



## INFORMATION MODULE 2

# Greening company premises Going into action on your own doorstep

## The area of activity What this is all about

**Conservation begins on one's door step. Just like the garden at home, business grounds can contribute to local and regional biodiversity and the enjoyment of nature. The keyword is: Biodiversity-friendly property management.**

Often company facilities are located in urban or industrial areas. Cities and populated areas are – other than some people might perhaps think – often home to a surprising amount of species. Certain types of flora and fauna can be particularly successful in typical urban environments. But numbers alone do not make for biodiversity. Targeted, often quite simple measures can successfully preserve or create natural habitats to give other species a refuge and protect genetic diversity. Birds, pollinating insects and rare plants benefit. The land on which company premises and facilities are sited, the business card of a company so to speak, can become a biodiversity building block. This does not of course replace large-scale nature conservation in protected areas or important measures in the supply chain. But in many cases greening company land is easy to implement and successes are quickly visible. There are good partners out there as well as good sources of information.

Please note the other information modules in this series, in particular the general introduction (module 1)

## Approach

### Questions and advice for the beginning

- » Consider: Do you have any opportunities for greening your company grounds with smaller or larger ecological measures – leaving the drab uniform grey and green behind?
- » How much money, which areas of land are available?
- » If landscaping was already envisaged, can you commission a landscape or garden design office to implement a concept that is as close to nature as possible?
- » Do you have the necessary ecological expertise inside the company, or should experts be consulted?
- » Is it possible to involve the staff in the various stages in a manner that is motivational and satisfying?
- » Will you develop or have developed a concept and principles for all company sites?
- » Is it feasible to work with a local conservation organisation or to involve neighbours to achieve a particularly high level of conservation outcomes?
- » What kinds of communication measures make sense? Can you make a strong case for the matter in your chamber of commerce or your trade association?
- » Sometimes there is concern about having access to and use of company land restricted by introducing protected species. In practice usually no problems arise if the measures are carefully planned. In this way particularly valuable biotopes can be created where rare species can find a permanent habitat. You can seek advice from your local conservation authority and local conservation organisations.
- » The aesthetics of natural designs make everything look a little more wild than we are perhaps accustomed to – the eye needs to get used to it. This opens a good opportunity for a small contribution to environmental education in order to change how we see and appreciate a dead wood pile or an uncut meadow, e.g. by means of information boards at one or more strategic points. The local press is often interested in these matters.



## Measures From simple to ambitious

- » Minimise **sealing of the soil surface** in car parks and along paths.
- » Choose permeable ground paving to allow rain water to percolate into the soil. This complies with the requirements for **storm water management** and, depending on the local authority can generate considerable savings in sewerage charges.
- » Prioritise **local plants and plants that are suited to the site**.
- » Choose a variety of plant species that offer **food and shelter** to **birds and insects** (bushes, wild herbs, flowering fields, hedgerows, orchards, copses etc.).
- » If possible include **still and flowing water bodies**. Lakes, ponds and streams are important refugia for frogs, newts, dragonflies or other aquatic loving and dependent species, depending on the climate zone and country.
- » Allow other areas to run wild and **create structures such as dead wood piles, dry stone walls, stone piles, leaf mounds or burrows**. Lizards, hedgehogs, beetles and many other species are at home there.
- » Allow **meadows** or parts of meadows to grow without mowing. **Mowing** only two or three times a year favours the establishment of species-rich meadows and can save costs too.
- » Hang and install **nesting boxes for birds and bats**, and create so-called **insect hotels**.
- » Avoid the use of **fertilisers and pesticides**. As far as possible use biological and integrated pest control.
- » Ensure the use of **insect-friendly lighting**.
- » To **conserve peat bogs** avoid the use of peat.
- » And even that is possible: **Monitoring species before and after the transformation** of particularly large company grounds is an effective and interesting way of showing the success of a project in terms of biodiversity. Conservation experts know which indicator species to look for.

## Getting in deeper: INFOPOOL Cooperation partners, examples, tools,

Germany is one of the countries that promote the discussion on the natural design of company land. Numerous organisations offer companies support and provide information. Below is a list of publications in German.

**Moderne Unternehmen im Einklang mit der Natur – Leitfaden für ein naturnahes Betriebsgelände, published by LUBW State Agency for Environment, Measurements and Nature Conservation, Baden-Württemberg, 1. Edition 2013.**

Brochure for practical application with background information on the most important measures. Free download at [www.lubw.baden-wuerttemberg.de/](http://www.lubw.baden-wuerttemberg.de/)

**Stiftung "Natur und Wirtschaft" ("Nature and Business" Foundation)**

Beautiful to look at, useful as role models: Best practice from Switzerland [www.naturundwirtschaft.ch/](http://www.naturundwirtschaft.ch/)

**Umweltpartnerschaft Bremen**

good overview of recommended actions for individual measures [www.umwelt-unternehmen.bremen.de/](http://www.umwelt-unternehmen.bremen.de/)

"Basic knowledge: companies and biodiversity" is a series of short, cross-industry information modules for companies interested in finding out more on this topic. The modules offer guidance, suggestions and advice, helpful not only for large, but also smaller businesses. The 'Biodiversity in Good Company' Initiative published the German version of these publications in the framework of a project promoted by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment. This is an English edition of the series, adapted for international use. Available for downloading at [www.business-and-biodiversity.de/en](http://www.business-and-biodiversity.de/en).

Published by 'Biodiversity in Good Company' Initiative e.V.

Pariser Platz 6 - 10117 Berlin  
Phone: +49.(0)30.22 60 50 -10  
Fax: +49.(0)30.22 60 50 -19  
[contact@business-and-biodiversity.de](mailto:contact@business-and-biodiversity.de)  
[www.business-and-biodiversity.de](http://www.business-and-biodiversity.de)

