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## Introduction



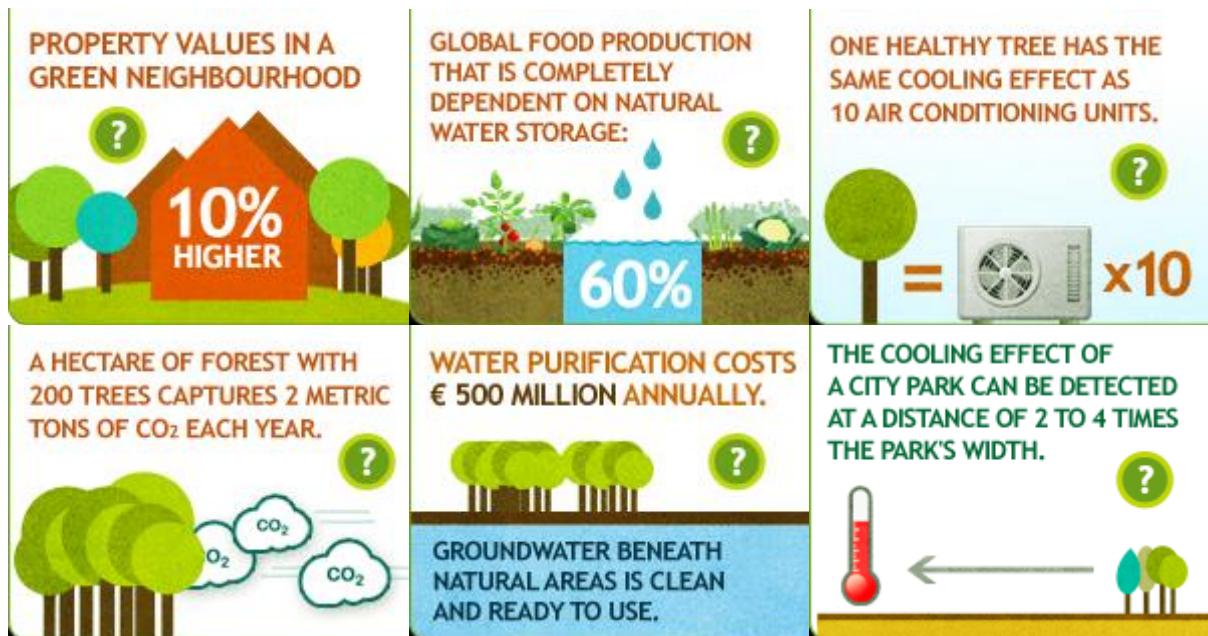
So you want to do something involving biodiversity. You've become interested in the topic or you've been asked to support biodiversity in your area. Now you're asking yourself what steps you should take, what tips and suggestions are available, and whether there are contacts or model projects that can help. This website can help you find your way. It will also give you the tools to share your insights with others working in biodiversity.

## About BAP

With a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), you can work with other interested parties to strengthen biodiversity in a particular area. Biodiversity can also be utilized to achieve societal goals. By developing a joint BAP, you not only generate support for your plans, but you also make use of the ideas and expertise of others. You are not alone when it comes to carrying out the plans you've made.

## The value of biodiversity

Biodiversity is key to a well-functioning ecosystem. Ecosystem services benefit the natural world, the countryside, and urban areas. Biodiversity contributes, for example, to quality of life, higher property values, and an attractive business climate. Biodiversity also supports jobs in agriculture, fisheries, and the recreational sector. In other words, biodiversity plays an important role in fulfilling the needs of society. That's why a Biodiversity Action Plan matters (BAP).



## Opportunities

Setting up a biodiversity action plan can provide opportunities and solutions involving several different social issues.

The main point of a biodiversity action plan is to strengthen the biodiversity in an area, but a BAP also serves to optimize its use. Often, it's a combination of the two. An ecosystem frequently provides several different services and can therefore present a solution to multiple social issues. The use of one service, however, means a reduction in the other services.

With a BAP, you can focus on a specific ecosystem service. Say, for example, that you would like to use biodiversity to help regulate the temperature in the city. But at the same time, you can also determine with others which services an area would ideally provide in the future.

