

Putting a bit back:

A Guide to Nature Conservation for Small to Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

are you doing your bit?

Contacts



This leaflet has been produced by Earthwatch on behalf of the DETR with support from London Luton Airport. Earthwatch hosts a business & biodiversity resource centre supported by the DETR and Innogy to signpost companies towards publications and NGOs which can help them develop and implement biodiversity strategies. For more information, telephone 01865 318800. Acknowledgements Thanks to Middlemarch Environmental Ltd. for research and photographs, to English Nature and JNCC for photographs, and to Dr Mark McLellan, James Calow and Jon White for their contributions.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Tel: 01491 839766 www.btcv.org.uk

Earthwatch Institute (Europe)

Tel: 01865 318800 www.earthwatch.org/europe

Flora for Fauna

www.nhm.ac.uk/science/projects/fff

Groundwork

Tel: 0121 236 8565 www.groundwork.org.uk

Plantlife

Tel: 0207 808 0100 www.plantlife.org.uk

The People's Trust for Endangered Species

Tel: 020 7498 4533 www.ptes.org

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Tel: 01767 680 551 www.rspb.org.uk

The Wildlife Trust's UK Office

Tel: 01636 677711 www.wildlifetrusts.org

Government and other bodies

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM)

Tel: 01923 664000 www.bre.co.uk

British Standards Institute (BSI)

Tel: 020 8996 9000 www.bsi.org.uk

English Nature

Tel: 01733 455000 www.english-nature.org.uk

Local County Council

See local phone book, ask for County Ecologist, Biodiversity Officer or Local Agenda 21

Small Company Environmental and Energy Management Assistance Scheme (SCEEMAS)

Tel: 0345 023 423

The Environmental Technology Best Practice Programme (ETBPP) is now known as Envirowise

Tel: 0800 585 794 www.envirowise.gov.uk/

Biodiversity Policy Unit DETR

Tel: 0117 372 8974 www.ukbap.org.uk

Earthwatch Institute (Europe)

57 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HJ.

Tel: 01865 318800 Fax: 01865 311383

e-mail: info@earthwatch.org.uk

www.earthwatch.org/europe

www.businessandbiodiversity.org

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Putting a bit back

Business is becoming used to Environmental responsibility. Reducing pollution, using energy wisely and minimising waste are proving not only good for the environment, but good for business efficiency as well.

But in return for all the services that nature provides for business – water, energy, fuels, raw materials, a receiver of waste and pollution – shouldn't business be putting a bit back into nature conservation?

It is a sad fact that species thought common not long ago are declining. Who would have thought that barn owls, field poppies and even sparrows are becoming more scarce? 98% of wildflower meadows, 448,000 km of hedgerows, over two million skylarks and 95% of high brown fritillary butterflies have been lost in less than a lifetime.

You might think that it is bigger businesses that have the greatest responsibility for protecting the environment and restoring natural habitat. But it is a fact in the UK that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up 99.8% of all UK businesses. So if each company puts a bit back, the contribution is potentially huge.



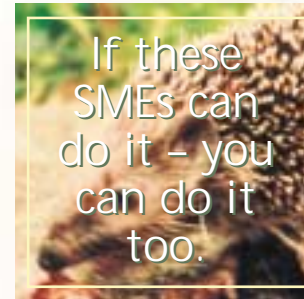
Government and conservation bodies hope to encourage SMEs along with bigger businesses to take some action that contributes towards nature conservation by putting a bit back.

This leaflet sets out how SMEs can get involved in nature conservation. It provides information, examples and contacts to get started, and shows that getting involved doesn't necessarily involve much expense, time or bureaucracy.

Why not join the growing number of companies that are having a positive impact on the environment? Every effort, no matter how small, does make a difference.

