

10 REASONS FOR BUSINESS TO ENGAGE WITH BIODIVERSITY

- **Ensures organisations address legal and risk issues**

There is biodiversity legislation that applies to companies operating in the UK, such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act and area designations such as Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. By proactively tackling biodiversity issues, a company can ensure that legal obligations are managed and development is more likely to go smoothly. By managing risk before a problem arises, a company can protect itself from unforeseen liabilities, negative publicity, fines and stakeholder pressure.

- **Be part of the bigger picture i.e. *A Living Landscape* and European & UK commitments**

There are UK wide and international commitments to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The same treaties and conventions that cover issues such as climate change give equal weight to the importance of biodiversity. It is also becoming widely recognised that there is a desperate need to rebuild our shattered ecosystems and create living landscapes to enable species to meet the challenges posed by climate change. By getting involved at a local level, companies gain the opportunity to be part of a high profile strategy and to play their part in delivering landscape scale improvements to biodiversity.

- **Integrates with ISO 14001, Green Dragon, EMS and BS 8555 adding value to existing environmental systems**

Many companies have environmental systems certifications of one sort or another. Improving the focus on biodiversity and land management within environmental management systems will add value to existing certifications by demonstrating continuous improvement, ensuring legal and risk issues have been addressed and will allow companies to be confident in the quality of their environmental certifications as they relate to their whole business, not simply discharges to water or waste management.

- **Shows commitment to biodiversity & delivering CSR**

Many companies have environmental policies and Corporate Social Responsibility commitments. By looking at wildlife and land management issues companies are showing that they are delivering on their policies and that they take their commitments seriously.

- **Enhances reputation with key stakeholders**

When a company positively engages with biodiversity conservation by getting involved with Local BAP partnerships and others organisations working to improve biodiversity in local areas, this provides an opportunity for companies to increase awareness and understanding of the contribution they are making with local stakeholders: their employees, their customers and the communities in which they are based.

- **Provides significant additional promotional opportunities**

Companies with poor environmental performance can find themselves the target of NGO and media exposure. It is often the case that an entire business sector is judged by the worst performing member, especially as so often it is only when things go wrong that a story is taken up by the press. By making a positive contribution a company is able to improve their public image and get positive promotion for the good work that they are doing.

- **Staff retention**

People often want to work for socially responsible companies. Biodiversity conservation can motivate employees through involvement in practical activities that support staff development, commitment, morale and wellbeing.

- **Investor indices and retention**

Investor indices have been developed to measure a company's environmental performance. Private indices are used by ethical funds and mainstream fund managers to assess good management and address some of the risks associated with investment in a company. There are also a number of published indices such as the FTSE4Good, Dow Jones Sustainability Index and the Business in the Environment (BiE) index. Showing responsible environmental performance inspires confidence and trust among investors. Inclusion of biodiversity indicates a company-wide understanding of an approach to the environment.

- **Efficiencies/savings**

In some cases, biodiversity conservation can reap direct and visible benefits, whether this is altering a mowing regime or integrating environmental performance throughout the supply chain.

- **Develop positive partnerships**

Developing and implementing a biodiversity strategy provides opportunities for participation and engagement with stakeholders. This can enable the formation of partnerships to deliver conservation objectives for the company and gives access to information, advice and support from a network of specialist environmental organisations.