Would you like to know what the different ecosystem services are? A list of Green services has been compiled and included in the report of the *Leiden Lekker Groen* Conference ("Leiden Goes Green"):

<b>Regulating services</b>	
The Green Filter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purifies the air</li> <li>• Absorbs noise and adds visual appeal</li> </ul>
The Green Parasol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulates wind</li> <li>• Regulates temperature</li> <li>• Regulates sunlight</li> <li>• Absorbs CO<sub>2</sub></li> </ul>
The Green Sponge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water retention</li> <li>• Water storage</li> </ul>
The Blue Filter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-cleaning quality of water</li> <li>• Cleaning capacity of soil</li> </ul>
The Brown Filter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-cleaning capacity of soil</li> </ul>
The Green Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resistance to pests and diseases</li> <li>• Resistance to invasive species</li> </ul>
The Green Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbivory</li> <li>• Spreads seeds</li> <li>• Natural pollination</li> </ul>
The Green Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil fertility</li> </ul>

<b>Cultural services</b>	

<p>The Green Experience</p> <p>green self-worth</p> <p>green beauty</p> <p>green orientation</p> <p>green history</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustains ethics</li> <li>• Provides identity</li> <li>• Provides aesthetics</li> <li>• Orientation in time and space</li> <li>• Historical / cultural value</li> <li>• Regional products</li> <li>• Traditions</li> </ul>
<p>The Green School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental education</li> <li>• Sector-supporting information</li> <li>• Feeds scientific research</li> </ul>
<p>Green Recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passive and active recreation</li> </ul>
<p>Green Health and Spirit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therapeutic effects and physical health benefits</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Provides spirituality</li> </ul>


<p><b>Supply services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplies food, fibre</li> <li>• Supplies fuel</li> <li>• Supplies medicine</li> <li>• Supplies drinking water</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Support services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biomass production</li> <li>• Provides natural habitat</li> <li>• Preserves natural cycles</li> <li>• Preserves breeding grounds</li> <li>• Provides genetic material</li> <li>• Produces oxygen</li> </ul>
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## City

A city park contributes to the health and quality of life of city residents, provides a boost to property values in the area, maintains a large number of plant and animal species in town, helps improve air quality, works as a barrier for noise pollution, and neighbourhood residents all have their own reasons for valuing the park.

See also the factsheets on Urban cooling and on Health at [www.biodiversiteit.nl](http://www.biodiversiteit.nl) (in Dutch).

 <p><b>BIODIVERSITY IN THE CITY</b> A clever traffic plan creates quiet islands in the bustling city. Features are included to attract birds.</p>	 <p><b>BIODIVERSITY IN THE CITY</b> Edible plants such as grapes and raspberries trail down from balconies. On the ground, beans and peas climb the walls. Bright blossoms burst from meandering vines.</p>	 <p><b>GREEN FOR KIDS</b> Tree houses are built in city parks, plenty of green space surrounds schools for play and vegetable gardens, there are trees for children to climb and play in everywhere..</p>
 <p><b>CITY PARKS</b> A city park contributes to residents' health and happiness, boosts property values, and helps preserve plant and animal life.</p>	 <p><b>FERNS</b> Twenty-three species of ferns grow in Amsterdam.</p>	 <p><b>CITY PARKS</b> City parks in Singapore are not only cooler, but they also cool the surrounding area, day and night. The more trees and shrubs, the cooler the park.</p>

## Countryside

The countryside provides productive agricultural services. These areas are dependent on the plant and animal life present for the fertility their soil, their capacity to retain water, and the regulation of pests and diseases. But the countryside is also valued as a pleasant place to live and pursue recreational activities, where we conserve cultural-historical landscapes, and a place we increasingly look to absorb excess precipitation.

See also the factsheets on Soil fertility, Protection from pests and on Pollination at [www.biodiversiteit.nl](http://www.biodiversiteit.nl) (in Dutch).

 <p><b>CONCENTRATION</b> Nature, the countryside, and urban vegetation all boost concentration.</p>	 <p><b>EXOTIC SPECIES</b> Over 10% of species in the Netherlands are imported exotics: the zander, Pacific oyster, muskrat, brown rat, shipworm, Egyptian goose, and rose-ringed parakeet.</p>	 <p><b>BUSINESS CLIMATE</b> Parks and other green areas help attract international and knowledge-based companies.</p>
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## Nature

The Dutch sand dunes protect millions of people and billions of euros worth of infrastructure against flooding, serve as a recreational area for the country's western city dwellers, and provide clean drinking water. This is another example of one area providing a number of different goods and services that are of great economic and social value to residents and businesses alike, most of which are based far beyond the dunes.

See also the factsheets on Coastal defences, Natural water storage, Water supply and on Sustainability of grassland on peat soil at [www.biodiversiteit.nl](http://www.biodiversiteit.nl) (in Dutch).

## Get going

**There is no fixed blueprint for constructing a BAP, but answering the following questions can help you get started:**

- **Choosing:** What do I want to achieve and what am I going to focus on?
- **Connecting:** How do I take other initiatives into consideration? Who can I work with?
- **Area:** How do I develop a BAP for a particular area? How can I get stakeholders involved?
- **Services:** How can I develop a BAP to utilize a specific service?
- **Persuading:** How do I convince others about the value of what I would like to do?
- **Funding:** Where can I find funding for my ideas?
- **Carrying out:** How can I ensure the project is a success?



