

ECONOMY & NATURE LOWER AUSTRIA

Biodiversity constitutes the basis of our lives.
It is the foundation of each and every
fruitful, sustainable economy!



**GET ACTIVE NOW AND CONTRIBUTE
TO THE PRESERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY!**

Mag. Jasmine Bachmann
Energy and Environment Agency Lower Austria

jasmine.bachmann@enu.at
+43 2236 86 06 64-516
www.wirtschaft-natur-noe.at





ECONOMY DEPENDS ON NATURE

Biological diversity is nature's "portfolio". It encompasses habitats and species plus their genetic diversity. It is, in short, like a life insurance for current and future generations. Enterprises themselves also depend on stable environments. Every economic process either directly requires ecological resources or at least depends on their existence. Food, biomass for generating energy, flood prevention, water purification as well as recreational opportunities in pleasant surroundings are some invaluable gifts which come to us at no cost, granted by nature. Therefore, enterprises should, to the extent they are able to, take measures to counteract the crisis of biodiversity, for this crisis is indeed one of the biggest challenges of our time.

The **LIFE Project Economy & Nature Lower Austria** intends to increase awareness of what biodiversity is and of all those things which our ecosystem provides us with. Our intention is to motivate companies in Lower Austria to adopt measures geared towards the preservation of biodiversity. Much has already been done by local businesses. We would like to point out these local activities and encourage others to take steps in the same direction, too.

THE CHALLENGE

The extinction of species caused by man has reached a dramatic scale. It is up to 1000 times higher than the natural extinction rate. This decline in biodiversity weakens the ability of ecosystems to provide us with the valuable ecological output we need. It also has a negative impact on companies and the economy. If this depletion continues in an unchecked way, we can expect an annual decrease of about 7% of the global economy until 2050.* Thus, the decrease in biodiversity will also put our economic growth in jeopardy.

We want to support your company in integrating biodiversity concepts in your production processes. We will also help you communicate this important involvement to clients and staff alike in a sustainable and efficient manner!

BIODIVERSITY - NATURE'S STOCK

Biodiversity encompasses every form of life on earth. The variety of flora and fauna belongs here just as well as its genetic richness and the complexity of ecosystems. This natural stock constitutes the basis for the ecological and social wellbeing of current and future generations. Biodiversity plays an indispensable part in any sustainable economic development.

NATURE IS IN NEED OF YOUR COMPANY

Corporate volunteering - volunteer measures taken in nature reserves

Joint activities apart from the company's daily routine play an important role in uniting your staff and evoking feelings of togetherness. They also help promote a spirit of teamwork. Action days, e.g. fieldtrips affiliated with maintenance work (often in the form of manual labour) in a nature reserve, serve exactly this purpose. Monitor, keyboard and telephone will, for a day, be replaced by string trimmer, sickle and rake. For these action days we will send along a nature preservation expert and, if requested, a coach in economic matters. Their efforts will support important aspects with regards to biodiversity.

Inviting nature to company premises - promoting biodiversity in company grounds

Even premises which are used for commercial purposes can provide habitats for a multitude of flora and fauna without getting into conflict with the intended commercial purpose of the site. Simple steps can be taken to bring the company's premises closer to nature, like planting native trees and shrubbery, or planting hedges as hiding places for mammals or insects, an extensive use of grasslands or boxes put up as homes for mammals, birds, or insects. Such steps can be taken on outdoor storage areas, mining facilities or fallow land.

BENEFITS DERIVED FOR YOUR COMPANY

- Your commitment to conservational issues in your region is clearly demonstrated by such steps towards a positive company profile
- Customer loyalty is heightened because in our times there exists an increased awareness of environmental issues
- You live and convey values which might also have a positive effect on staff retention
- You enhance your regional identity
- Nature is alive and visible on your company premises, and thus the wellbeing of your staff is heightened
- Cost reduction is achieved due to lower maintenance costs for green space
- The sustainability pillar "ecology" is strengthened, your CSR profile is enhanced
- Steps towards networking and a positive feedback about your activities are taken

We will help you develop your strategy while keeping your company interests in mind. The project will be executed by the Energy and Environment Agency Lower Austria (eNu) in cooperation with the Umweltdachverband (an umbrella organisation for environmental issues), the Biosphere Park Wienerwald and the Wirtschaftskammer Niederösterreich (Federal Economic Chamber of Lower Austria). Financially and conceptually, your project will be supported by the departments of environmental protection, economy, tourism, and technology of Lower Austria.

Integrating biodiversity in existing sustainability concepts

By observing and optimizing your supply chains, by using raw material from local or sustainable sources as well as by ensuring environment protection on your premises you can contribute greatly to the local and international preservation of biodiversity. A biodiversity check will analyse your company's impact on nature and also recommend steps on how to minimize potentially negative effects. This module is geared mainly towards ecologically conscious companies that take seriously their corporate social responsibility and sustainability. Its intention is mainly to strengthen the sustainability pillar "ecology".

Sponsoring a certain place, habitat, or species

This is an easy way to demonstrate your commitment to biodiversity: You sponsor a certain place, a habitat or a species, especially if they are closely linked to your line of business or have close ties to your region. By doing so, you can both affirm the regional identity of your company and compensate potentially negative effects your company might have on the environment. Such a symbolic "adoption" provides you with the opportunity to bestow donations in time, cash and kind needed to guarantee the continuing operation of the endangered habitat or the funding the species.

BENEFITS DERIVED FOR BIODIVERSITY

- Valuable habitats and species will be preserved
- Increased awareness and understanding of biodiversity and the significance of nature are achieved
- A multiplier effect for the protection of nature is achieved
- Simple measures can have enormous effects
- You contribute to the preservation of local and international biodiversity

*Source: Stern report (2006)

