



Supporting Members Starting Out On Sustainability

Article Five – How Your Business Can Regenerate Nature

Many decades of the world engaging in a Linear Economy which is based upon Take – Make – Waste, has not only produced significant amounts of waste, but it has also had a devastating effect on nature. This article aims to offer advice to businesses on how they can help to repair some of this damage.

Definitions:

Nature: is a holistic term that encompasses the living environment which includes all living organisms and the ecological processes that sustain them. By this definition, people are a key part of nature. (*Te Mana o Te Taiao 2020*)

Biodiversity: is the diversity of living things in an area eg) the number of species, genetic variation within each species, diversity of ecosystems.

Nature Regeneration: is improving ecological health and biodiversity by enabling, supporting and enhancing natural processes.

Why Is Regenerating Nature Important?

Biodiversity loss is at crisis point in NZ and across the globe, we must act urgently – in NZ 4,000 species are threatened or at risk of extinction. Moving to a Circular Economy which is based upon Use – Reuse/Recycle/Repair Constantly, which minimises waste, has a fundamental role to play in halting and reversing biodiversity loss by:

- eliminating waste and pollution to reduce threats to biodiversity
- circulating products and materials to leave room for biodiversity
- regenerating nature to enable biodiversity to thrive

Why Does Nature Loss Matter?

Our society and economy depend upon nature to survive because nature:

- provides materials such as food, fuels and fibres
- regulates climate, wastes and pollination
- supports processes such as water purification and nutrient cycling
- provides opportunities for enjoyment of the beautiful outdoors

Why Investing In Nature Is Good For Business:

It will enable you to:

- get ahead of the legislation and avoid penalties
- enhance the reputation of your business
- achieve staff retention – team building and wellbeing
- help to mitigate the risk of shortage of raw materials
- develop resilient supply chains
- form collaborations with like-minded businesses or agencies
- open up new business opportunities

What Can Business Do?

There are two areas that businesses can focus on:

- taking action to regenerate nature
- reducing your impact on nature

Recent survey results show that of the businesses who responded:

- 70% will increase their nature investment in the next 5 years
- 77% would prefer to invest in activity-based projects
- 24% have nature targets
- 58% have climate targets

How You Can Start:

1. You need to understand the importance of nature to your business. Consider, what would be the high-level impact on business operations, employees and customers of:
 - water restrictions or pollution in your operating locations
 - regulations such as plastic waste
 - air pollution
 - regular natural disasters such as floods or fires
 - reduced tourism due to biodiversity loss
 - food shortages
 - widespread perception that your business has added to any of the above
2. Set simple targets and make changes – set simple nature targets for areas that are relevant and where your business wants to focus action, for example:
 - monitor your supply chain
 - deforestation – use only certified paper or wood
 - waste – use only sustainable packaging
 - sediment - reduction
 - pollution - reduction
 - donations – if you want to make a financial contribution
 - water – preservation

How Can You Get Involved In Activity-based Projects?

There are a number of nature projects that need your help, check out your local council website, the DOC website below or the SBN website below to find a nature regeneration project that you may be interested in supporting. Here are some useful links to help you on your sustainability journey:

- SBN [Nature Pathways Tool](#)
- SBN Ways to regenerate nature: [DOCKET](#)
- [DOC - How your business can get involved](#)
- [Circular Economy Directory](#)

Adapted from Sustainable Business Network – How Your Business Can Regenerate Nature.