## Choosing

**What is the best approach for developing a BAP?** Is it necessary to involve all the stakeholders in an area or can you do it yourself? Whichever approach you choose, try to connect - with biodiversity, with other interested parties, with other initiatives - and work together!

## Developing an area

If your BAP involves an area in which different biodiversity services are utilized, then a participatory approach will work best. You will be dealing with a variety of interests and perspectives, and by involving others, you increase support for your BAP and don't have to go it alone. In consultation with the 'users' of the area, you can look at the value of its current biodiversity and consider the site's future. What services will the area need to provide 20 years from now? And for whom? Can these services go together? What would this mean for biodiversity in the area? Read more on setting up a BAP for a particular area.

## Utilizing a specific service

Would you like to work with a BAP in order to utilize a specific function of biodiversity, such as controlling particulate pollution or storing water? In this case, dream sessions are not always useful. Instead, write your BAP with a direct focus on the specific function of biodiversity you'd like to work on, and then find experts on the subject and stakeholders with an interest in this function. Who else would benefit from reducing particulate pollution, for example? What type of vegetation works best? Read more on setting a BAP for a specific service.

## Practical plan

How to proceed with a BAP involving either an area or a service? **Concrete steps:**

### Step 1: Choose a clear objective

"Well-functioning ecosystem services", "healthy biodiversity", "social well-being" - complex formulations do not get your meaning across very well. If you want people to connect with your cause, then you first need to clearly and succinctly express what you want to achieve. Define your topic and formulate a working objective everyone can understand. Clearly delineating the geographical area you wish to focus on will also make it easier to identify stakeholders.

### Step 2: Look into previous experience

It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. Many initiatives on strengthening and utilizing biodiversity have already been carried out in the Netherlands. In this guide, you will find a variety of examples (see Action). Make contact with local nature organizations, for example, but also with the city or the province (see Cooperating). Under Network, you can find a list of BAP initiatives.

### Step 3: Select a coordinator

When developing a BAP with others, you must decide who does what. It is a good idea for someone to take on the role of coordinator. For larger projects, assembling a BAP team of enthusiastic people is recommended.

Complex or sensitive processes often see the coordinator divided into two roles/individuals:

- The 'organizer', who gets things moving and keeps them moving. The bulk of the organizing coordinator's work occurs behind the scenes.
- The 'mediator', who has the support and approval of process participants and who is often a local heavyweight who enjoys the respect of the public. The mediating coordinator serves as the chair -- responsible for visibility, running meetings, resolving conflicts, and lobbying - with the instructions and support of the organizing coordinator.



**Step 4: Choose a BAP team**

Any initiative needs a strong heart, a small group of people who ensure the progress and quality of the work: a BAP team. The coordinator assembles this team, by inviting people from various organizations to the initial meeting and putting your plans on the table. Include someone in the team with knowledge of biodiversity in the area and its benefits, like an ecologist.

**Step 5: Recruit strategic allies**

It can certainly help to have the formal approval of an alderman or provincial representative at the outset. Better still is to have the alderman as a strategic ally. Someone in this position can facilitate the process: by removing bureaucratic stumbling blocks, appealing to their own network, helping find funding, and serving as an ambassador for the project. Note: political support often only comes once a movement has started.

**Step 6: Get to work!**

You know what you want to achieve, you know where experience with your topic has already been acquired, and you have found a coordinator, active individuals to help, and strategic allies. Now, you can draw up a BAP and start connecting, cooperating, dreaming, convincing, and doing!

## Connecting

To effectively utilize biodiversity for larger social aims and to contribute to biodiversity conservation, it is important your initiative is rooted in the area involved and connected to other initiatives.

How can you and your initiative make a true contribution to biodiversity in your area? Can your initiative also contribute to ecosystem services? By coordinating different initiatives, the end result can be much greater than the sum of its parts. In a word: synergy. Take the example of natural alternatives to pesticides. By coordinating activities at an agricultural operation and in the surrounding area, the effects will be far greater.

### Connecting with biodiversity

The most direct form of connection is to ensure that areas targeted by the various initiatives are connected. In this way, a network is formed of 'biodiverse' places that can then increase in diversity by sharing their species. This will create a large network, with habitat for a wide variety of species. Find out how your plans can contribute to this sort of interconnected network. You can probably learn more from an urban ecologist, other experts from the local authorities, or nature organization volunteers.

### Connecting with people

Biodiversity provides services that people value. Living, working, and pursuing recreational activities in or near nature contribute to a healthier, happier life. You can create more enthusiasm for your plans by shifting the emphasis from the value of nature itself to the people who make use of the services biodiversity provides. Also, the social benefits of your initiative may prove greater than the costs, giving a small project a greater chance of being funded and/or expanded.

