

# Biodiversity actionplans

FOR BUSINESS

## **Who to contact**

If you would like more information about biodiversity or wildlife issues the following may be able to help:

### **Notice Nature**

*[www.noticenature.ie](http://www.noticenature.ie)*

### **National Parks & Wildlife Service**

Tel: 01.888.2000 *[www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)*

**Your local authority Biodiversity / Heritage Officer**

### **Environmental NGOs**

for a list of relevant NGOs see *[www.noticenature.ie](http://www.noticenature.ie)*

## What is Biodiversity and why protect it?



Biodiversity means the variety of all life on earth from the smallest and simplest micro-organism to the complex system that is a rainforest. It includes the habitats and ecosystems which support this life and how life-forms interact with each other and the rest of the environment.

Biodiversity is important because it provides a source of significant economic, environmental, health and cultural benefits. It provides us with a large amount of goods and services (such as food, medicine, raw materials and clothing) that help us to sustain life on earth. It is these goods and services that allow us to live on this planet. The wellbeing and prosperity of the earth's ecological balance as well as human society directly depend on the extent and status of biological diversity.

Businesses depend on the earth's biological resources as essential components and services for the operation of their day-to-day activities, such as clean water and raw materials. It is therefore important that there is a sustainable supply of these resources to ensure economic growth.

However, biodiversity is constantly under threat both here in Ireland and worldwide. Activities such as increased development, inappropriate agricultural practices, poorly managed afforestation and climate change have all put pressure on Ireland's biodiversity with the result that many species of plant and animal are now under threat of extinction.

It is vital, therefore that all sectors in society play their part in the protection of biodiversity. These guidelines demonstrate some simple ways that businesses can take action to halt the loss of biodiversity.

## What is a Biodiversity Action Plan?

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a means of managing your site and activities to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through developing management plans for your organisation. A BAP is basically a management system for your site and organisational activities which can be integrated into your Environmental Management System. These can include simple measures on site management and on policies, e.g. purchasing policy. Developing a BAP needn't be a daunting process and plans can be prepared for individual sites as well as for the business as a whole. In developing the BAP, it is important to get those at the appropriate level involved at an early stage to ensure success and if you already have company guidelines (e.g. from parent company) it is important that any proposed actions recognise this.

## Why do a Biodiversity Action Plan?

Creating a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for your organisation can help you to plan, manage and monitor the habitats on your site. It provides you with a managed plan that will help you to put the correct procedures in place to conserve biodiversity on your site. It doesn't matter whether you are part of a multinational organisation or an SME, every business can play their part in protecting biodiversity. The following are some advantages of putting a BAP in place:

- Depending on the activity or location of a particular business, biodiversity or an aspect of biodiversity may be threatened in which case a business must comply with legislation that has been put in place to protect biodiversity. A BAP will therefore help compliance with this legislation.
- It can be integrated into existing management systems and procedures such as your Environmental Management System and help to address biodiversity issues raised under that.
- It can improve all stakeholder relations (e.g. employees, local community, customers and suppliers).
- Involvement in biodiversity improvement and protection, especially in the area surrounding one's business location, can be an important part of a company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. A BAP can help formalise this.
- It can appeal to ethical consumers.



## Steps for putting a Biodiversity Action Plan in place

The steps for putting a Biodiversity Action Plan in place are very similar to those of any management system. It is a cyclical system that requires the input of staff and stakeholders alike.

Steps	Description	Actions
<b>Get Management Support</b>	Getting management support is vital for the implementation of a Biodiversity Action Plan. It will ensure that you get the resources necessary. It is important to highlight that the cost of implementing a BAP need not be excessive but can lead to a real sense of achievement for all involved.	Present a plan to your management outlining the benefits of implementing a BAP. Ensure to outline the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Compliance</li> <li>» Increase of employee engagement</li> <li>» Improved Stakeholder Relations</li> <li>» Corporate Social Responsibility</li> <li>» Integration into EMS</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Review</b>	Conducting a review of your company's activities, with regard to biodiversity and resources, your company can examine where change is needed and what impacts your company may be having on the environment. For example, your procurement policy in relation to timber and furniture; recycling and energy efficiency.	An environmental review can be quite broad but it would be advantageous to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» An audit of raw materials – from where are they sourced? Is the source sustainable?</li> <li>» A review of your products / services – what is their impact on the environment and in particular biodiversity?</li> <li>» Other: Transport, energy</li> <li>» A review of your operations, how is your waste handled etc?</li> </ul>
<b>Site Survey</b>	A site survey should be carried out to identify what types of habitats and species are present and to determine if these sites or habitats are impacted on by the company's activities or policies.	You may need to employ an expert to do this especially if you have a big site. On the other hand if your site is small, one of your employees may be able to help. Indeed employees will have a better understanding of processes on site and will have a valuable input into this process. It is important to time this activity appropriately e.g. more species are present in summer so this is a good time to get the most accurate picture of what is present on your site. It may be worth inviting local community groups to take part in this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Gather data – habitats present, types of species present, are they rare or protected? Native or exotic?</li> <li>» Prioritise areas that you feel need urgent attention</li> </ul>
<b>Develop an Action Plan</b>	This plan should outline targets and objectives as well as actions and the relevant resources required to achieve objectives.	Any good action plan should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Targets and objectives (make sure they are realistic)</li> <li>» Specific actions to achieve above (see list of actions on following page)</li> <li>» Dates for completion</li> <li>» Assign Responsibility</li> <li>» Resource Requirements</li> <li>» Stakeholders/ Partners Involved</li> <li>» Identify indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Involvement</b>	Encouraging staff to become involved in the conservation and development of biodiversity on site will increase staff awareness and morale. It may be possible for staff to get involved with the local community by sharing their experiences of developing conservation measures and working with native species. By doing this your company / organisation can give something positive back to the community. This would perhaps take the form of a newsletter or open day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Involve staff by setting up a team to look after biodiversity</li> <li>» When your action plan is complete devise a campaign that will ensure it is communicated to the wider staff.</li> <li>» Get staff involved in practical things such as tree planting (consider getting their children involved as well)</li> <li>» Ask staff for suggestions – you will be amazed at the amount of knowledge and enthusiasm there is for such a project. This needs to be tapped into.</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder Involvement</b>	It may be necessary or appropriate for you to include outside stakeholders in planning your BAP. These may include local government, local community groups or other appropriate stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Invite stakeholders to be part of your team that will plan your BAP</li> <li>» Set up a method of communication to outside stakeholders to let them know of your BAP.</li> </ul>
<b>Review</b>	The effectiveness of your BAP should be reviewed regularly and the BAP adjusted/amended as needed to maintain its effectiveness. Records of these periodic reviews should be kept to monitor progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Carry out further site surveys and environmental reviews at future dates</li> <li>» Compare initial results against any further surveys and assess if your targets are being met.</li> <li>» Communicate your progress</li> </ul>

