionnaire
- Tool 3: Biodiversity Management Planner
- Tool 4: 'Checklist' for LBP Engagement with Businesses
- Tool 5: 'Checklist' for Business Engagement with Biodiversity
- Tool 6: Sample LBP Policy on Engagement
- Tool 7: Sample Business Policy on Biodiversity
- Tool 8: Sample Action Plan for Engaging Businesses
- Tool 9: Service Level Agreement
- Tool 10: Presentation to Businesses