- *You may have a small area of land that can be given over to nature conservation. If landscaped appropriately, it could attract local birds, insects and other animals. Even a bird table and a window box with plants to feed butterflies is a contribution to local wildlife. The area could also be used as an area of relaxation for your staff.*
- *You may want to get involved with you local wildlife group, by, for example, sponsoring a local wildlife project, or even a species in decline. Your staff could get involved by volunteering on a community wildlife project. It's great for team building!*

As a small business you might find it difficult to know where to begin. This leaflet identifies a range of simple activities that can be carried out in the workplace. However, before embarking on any nature conservation initiative, consider a few points:



- *If you have land around your site, find out what's there: the site may already have valuable wildlife habitat without the company realising it. A simple site survey (carried out by an ecologist from your local Wildlife Trust or council) is recommended.*
- *Examine whether your company's activities have any negative impacts on nature (e.g. the use of pesticides on a patch of grass may discourage local species to flourish). If this is so, consider ways to reduce this impact.*
- *Consider what impacts your company might have on the environment through assessing the effect of your day-to-day operations on air, water, land and wildlife. Once you have identified the impacts, you can develop and implement a plan to diminish the negative impacts.*
- *Consider what impacts your company might have on the environment through your suppliers: what raw materials are you using and where do they come from? Are there any other suppliers which may have less of an impact on the environment?*
- *Use the expertise of your local Wildlife Trust and other conservation groups (see back cover for contacts): they can tell you about any local nature conservation priorities that you can feed into.*
- *By doing your bit for nature conservation in the workplace you will be helping the UK meet its commitment to nature conservation made at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.*

Some simple ideas are outlined in the table overleaf. Consider the company case studies, and see if your company can't do something similar. If these SMEs can do it – you can do it too.

Biodiversity

Nature conservation is about maintaining 'biodiversity', meaning the variety of life. Biodiversity consists of all living things from small insects to ancient oak trees. Nothing exists in isolation and each contributes to the balance of nature and the survival of the planet. Biodiversity is one of the Government's indicators of Sustainable Development.

What is an SME?

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises are companies which

- have fewer than 250 employees;
- have an annual turnover of less than £25 million.

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Case Study 1 Shields Environmental Ltd

Case Study 1

SHIELDS ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

Shields Environmental is a telecommunication network services company with 70 employees. The firm is based on the Purfleet Industrial Park, South Essex, having offices and an adjacent processing facility.

Actions:

- The company developed their site on derelict land, planting unused margins around the office and car park.
- The company followed a planting scheme recommended in an assessment by The Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) with many trees and shrubs native to the area.
- They have used peat-free composts and soil conditioners.

Benefits:

- The planting scheme enhances the general environment of the industrial estate.
- The company has a visually attractive site benefiting both staff and visiting customers.
- The planting attracts wildlife to the site.

Costs:

- There is a small ongoing maintenance cost.
- The shrubs can trap wind blown litter, that needs to be collected.

"Whilst concentrating on our main business activities, putting something back into the local environment is a clear expression of the company's core philosophy".
Roger Shrimpton,
Environmental Manager.

Case Study 2 Beacon Press Ltd



Case Study 3

MILETA TOG 24

Mileta Tog 24 is a Yorkshire-based company that manufactures outdoor clothing and has 41 shops nation-wide, employing 400 people.

Actions:

- Mileta Tog 24 has become a species champion of the stag beetle (see below).
- The company produced posters about the species which were exhibited in stores and donated a small sum of money for each item of clothing sold.
- Poster design competitions were organised in schools close to each of its shops and the winning designs were printed into T-shirts for sale in the shops.

Benefits:

- The company is directly involved in supporting conservation of a threatened UK species.
- Environmental awareness has been raised for staff, customers, and local communities in which the shops operate.
- Support of the programme has generated good publicity for the company.

Costs:

- Mileta Tog 24's contribution amounted to £10,000 spread over 2 years.

"We are delighted to have been involved with the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and done our bit to help the survival of the stag beetle".*
Brian Ward, Joint Managing Director.