## Actions to Take



The following are some examples of actions you can take as part of your action plan to help protect or improve biodiversity on your site.

- 1 Plant native species of trees and shrubs suitable for your site.
- 2 Reduce the use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers, using certain native species can attract insects that are natural pest controllers. For example ladybirds eat aphids and greenfly so are handy to have around your rose bushes.
- 3 Identify any conservation designations on land owned or nearby the site that may potentially be impacted on by your activities. For example is there a nearby river that your businesses activities could impact on.
- 4 Leave or develop current wildlife areas and consider creating new areas including wetlands such as ponds.
- 5 Put up bat and bird boxes in appropriate positions on the site.
- 6 The buildings on your site may support many different species. It is important to acknowledge this and take it into account when doing renovation or building works.
- 7 Ensure correct management of hedgerows and appropriate grass cutting.
- 8 Change from using peat compost to peat free compost, or create your own compost on site from food waste.
- 9 You can improve your local environment and built relationships with your local community through sponsorship of community native gardens or support local awareness or education programmes on biodiversity.
- 10 During the designing of future projects and site development, ensure that contactors adhere to the company Biodiversity policy and the Action Plan.

## What if you don't have gardens / land?

Even if you don't have any gardens / nearby land you can still contribute to protecting biodiversity. The following are some actions you can take:

- Place a bird box outside your building to attract some native birds
- Sponsor the planting of native trees in the locality
- Support your local Tidy Towns or other community groups in their attempts to protect and enhance biodiversity
- Ensure your raw materials are from sustainable sources e.g. buying wood that has Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or similar certification

The Rye River a tributary of the River Liffey is approximately 26km in length and comes into Leixlip, through the Intel Ireland site. The Rye Water is considered one of the most important salmon spawning grounds in the Liffey catchment.

Intel chairs a quarterly meeting of the Friends of the Rye River. It is made up of representatives from local residents, Carton Golf Club, Anglers Club, Fisheries Board, Water Bailiff, Kildare County Council and Aquens Ltd, from University College Dublin to discuss the Rye River which runs through the Intel site. This is a key group of local stakeholders who are concerned about the long term viability of the river and Intel plays a leadership role in terms of bringing together all interested parties and exploring ways the river can be improved. This group monitors the health and well being of the river. Intel hosts the meetings of this group on a regular basis throughout the year.

The Rye River has undergone extensive rejuvenation works in the last year funded by Intel and advised by the Rye river group. The enhancement programme was designed by the Central Fisheries Board and the work was carried out by the Engineering Services Section of the Office of Public Works (OPW).

Phase 1 of this programme involved pruning the excess shrubbery along the river banks from the aqueduct downstream to Leixlip village and the loosening of gravels in the bed of the river to accommodate spawning salmon. This phase was completed in the autumn of 2004.

Phase 2 involved the construction of a series of vortex stone weirs, excavation of pools and placement of salmon spawning gravels at intervals downstream of Sandford Bridge.

These works are near completion now. The overall objective of this programme is to improve the quality of the Rye River as a salmon and trout fishery.

Dr. Martin O'Grady from the Central Fisheries Board is pleased that the works have taken place, "The objective of this exercise was two fold. To create deep pools to accommodate large trout and these pools will also provide resting places for large salmon. In addition, the gravel placed at the tail of the pools will provide increased spawning opportunities for returning adult salmon and residential trout. I'm really delighted with the work that has been carried out, the OPW have done an excellent job."

Electofishing is also carried out on the Rye on behalf of Intel Ireland supervised by the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board. This allows an assessment of the fish stock present in the Rye to be calculated, specifically the salmon and trout, which in turn reflect the quality of the water.

Initial findings suggest that overall numbers of salmon has increased on the previous year. Data analysis will be undertaken in the laboratory and the findings of the electro-fishing survey are presented in the annual report. Information on the population size and distribution, age structure, biomass and condition of the fish is also generated from the data collected.

The work on the Rye builds on the large scale rejuvenation project that Intel Ireland undertook on the Rye River in the 1990s to improve the spawning beds and the banks of the river. The Friends of the Rye group continue to meet to monitor the health of the Rye River and see what improvements can be made in the short, medium and long term.

**Intel Ireland**  
Friends of the  
Rye River Winners of a  
Chambers Ireland  
President's Award for  
Corporate Social  
Responsibility 2006

