

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



Biodiversity Action Plans help businesses mitigate impacts on biodiversity. Credit: Juan Pablo Moreiras/FFI.

Background

Businesses are increasingly beginning to understand how their operations depend on and impact biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES). Like millions of people around the world, businesses depend on the sustained goods and services that are provided by a healthy ecosystem. Many businesses are now seeking to manage this risk by mitigating their impacts and enhancing biodiversity in the vicinity of their operational sites. Many new large-scale industrial developments are making commitments to no loss of biodiversity.

In successfully mitigating their impacts, and in demonstrating good environmental stewardship, businesses can receive operational, financial and reputational benefits, as well as potential access to new markets for their products. Likewise, countries are developing targets to enhance or conserve biodiversity at a national level, under their obligations to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

To effectively mitigate impacts on BES, and to enhance it, it is necessary to clearly identify what actions will be taken in order to achieve a clear set of goals agreed by key stakeholders. The development of a Biodiversity Action Plan can help to achieve this.

What is a Biodiversity Action Plan and why is it important?

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a plan that sets out a series of future actions that will reduce the threat to or enhance biodiversity. In doing so, it reduces potential risks emerging from impacts to BES. A BAP offers a structured and coherent framework for actions at appropriate spatial and time scales, often in conjunction with internal and external stakeholders. The development and implementation of a BAP can help ensure that a consultative, coordinated and proactive approach to biodiversity management is developed, in the context of local and national biodiversity conservation objectives.

Preparing and developing a BAP

While there are general guidelines and principles that should be followed in developing a BAP, each site and project has unique biodiversity threats and conservation needs. Maintaining flexibility in how BAPs are developed and their goals achieved can allow businesses to develop plans in a way that is most appropriate to their local situation. It is also important for companies to recognise that biodiversity management is a *dynamic process*; successful implementation requires sustained commitment for the duration of the project.

In general, the key activities that are required in the development of a BAP are: 1) early-stage consultation with relevant stakeholders; 2) the identification of existing threats and establishment of priorities for conservation action; and 3) the identification of appropriate actions to achieve these priorities.



Fresh water is one of many ecosystem services that businesses rely on. Credit: Juan Pablo Moreiras/FFI.



Consultation with stakeholders is important in developing a BAP. Credit: Jeremy Holden/FFI.



Each site and project has unique conservation needs. Credit: Pippa Howard/FFI.

What should a BAP contain?

Plans should begin by defining a long term **goal**, with clear benefits for all parties involved. The goal is unlikely to be changed during the lifetime of the BAP, but guides the overall direction of the planning process and the identification and agreement of more specific, shorter-term **objectives** which contribute to achieving the goal of the BAP. These objectives should be specific and measurable, so that their achievement can be monitored at a later stage. Objectives are broken down into a number of **actions**, which are more specific but still involve a number of different stages of implementation. Finally, in order to practically achieve these actions, **activities** need to be carried out, which are discrete tasks that clearly state what must practically be done on the ground in order to achieve the stated action.

To support practical implementation, plans should also clearly define, from the outset, who is responsible for their implementation and provisions should be made for coordination over the lifetime of the plan. Such coordination is crucial for plans to achieve their full potential and for stakeholder engagement to remain active throughout the implementation of the BAP. Communication and negotiation with relevant stakeholders should be central to the biodiversity planning process, and wide ownership of, and commitment to, the BAP at its earliest stages of development can greatly strengthen its implementation.

Monitoring and evaluating implementation of a BAP

The success of a BAP can be assessed by monitoring and evaluating the level of implementation of specific actions or activities, and by checking the degree to which the overall objectives of the plan are being met. Such monitoring should be an integrated component of the plan itself, and can help to evaluate achievement of the objectives, actions and activities within a BAP, by identifying and assessing measurable indicators for each of these stages.

Summary: Step-by-step plan for developing a BAP

1. Decide if a BAP should be developed – understand legal, biodiversity and business case drivers.
2. Complete prerequisites – plan for integration with site or project management systems and management of resources.
3. Prepare the BAP – consult with stakeholders and establish the priorities for conservation.
4. Implement the BAP – roll out the necessary actions.
5. Monitor, evaluate and improve – track implementation progress and effectiveness.
6. Report, communicate and verify performance – upgrade the engagement process and build support with stakeholders and partners, as necessary.

Our work with BAPs

Fauna & Flora International has wide experience in designing, implementing and reviewing BAPs with corporate partners in the mining, oil and gas and agricultural sectors. Our long history of successful conservation and global network of conservation partners allows us to draw on experience and expertise in almost all environmental and social contexts. Our commitment to biodiversity ensures that BAPs are implemented to the highest level of care and due diligence.

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact

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