* The PTES is a conservation organisation that took the role as Lead Partner for the Stag Beetle Biodiversity Action Plan.

Case Study 4

HUSKY INJECTION MOULDING SYSTEMS

Husky Injection Moulding Systems is located in Coventry and has 27 employees making machines for the manufacturing of plastic extrusions.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SMEs

Actions	Benefits	Approx. costs (£)	Who to contact
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW			
A review of the company's activities, including supply chain, day-to-day operations and waste disposal, can help a company identify where it has the most impact on the environment.	Reduces impact of the company on the environment.	Free services available.	The environment helpline of Envirowise, formerly The Environmental Technology Best Practice Programme, provides up to two hours free advice to firms on environmental issues affecting their business. (See contacts.) The Small Company Environmental and Energy Management Assistance Scheme is a grant scheme offered by the DETR, which is designed to help smaller companies establish recognised environmental management systems. (See contacts.)
SITE REVIEW			
A simple site survey is recommended in order to identify any environmental impacts of business activity and so that existing wildlife habitat at the company site can be safeguarded.	Ensures valuable habitat is not destroyed.	£150 - £300	Some of the contacts given in this leaflet, such as your local Wildlife Trust, may assist you in surveying your site.
IMPROVING SITE NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST			
Plant native wildflower mixes.	Visually attractive, species rich habitat.	£0.20 - £1.50 per square metre.	The Flora for Fauna web site can help you to find out which species of plants are native to your local area. (See contacts.)
Native climbers are planted to grow up chain link fences etc.	Window boxes and hanging baskets with native species can be used where space is limited.	Window box £30 - £40 per metre. Hanging basket £25 - £40 each.	
Plant native hedgerows or increase species in existing hedges on site.	These sites provide nesting sites for birds and are important food sources for butterflies and bees.	£3 - £6 per plant.	Environmental consultancies or local environmental groups, such as Wildlife Trusts, may be able to advise you about planting regimes.
	Screens unattractive areas and increases site wildlife value.	£4 - £10 per metre.	
Planting of native trees on site.	Improves wildlife and landscape value.	£2 - £50 per tree (depending on age).	The Flora for Fauna web site can help you to find out which species of plants are native to



Case Study 2

BEACON PRESS LTD

Beacon Press are a printing company based in East Sussex. The company occupies an area of 0.7 hectares and has 63 employees. Even though Beacon is a small company it has won many international awards as part of its drive to become one of the UK's most environmentally friendly companies.

Actions:

- The site has been extensively landscaped with trees and shrubs.
- Staff volunteered to clear the waste from a section of a river that runs through the site (which included 70 car tyres, a washing machine, and half a canoe!).
- Broken wooden pallets are recycled and made into bird boxes.
- Many of these bird boxes are set up on the Beacon Press site and have attracted breeding pairs of local bird species.
- Additional bird boxes are given to employees for their own gardens, and also to local schools and community groups.

Benefits:

- The initiatives enhance the nature conservation value of the site for birds and river wildlife.
- The initiatives encourage employee and local community involvement and interest in nature conservation.

Costs:

- There was an initial outlay for buying and planting 200 trees and shrubs.
- Staff volunteer their time when needed.

"We have spent the last twelve years improving the environmental performance of our company and we are proud of the results we have so far achieved. It represents a tangible sign that care for the environment is inextricably woven into the business culture of the company".
Mark Fairbrass, Chairman.

Case Study 4 Husky Injection Moulding Systems



Actions:

- Husky has become a corporate member of the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.
- The firm have recently pledged £2,000 to support the Trust's Otters and Rivers Project.

Benefits:

- By joining their local Wildlife Trust, staff have the opportunity to become better informed environmentally, whilst helping to safeguard local wildlife.
- Company staff have gained satisfaction from putting something back into the local community.
- The initiative meets one of the company's core values through proactive environmental responsibility.

Costs:

- £2000 to support the project.
- Provision of a car for the Otters and Rivers Project Officer.