By mapping out the services an area provides, it soon becomes clear whether all stakeholders are represented in the process. If not, additional participants can then be approached. Both competing services and services that reinforce one another can be depicted on a map or satellite image. An urban ecologist who is part of the BAP team (see Choose) can assist with this step of the process.

A vision for the area's future can be developed with the help of 'dream sessions'. A variety of areas in the Netherlands have made use of such sessions.

#### Dream Sessions in Leiden:

The Dutch municipality of Leiden has used dream sessions to bring together various stakeholders in biodiversity in the greater Leiden area to develop a vision for the future. What will the municipality and its biodiversity be like in 20 years? What functions will biodiversity have then? By taking this positive approach, and encouraging people to visualize the future, Leiden has managed to identify the common denominator in a wide variety of different interests and to generate enthusiasm among stakeholders. In this way, Leiden fosters a sense of connection with the topic and people then carry out the required activities collectively. See 'Dream Sessions' for more on this approach.

### Connecting with other initiatives

Areas designated for renovation or development - such as business parks that are being refurbished or neighbourhoods that are being rejuvenated, as well as brand new developments - present great opportunities for bringing in fresh ideas. Other projects that lend themselves to links with biodiversity plans and the services biodiversity offers include: emergency storage of excess water and buffer zones along major roadways.

Existing biodiversity initiatives may serve as a good foundation for the change you wish to set in motion. Stakeholders in other plans may want to take part in yours too. When your initiative engages with the wishes of other parties (such as the government), such cooperation can lead to productive synergies and can open up new avenues for funding.

### Local services and regional biodiversity:

Local ecosystem services can depend on regional circumstances. Consider natural alternatives to pesticides in agriculture, for example. To encourage the presence of a certain pest's natural enemies, measures taken at one farm (such as planting flowers along the edges of fields) may not be enough. The green/blue arteries in the surrounding area also play a role. Connecting such an initiative with neighbors and other parties in the surrounding area is important if it is to succeed. Cooperation with others is crucial.

### Connections in the *Overdiepse polder*:

In the Dutch project 'Room for the River', the *Overdiepse polder* along the Bergse Maas River is being adapted to provide temporary water storage in emergency situations. The farmhouses will be moved onto raised mounds, to provide people and livestock with a safe haven in the event of high water. A number of farming operations were purchased by the government to provide more room for a cost-effective enterprise. At the same time, this provides just enough space to fit the province's ecological main structure into the plans, so that a natural landscape of wetlands can be established through the heart of the area.

## Cooperating

To get activities going, it can be useful to find other parties to work with. This is certainly true if you want to develop a shared vision for the future of an area. But also if you want to work with smaller initiatives, cooperation can prove key to obtaining the knowledge and expertise needed and mobilizing support for your plan.

### Who are potential partners?:

**Private individuals:** Members of the public can be important partners, if encouraged to think about the future of their neighborhood. Contests can be a helpful tool in this regard. In addition, individuals do considerable work as volunteers for nature organizations, and they make great contributions to the biodiversity in an area, in the choices they make for their back gardens or allotments. Rural residents can exercise significant influence on the biodiversity around their property.

#### Getting civilians involved:

The publication 'Urban biodiversity: the contributions of private individuals, businesses, and institutions; a guide for professionals', addresses the question of how to involve individuals in biodiversity activities. The form of the message is more important than the content in this case. A positive message and use of local media is key.

**Local nature centers:** Nature centers have access to information and often an extensive network of people eager to work for environmental causes.

**Local civil society organizations:** These organizations include neighborhood associations or community centers, or action groups organized around a specific local theme.

**The city's urban ecologist:** Some cities enlist the services of an urban ecologist. Urban ecologists know about city policy and about the species present in the area, so they can help assess the feasibility of an initiative. They can also help point the way to the appropriate agencies for permits, for example, or resources on a particular area of expertise. If your city does not have an urban ecologist, the local authority will have a department responsible for nature.

**Business community:** The local business community is often organized in associations that work on behalf of the public (e.g. business clubs, Rotary Club, Lions Club). And biodiversity can also contribute to an attractive business climate. In the recreational sector, biodiversity often forms part of the business's product, so business people in the sector can be important partners for initiatives involving biodiversity.

**The local authorities:** The local authorities can be an invaluable partner in creating room for your planned activities and removing stumbling blocks. Examples of contributions include using spatial

planning policy to make space available for strengthening biodiversity. Contributions to biodiversity can be integrated in neighborhood renovation projects, new residential developments, business parks, city water management, etc. Dutch local authorities that are already active on biodiversity issues, such as in Leiden, Amersfoort, and numerous other municipalities in the Noord-Brabant, can serve as examples and resources for other areas.

**The province:** The province plays a key role as regional director. Provinces can be an important partner in, for example, making business parks more sustainable. A number of Dutch provinces, such as Noord-Brabant, Zuid-Holland, and Zeeland, conduct policy that actively addresses biodiversity. This makes room for new ideas.

