

Bright Green Business helps Scottish businesses recruit skilled students & graduates, improve environmental practices & develop business networks. To find out more about our other services visit our website www.brightgreenbusiness.org.uk.

Introduction

The inclusion of social and environmental concern into business objectives is becoming a standard method of business management. It is engrained in the principle of sustainable development in which ecological, economic and social sustainability are integrated. It is become an integral part of environmental management systems and corporate social responsibility objectives. Certain suppliers are being asked to demonstrate how biodiversity is being managed on their site and if the business to not meet the expectations of the retailer then it will affect their business opportunities.

A report conducted by McKinsey showed that 59% of businesses see biodiversity as more of an opportunity than risk for their companies. It is vital that business conserve biodiversity within their local areas as it helps to promote high quality stepping stones facilitating the movement of species.

Biodiversity refers to the diversity of life forms, species, genetic variation and ecosystems. An ecosystem is a collective group of organisms which share resources. Biodiversity is a vital component of our environment as humans rely on the goods and services provided by living things known as 'ecosystem services'.

These services can be divided into four categories:

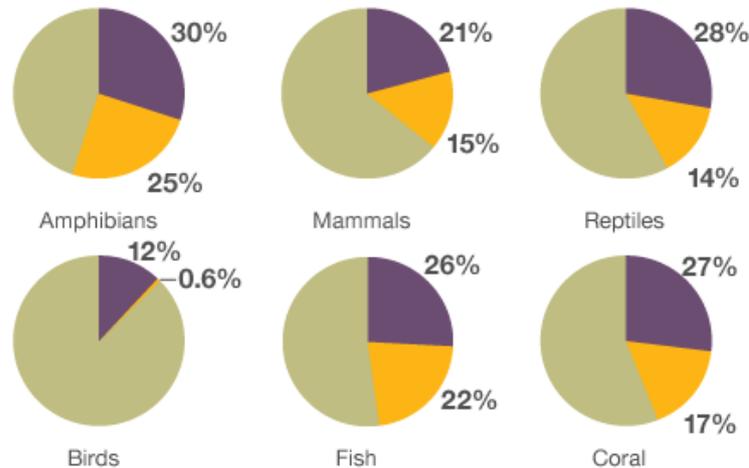
- **Provisional:** fiber, food, freshwater, fuel wood and any other essential resources
- **Regulative:** climate regulation, disease control and suppression of pathogens, water purification and regulation
- **Supporting** (processes): nutrient cycling, primary production and soil formation
- **Cultural:** cultural heritage and sense of place, educational, recreational, spiritual and religious.



By placing a value on nature it enables governments and businesses to quantify the rate and cost of lost resources. It has been estimated by the IUCN that ecosystem services are worth US\$33 trillion per year. However it has been projected that species are declining at a rate of between 1,000 and 10,000 times faster than the natural extinction rate. If the estimations of the number of species on our planet today are correct in the lower limits (2 million species), this means that between 200 and 2,000 extinctions will occur every year. If the upper limit (100 million species) is more accurate then between 10,000 and 1000,000 species will become extinct every year.

Which species are under threat?

■ % of assessed species under threat
■ % data deficient



Drivers of biodiversity loss

Anthropogenic pressure caused by an increasing population, overexploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation have all caused global biodiversity to decline. A number of species and habitats have become fragmented, degraded and destroyed in recent years leading to a decline in species and habitat abundance and richness.

The main drivers of biodiversity loss are:

- **Population growth:** increases the demand for space for habitation and food production
- **Urban sprawl and intensive agriculture and forestry:** encroached upon natural habitats
- **Overexploitation:** our population is consuming more than the planets resources and ecosystems can provide
- **Pollution:** negative affects the health of flora, fauna and human health
- **Climate change:** could result in increased extinction rates as species may be unable to adapt quickly enough to increasing temperatures
- **Invasive alien species:** outcompete endemic species causing endemic species to decline in numbers or become extinct resulting in a alterations to ecosystem properties, function and processes.



Business Benefits for Supporting Biodiversity

The inclusion of conservation concerns into business objectives, management and operational practices is important for public acceptance of your business operations as well as providing:

- Competitive advantage in the marketplace by demonstrating ethical, environmental and social performance in a society that is increasingly concerned about companies environmental credibility.
- Attracts and retains investors, customers, suppliers and employees who share the company's values.
- Avoids future liabilities arising from long-term planning that fails to take biodiversity into account.
- Provides attractive areas for employees to use during their free time whilst helping to engage them in the environment.
- Demonstrates that businesses can make a positive contribution to global biodiversity conservation and integrated land-use planning.
- Helps to meet CSR goals and fulfil the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

How can your business support biodiversity?

- Dedicate a piece of land as a biodiversity garden by planting and maintaining the appropriate vegetation, install bird and bat boxes and bird feeders.
- Create a green roof which acts as a migratory corridor for species, reduces air pollution and improves energy efficiency.
- You can contact your local biodiversity officer who can provide you with specialised advice on the ways to improve biodiversity within your local area. Find out more here.
- Assign a member of staff within your Green Team as Biodiversity Champion who can get staff involved in outdoor activities such as maintaining or creating a biodiversity garden.
- Develop a Biodiversity Action Plan



- Provide support for maintaining local protected areas (e.g. Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest etc.).
- Take part in recording the species diversity and abundance within your local area.
- Create an allotment for fruit and vegetable which can promote health living within the workplace.
- Use the Biodiversity Index tool to map the vegetation types within your area. A report will then be produced which will give your business its biodiversity index rating.

Bright Green Business

Mouldsdale House, 24D Milton Road East, Edinburgh, EH15 2PP

Email: green@thebusinesspartnership.org.uk

Phone: 0131 603 5040

Website: www.brightgreenbusiness.org.uk