"We're delighted to support the Otters and Rivers Project and we are looking forward to becoming actively involved to encourage otters back into Warwickshire".
Steve Jacques, General Manager.

Case Study 5

GINNS AND GUTTERIDGE LTD

Ginns and Gutteridge are funeral directors based in central Leicester with a staff of 20 people. The company site consists of a prominent street frontage and a yard area for car parking. The company has worked with the Leicester City Wildlife Project adopting a planting scheme to improve their site.

Actions:

- The company dug planting pits along the chain link fence to the rear of the car park and planted shade tolerant shrubs and medium sized rowan trees to add more greenery to the area.
- Planting of spiny shrubs, such as holly, gives additional protection and will eventually obscure the fence.
- The company has recently added to these measures by erecting hanging baskets on the street frontage.

Benefits:

- The activities have improved appearance of the site for staff and customers.
- The trees and shrubs have provided an ideal habitat for nesting blackbirds.
- The planting scheme has low maintenance.

Costs:

- There was a small financial outlay for buying trees, shrubs, plants and hanging baskets.

"The planted trees and shrubs have flourished at the site, proving attractive to both customers and local wildlife".
Mrs Pat Leeds, Company Manager

Leave dead woodpiles where appropriate.	Provides a valuable habitat or food source for nesting birds and invertebrates.	0	your local area. The website also signposts suppliers of native plants. (See contacts.)
Plant shrubs that are of high bird and insect value.	Encourages a wide range of species and thorny shrubs can provide secure boundaries.	£3 - £10 per shrub.	Environmental consultancies or local environmental groups, such as Wildlife Trusts, may be able to advise you about planting regimes.
Add water plants to any suitable wet areas and consider creating a pond.	Provides a valuable habitat for water loving creatures.	£1 - £2 per plant. Ponds: £3 - £150 per square metre.	See above.
Erect bird boxes and bat boxes in suitable sites.	To supplement habitat for birds especially whilst new planting is maturing.	£8 - £45 per box.	
Provide bird-feeding stations.	Improves interest by encouraging birds on to the site.	£20 - £60.	
Provide hedgehog boxes.	Provides a hibernation site for the animal.	£30.	

MEMBERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

A small donation to a local environmental organisation undertaking conservation, such as a local Wildlife Trust, can make a big impact on what it can achieve in your area.	Encourages involvement in off-site wildlife programmes.	£300+ depending on organisation. Sponsoring Tree Planting: £2 - £50 per tree (depending on age).	See your local phone book for 'Conservation Organisations'.
Consider sponsorship programmes and species champion scheme.		Become a Species Champion costs £5,000+ depending on species and timescale.	The Biodiversity Policy Unit of the DETR can advise on species and habitat action plans needing support. (See contacts.)

STAFF INVOLVEMENT

Encourage staff to participate in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planting Installation Recording wildlife Organise staff groups to work on local environmental projects.	Increases staff interest and awareness.	May become an out of hours social activity.	See your local phone book for 'Conservation Organisations'. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Groundwork and the Wildlife Trusts may be able to advise of activities in your area. (See contacts.)
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REVIEW

Conduct a periodic review of actions taken in order to establish their effectiveness.	Provides a record of the effectiveness of company actions.	£150 - £300	Organisations and consultancies mentioned above can help you to carry this out.
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Species Champions

SMEs can make a national contribution to nature conservation through working in partnership with national conservation organisations. One scheme through which this can be done is the Species Champion Scheme. The UK Biodiversity Group has established a list of species and habitat types that need conservation. An action plan has been developed for each of these, and a 'lead partner' is appointed to oversee the implementation of the plan. Companies are able to sponsor such plans through the lead partner; these sponsoring companies are known as 'Species Champions'. The UK Government supports the Species Champion Scheme which is available to all companies who are prepared to help lead partners in conserving the chosen species by supporting the scheme financially or in kind.