## Areas & Services

You can approach setting up a biodiversity action plan in two main ways: You can aim to develop an area or to utilize a service.

### Developing a particular area

If your BAP involves an area in which different biodiversity services are utilized, then a participatory approach will work best. You will be dealing with a variety of interests and perspectives, and by involving others, you increase support for your BAP and don't have to go it alone. In consultation with the 'users' of the area, you can look at the value of its current biodiversity and consider the future of the area. What services will the area need to provide 20 years from now? And for whom? Can these services coexist? What would this mean for biodiversity in the area?

More on setting up a BAP for a **particular area**:

Farmers, business owners, and recreational users are people who live, work, and enjoy being in the area. Because they know the area well and are the most affected by what happens here, their ideas play a central role in the development of a BAP.

#### The ecosystem approach

The Netherlands has a wealth of information and experience on environmental planning and management, not the least of which is found in the professionals who work in this field. Below are two recommended methods for users to try. Both are based on the ecosystem approach and have proven track records. *The context determines which method is best in a particular situation.*

#### Dream sessions

The *ideas* users have about the area in which they live and work figures centrally in the dreaming process. To start out, users and their organizational structures are mapped out. Together, the users then determine what services the area can or should provide them with. To do so, users develop a *vision or dream for the future* of the area, and then identify what actions are needed to make the dream a reality.

#### When are dream sessions useful?

Dream sessions are especially useful if an area has a variety of *different functions* and the resulting range of stakeholders. Consider, for example, a zoning change for a housing development; the design of city's master vision for spatial planning; or when you would like to flesh out local or regional biodiversity policy. A basic BAP can be developed in just two meetings.

#### How do I do this?

Read more in the annex on holding a dream session: Dream session plan.

### Utilizing a specific service

Would you like to work with a BAP in order to utilize a specific function of biodiversity, such as controlling particulate pollution or storing water? In this case, dream sessions are not always useful. Instead, write your BAP with a direct focus on the specific function of biodiversity you'd like to work on, and then find experts on the subject and stakeholders with an interest in this function. Who else would benefit from reducing particulate pollution, for example? What type of green area works best?

More on setting a BAP for a **specific service**:

The main purpose of a BAP is to strengthen biodiversity, but a BAP can also aim to optimize the benefits biodiversity provides. It is often a combination of the two. An ecosystem frequently supplies a number of different services and can therefore provide a solution for different societal issues. Utilizing a given service, however, does occur at the expense of the others.

### **Seizing opportunities**

Using a BAP, you can work on a particular benefit of biodiversity. For example, perhaps you are interested in using biodiversity to help regulate the temperature in the city. Together with others, you could determine what services you would ideally like an area to provide in the future. See above under 'Opportunities' for examples of solutions that a biodiversity action plan can offer to issues facing society.

### **Getting started**

Look above under 'Choosing -> Practical plan' at the step-by-step plan to actively get started utilizing the services that biodiversity and ecosystems provide.

## Convincing

Biodiversity is often associated with global problems such as the extinction of species in tropical rainforests. However, people often fail to establish a link with the nature close to home, in their own cities. Biodiversity action plans mainly concern the living and working environment, and to generate sufficient support for a BAP, the relationship between biodiversity and citizen wellbeing has to be highlighted. Several approaches are available to achieve this, and as the issues at stake are in constant flux, there is little certainty about the most persuasive arguments. Raising public awareness creates new opportunities and new ways to reach target groups.

A persuasive message always contains three elements: it should provide opportunities for tackling an issue, possibilities for *practical* implementation, and should be focussed on the individual (*for you!*). (*Why* would I do something, *what* can I do, and *how* do I do it)  
Below are some tips for addressing and convincing key target groups.

## Individuals

### “Biodiversity contributes to the quality of life”

Most people are aware of the extinction of species and the loss of natural areas, however projecting a negative, ‘doom-mongering’ message often results only in public apathy.

Let people consider the fact that biodiversity also has a key role to play in their quality of life. This realization provides people with opportunities for direct involvement with a BAP, as it does after all concern the neighbourhood where they live, recreational areas they use, and the park where their children play.

Improving the quality of life sends out a positive message which does not so much focus on the preservation of biodiversity, but more on the satisfaction that comes from improving quality of life by strengthening biodiversity.

### Tips for involving and convincing individuals:

#### Convincing the public

Motivating people to act or change their behaviour means ensuring your message is linked to a call to action. People must be offered a concrete course of action, where the results are also quickly visible. If people can make a specific contribution the results are often quickly visible (pollarding of willows, cleaning up a neighbourhood), whereas in the case of changing behavioural patterns or long-term processes this is less clear and people have to be provided with information. They want to know if their efforts will produce results (for example, improvements in air or water quality).

