

How is biodiversity relevant to your organisation?

This quick guide will help you to identify how your organisation links to biodiversity and get you thinking about other things you can get involved with.

Is your organisation already involved in any of the following areas of work either directly or through partners?

Quick check

- Do you have an environmental management system (EMS)?
- Is your organisation involved in management and/or use of land or natural resources?
- Are you involved in healthcare or social services provision?
- Are you involved in provision or promotion of sport and recreation, or tourism?
- Are you involved in provision of education?
- Are you involved in promoting business development and regeneration?
- Are you involved in conserving and enhancing cultural and built heritage?
- Are you involved with implementing action for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) its associated working groups, or with any local biodiversity partnerships, habitat or species action plans?

If you have answered 'No' to all of these questions there are still general steps that all organisations can take for biodiversity. You can encourage and help others to take action for biodiversity for example by:

- raising awareness e.g. through company newsletter or press releases;
- funding e.g. grant aid;
- networking and partnerships e.g. with other similar organisations, Local Biodiversity Partnership;
- corporate volunteering e.g. with TCV;
- instigating a purchasing policy which ensures that you use resources more efficiently and purchase sustainably sourced products.

1. Do you have an [Environmental Management System \(EMS\)](#)?

Most larger organisations should have one of these and biodiversity measures should be part of this. You can have both direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity through the way you manage your buildings and grounds; and through how you carry out services and functions. Identify all these in your EMS evaluation and make sure they follow through into your plans and programmes.

Some EMS' may include a biodiversity policy as a separate environmental topic. Your EMS and biodiversity policy should promote understanding of biodiversity and environmental issues and help to define a high level approach to biodiversity in your organisation. It will also help identify how you will go about putting objectives and targets into practice as action on the ground.

2. Is your organisation involved in management and/or use of land or natural resources?

Your business impacts directly on biodiversity in a range of different ways.

- Managing land e.g. through urban greenspace, grounds management, forestry, development planning & management – biodiversity is a core part of our landscapes whether it be rural or urban and contributes significantly to our physical, mental, social and economic well-being. The way you manage your land holdings, the grounds of your buildings and land and water environment can contribute to biodiversity objectives and targets. Even small changes to land management activities can make a big difference to biodiversity.
- Natural resources such as water, fisheries, deer, or timber are part of our biodiversity so management of such resources must be sustainable and aim to conserve and enhance them.
- If you consume natural resources such as energy, water, wood, minerals, fisheries, think about how you can lessen your impact by using resources more efficiently and making sure they come from a sustainable source e.g. timber and agricultural products.
- Policy making, planning for or regulating the way that land, sea or freshwater resources are used e.g. farming, forestry, fisheries, sport or tourism – consider how biodiversity may be impacted by the policies and decisions that you make and how these could better contribute to biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

3. Are you involved with healthcare or social services provision?

Quality of life is inextricably connected to a healthy environment and biodiversity is a clear indicator of this. The therapeutic nature of a diverse and rich surrounding environment is well recognised and put simply people tend to get better quicker in healthy natural surroundings. Have a look at [Our Natural Health Service](#), [Landscapes for people and health](#), [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), [CoHAB Initiative](#), and [World Health Organisation](#) for more information.

4. Are you involved in the provision or promotion of sport and recreation, or tourism?

Environmental quality is a key factor in determining where and how people spend their leisure time. There are clearly strong linkages between sport, recreation, tourism and the quality of the natural environment in which so much of it happens. Nature based tourism is a growing area so ensuring that it grows sustainably is essential in order to protect the resources on which it is based so make sure you activities protect or enhance the biodiversity they depend on. Find more information at SNH [Tourism](#) and [Enjoying the Outdoors](#).

5. Are you involved in provision of education?

You can play an important role by informing the environmental awareness of the next generation. Getting outside and experiencing biodiversity rather than just learning about it can provide a great basis for curricular activities. Management of school and college grounds can provide not only a pleasant place to learn but also a number of tools and facilities for learning. Have a look through the websites of [SNH](#), [Forestry Commission Scotland](#), [Learning and Teaching Scotland](#), [Eco-Schools Scotland](#) and the [EAUC](#) for ideas and resources.

6. Are you involved in business development and regeneration?

Successful economic regeneration relies on a high quality natural environment which can attract inward investment and encourage businesses to relocate. Check whether you are in the [Central Scotland Green Network](#) area, even if you're not you can use it as a source of ideas. A high quality natural environment will generally be rich in biodiversity.

So you can help biodiversity conservation by:

- Incorporating strong biodiversity messages into sustainable development advice to business enterprises.
- Supporting biodiversity awareness programmes
- Highlighting the economic benefits of developing high class natural environmental settings for business locations.
- Promote economic regeneration and business development through the provision of funding and grant aid, including and promoting screening criteria for projects which encourage conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

7. Are you involved with conserving and enhancing cultural and built heritage?

The environmental quality of the landscape setting for key buildings and cultural assets is likely to be of critical importance to you. Your actions in promoting the conservation of biodiversity within these settings will make a significant contribution. You can also play a key role in promoting the messages and raising awareness of the public visiting your sites.

Ancient trees and parkland, long-established grasslands, and even historic buildings, are often rich biodiversity resources which should be taken into consideration when planning restoration works of for example historic buildings and designed landscapes.

For more information on landscapes have a look at [SNH's website](#).

8. Are you involved with implementing action for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS), any of its associated working groups, or with any local biodiversity partnerships, habitat or species action plans?

You will already be clear about why biodiversity is important to your organisation and will probably already be committed to carrying out some action. The most important thing your organisation can do for biodiversity nationally and locally will be to carry out your agreed actions and continue your proactive role.

[Local Biodiversity Partnerships](#) exist for most Local Authority areas and our National Parks.