BAPs should make clear in advance:

- Why is it important for the target groups, what results will be pleasantly surprising?
- What is specifically requested from the target groups, how can they contribute?
- How can insight be delivered in the results; what is the communication strategy?

Choose an approach that leads to a concrete course of action. It may be useful to provide a breakdown of how the various groups involved can contribute ideas, cooperate, or simply be provided with information. Methods of communication should be adapted accordingly.

#### Ambassador species

One successful approach is through the use of ambassador species for biodiversity. These are plant and animal species that are typical of a particular municipality, region, or urban environment. Ambassador species are an engaging and effective way of raising wider biodiversity awareness. Many municipalities have already had positive experiences in this area.

#### Further tips for engaging and convincing individuals

- Keep the message personal and accessible.
- Emphasize the positive values of biodiversity.
- Experience is better than information!
- Make use of guerrilla marketing and social media.
- Very limited information is given to biodiversity via regular channels of information. Use local media such as newspapers, TV stations and entertainment guides.



## Businesses

### *“Investment in the immediate environment benefit a business’ productivity and green image”*

Winning the support of businesses and entrepreneurs requires greater emphasis on the business case for investing in biodiversity. This includes benefits such as attractive shopping areas, natural pest control on farms, recreational facilities for employees, improving productivity, saving energy and projecting a good business image.

Investing in the immediate environment also offers companies the opportunity to strengthen the relationship with local residents and to build a positive image. Corporate community involvement is becoming increasingly popular for the image of a company, and an increasingly important factor in the purchasing decisions of consumers.

#### Tips for involving businesses:

- Businesses and institutions will generally contribute ideas when asked directly.
- Biodiversity conservation as an essential rather than a voluntary component of Corporate Social Responsibility must be brought to the attention of businesses.
- In this respect, emphasis should be placed on the relationship with positive economic developments in the future, such as creating space for businesses and nature in land development plans, generating higher productivity and securing raw materials.
- Direct communication at local level is a promising strategy to make companies and institutions aware of the opportunities available to them.

## Local authorities

### *“Investing in biodiversity can achieve several policy aims in one go”*

The returns on community investments made by local authorities and civil society organisations can be boosted by taking into account the services an area delivers. By developing a BAP policy makers can achieve multiple policy aims at the same time.

A BAP offers the following opportunities:

- empowering citizens;
- creating liveable, safe neighbourhoods;
- developing an attractive environment for businesses;
- creating jobs;
- providing protection against climate change (climate adaptation);
- strengthening an area’s unique character;
- improving connections with surrounding countryside.

#### Tips for involving local authorities:

- Consider in advance what interests local authorities may have in developing a BAP. In view of the position they hold, what are the advantages of a BAP for the parties whose support you are trying to win? A BAP can for example play a key role in preparing a land development plan, but can also improve the liveability of neighbourhoods or prevent air pollution (particulate matter issues).
- Show how a BAP can address several policy fields at the same time. This will increase support for investments.
- Gain support of managers by also emphasizing the economic aspects: contributing to the sustainable economy, creating jobs, reducing health care costs, strengthening the business climate. Highlight the benefits of investing in a BAP in terms of both quality and where possible quantity.
- Show which parties are participating in the municipality: Is the business community getting involved? Are resident groups involved? Are care institutions interested?
- Show the investments made by other parties in the action plan: What are businesses and members of the public prepared to do? The government cannot lag behind!

- Show how the BAP can lead to a positive PR for the municipality or the province. What image is projected? What is the best way to take advantage of this?
- Use the presentation or the video on the website to gain the support of colleagues.
- Use examples from other provinces and municipalities.

## Funding

### *'Investing in biodiversity pays off'*

Whether investment in the environment pays off has been a moot point for some time. The environment fulfils a number of functions that can in part be converted directly into cash. According to typical calculations, every euro invested can produce a two-fold return for society. However, it should be considered that the returns do not always benefit the investor! In that case new financing structures are sometimes needed to bring various target groups together. So how can you finance your BAP?

### Existing options

Existing sources of financing such as subsidies and funds can sometimes be used. A few examples include:

- INTERREG programme (European subsidy scheme in which parties from various countries cooperate on projects in the area sustainable use of land and regional development)
- National subsidy schemes
- Private Funds (equity funds providing donations to foundations and associations for general non-profit community projects)

### Red and green arrangements

The *red-for-green* financing arrangements involve funding green areas from the returns of real estate development (red areas).

Another example is the *red-with-green* approach, where real estate expansion into the countryside (such as the construction of a business park or sports fields) is compensated by improving spatial quality elsewhere. This improvement must relate to the countryside (not urban developments) and can present opportunities for a BAP. A green fund is sometimes set up to achieve these improvements, and the local authority is the designated contact point for this purpose.

### Public private partnership

The government and the private sector both make use of an area's services and share responsibilities for the management and maintenance. Establishing public private partnerships not only broadens support for a BAP, it also offers new sources of financing. Public private partnerships often allow access to new sources of finance at an earlier stage as these types of arrangement combine various networks.

### New financing constructions

#### The regional account

A regional account allows various actors (authorities, businesses, citizens) to deposit funds. The bank then agrees to hand over a percentage of the total amount of interest to a regional development fund, or landscape fund. This offers the possibility of generating funds for regional nature conservation through other means than government resources, such as the proceeds of public initiatives.

#### The landscape auction

The landscape auction offers consumers and businesses the opportunity to 'adopt' a landscape element such as a hedge, orchard or pond and take responsibility for its management and maintenance. The landscape auctions are held on the internet and on location.

## Realization

When implementing the BAP it is important that you celebrate successes. You will also need to monitor progress and evaluate results.

### Low-hanging fruit first

The BAP may have resulted in a large number of activities that can be undertaken. Some of these activities will be more expensive than others and their political feasibility may vary. Start with activities that can be easily achieved in terms of both cost and political feasibility (the low-hanging fruit). There is the chance that successful completion of these activities will increase political support for other activities, which will mean that they will also become easier to achieve.

### Celebrating successes

Celebrating joint successes is a proven means for ensuring the circle of enthusiastic participants is as wide and as active as possible. Finalise the ideas stage by for example presenting envisaged objectives and actions at a meeting attended by citizens, businesses and government representatives. Securing the commitment of the authorities is a good starting point for implementing the plan.

It is exciting for participants in the process to hear how ‘their’ BAP has been taken forward. A successful project with happy people is a highly effective way of transmitting enthusiasm, and this energy can stimulate others to take up the initiatives that you have started.

### Sharing experiences through town-twinning

Many municipalities have substantial experience in town-twinning initiatives such as in the area of housing or the environment. These projects may involve learning from each other’s experiences or knowledge or simply working together on areas that both parties find interesting. One example is the twinning of Sint-Michielsgestel with Buk, which offers farmers from the Netherlands and Poland the opportunity to exchange information on sustainable agricultural practices and prudent use of crop protection products. Some twinning relationships are established with foreign communities that have many inhabitants from the Dutch municipality in question. Not only the local authorities but also the groups of citizens form contacts, and depending on the interests shown on both sides there is scope for all different types of initiative, such as based on the theme of biodiversity.

### Monitoring and evaluation

The manuals emphasize the importance of monitoring and evaluation, although these aspects are often neglected in practice. Due to the participatory nature of the BAP, the involvement of participants in the BAP process of monitoring and evaluation is a matter of course.

Make sure it is clear who is responsible for monitoring what area of the BAP and how. This should preferably be coordinated by the BAP team, and it is therefore important to ensure this team is comprised of a small, enthusiastic group of people. An annual, onsite meeting to look at and discuss the results of the BAP is one way to keep people involved and to ensure the implementation of the BAP remains close to the end users of the site in question.

Monitoring the progress of projects is relatively easy by checking whether the planned activities are running to schedule, although monitoring the biodiversity or the ecosystem services in an area is more challenging.

Ask the users of the ecosystem services about the state of affairs. Are the planned services actually being delivered and can any trends be observed? Input from experts can also be sought. These experts may be from among the participants themselves (such as waterboards if the project concerns water quality), but they may also be external (urban ecologists, etc.).

The results for biodiversity can be compared with national or local objectives for biodiversity policy. Local nature groups, possibly supported by a specialist, can also assist in this review.

## Annex: Dream session plan

### Starting: setting limits and determining roles

To begin with, the aim of the session must be clearly defined, and the role of participants agreed upon. It must be clear what participants can expect from the process. This also means it must be clear how much weight their decisions carry. That is, what is the status of the results? Are they binding? What will be done with them?

### Mapping out services

By mapping out the services an area provides, a view of the current situation emerges. This soon makes it clear whether all stakeholders are represented in the process. If not, additional participants can then be approached. Both competing services and services that reinforce one another can be depicted on a map or satellite image. An urban ecologist who is part of the BAP team can assist with this step of the process.

### Generating dreams and ideas

On the basis of the potential services available, participants are asked in a first meeting to dream about the future. Put existing policy, legislation, or other limitations out of the picture as much as possible at this stage. Allow people to ponder what they *wish* to see in the area; whether these dreams are practical or feasible will be considered at a later stage. The idea is to get the ideas flowing without being limited by practical considerations.

Practical information on dream sessions:

**Result:** The services provided by an area are identified, as are the values assigned these services and ideas for concrete action.

#### Programme

Start the meeting by welcoming the participants. Then hold a short, introductory presentation on the value of biodiversity, so that everyone has the basic level of knowledge needed to take part in the creative sessions. First, depending on the size of the group, the participants are divided into a number of small thematic groups of 6 to 8 people. Examples of themes include:

- City centre
- Edge of town
- Water
- Rural areas
- Business parks

Each small group is given the task of coming up with as many ideas as possible on what they consider important about nature in the area and the services it provides. What are the benefits of nature, according to the participants? Once the participants have finished making these lists, their 'values' are clearly posted on the wall of the room, on large A3-size paper, for example. Each group then indicates five priority items from their own group's list: Which five values are most important?

After the break, participants are challenged to generate as many ideas as possible about the future for each of the five priorities. Which images and ideas do participants that relate to these five values? The idea is to think big, to dream: What will the area ideally look like in the year 2040? Encouraging the participants to reflect without further limitation, can generate a wealth of creative ideas, which are then written on A4-size pieces of paper. These dreams are then also attached to the wall for all to see, clustered by priority.

Following the two creative sessions, the results of all small groups will be hung on the wall. Next, the participants use stickers to indicate which values (session one) and dreams (sessions two) they

consider most important. To do this, they walk past the A3 and A4 papers from all small groups. Participants can now see which functions of the area are most appreciated and which dream is the most compelling. The results are discussed with the group as a whole, and participants are told how these results will be used in a follow-up meeting.

## Structuring ideas

The BAP team analyzes the ideas of the dream session participants and sorts them according to each activity's purpose. The aims and activities are then also assessed as to their feasibility and sustainability (e.g. Can the services be utilized in a sustainable way?).

## Setting priorities and identifying coordinators and resources

During a second session, participants are asked to rank the different goals and activities in order of importance, coordinators are named for the various activities, and resources are identified. The plan's feasibility now becomes clear.

Practical information on this second meeting:

**Result:** Biodiversity action plan (BAP)

### Programme

Start the meeting with a word of welcome and a brief account of what has happened since the last meeting. An expert meeting has been held, in which the BAP team has structured the results from the first meeting. For each theme, dreams have been distinguished from more concrete ideas. The concrete ideas are sorted by the dream they relate to. The BAP team provides additional details, as needed, or makes steps more concrete. The results are hanging on the wall for all participants to see. In preparation for the creative process, the participants are then divided into a number of small thematic groups of 6 to 8 people. Examples of themes include:

- City centre
- Edge of town
- Water
- Rural areas
- Business parks

Before the break, the small groups will decide which project ideas are to be developed first. To do so, participants are given the task of taking their ideas from the first meeting and placing them on a feasibility chart, which the BAP team has prepared for each small group. One axis runs from low costs to high costs, the other runs from projects able to be carried out in the short term (left) to long-term projects (right). Once the ideas from the first meeting have been positioned in the feasibility chart, participants will easily be able to identify the 'low-hanging fruit' to be worked out further after the break.

After the break, the small groups get started turning the ideas into full-fledged action plans by adding resources and funding to the mix. They use project formats for this purpose (aim, activities, coordinator, responsibilities, timeframe, budget estimates). Finally, the responsibilities are assigned and the small groups present their action plans.

## Drawing up a vision

On the basis of the ideas and goals that made the final cut, an ideal vision or target is outlined that participants are enthusiastic about. This vision, or 'enticing perspective' is written in narrative form so that it is accessible and engaging. The target situation or vision gives the BAP a direction and plays an important role in communication about the BAP. It provides coherence and reinforces

the connection between the separate project proposals, thus increasing the likelihood of solid support and funding.

Visions for Leiden:

*By promoting green roofs, ivy-covered walls, and the planting of trees in public squares and along waterways and roads, Leiden has been transformed into a green city. Despite the limited space available for public green areas within the city limits, Leiden has become one of the greenest municipalities in the country. The "Hanging gardens of Leiden" and the canals with all their flowers, such as the Kijfgracht, have grown into popular tourist attractions. Edible plants such as grapes, raspberries, and strawberries trail down from balconies. On the ground, beans and peas climb the walls, where bright Nasturtium blossoms burst from meandering vines. Sweet chestnuts and other fruit and nut trees are everywhere. A cleverly-devised traffic plan creates quiet islands within the city. Features are included that attracts birds. These islands of green help air circulation, making hot days in the city more pleasant.*

*For children, Leiden is a true paradise. Temporary natural areas are opened up, so children can play in these little spots of "wilderness". Tree houses are built in city parks and in the woods. Loads of green space surrounds schools, so kids can tend vegetable gardens and still have plenty of room to play. All the children in the Leiden area have their own tree! Everywhere are trees to climb and play in. Dutch health and safety laws have even been amended to permit minor falls. Rural areas have also been opened up for children. On adventurous hiking trails, you encounter water you have to jump over and there's a good chance of getting your feet wet.*

From: "Collective vision for Biodiversity in and around Leiden; by and for residents", June 2009 (Publication in Dutch).