

# BIODIVERSITY

Communications Toolkit

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q. My organisation has its own objectives and significant resources have been allocated to agreeing our key messages and current communications strategy. How do you expect me to be able to use this toolkit – I can't change what our organisation has already agreed and implemented?

A. We do not expect any organisation to change their current communications strategy and adopt a different approach. Instead, the aim is to encourage organisations with an interest in or responsibility for biodiversity in Scotland to incorporate biodiversity messages into their current and ongoing communications activity. All areas of sustainable development and natural heritage have cross-over and it makes sense to utilise all opportunities to incorporate joined-up messages.

By adopting a co-ordinated approach and delivering consistent messages to audiences, we can improve awareness and understanding of biodiversity issues and encourage people to get involved with biodiversity conservation.

Q. We are committed to helping conserve biodiversity and encouraging others to do so, but often time is an issue and it seems like this Toolkit is adding extra workload.

A. We expect the Toolkit will actually save time and resources for a lot of organisations as it offers a single reference point for all the information and guidance you require to implement biodiversity communications.

Q. I've got a very small team and no-one is solely responsible for communications. I'm not sure using the toolkit can be a priority for us.

A. The Using The Media section provides a step-by-step guide to communicating with the media, which has been designed for organisations with little or no experience in communications or media relations. This includes a number of template articles, which you can use as a guide to drafting your own material.

Q. I have been trying to raise awareness of biodiversity issues in my local area, but the local media is just not interested in covering it. What can I do to engage them?

A. Local media want to write about events taking place in their local area and about people and organisations in their local area. Make sure this is the kind of information you are offering them, e.g. local case studies, which are an effective way of securing coverage.

You could arrange to meet with the editors or chief reporters to inform them of what you are trying to do and why you are trying to do it. Provide some local statistics or examples, e.g. the number of species in the area that are under threat, or how a local natural heritage site contributes to the area. It is likely the journalists will offer you some insight into the kind of stories they would like to cover.

You could also engage them by inviting them to volunteer with a local biodiversity project, or through a biodiversity tour, where you can point out the different species and habitats that exist in the area.

Q. Through a number of initiatives over the past two years, my organisation has raised considerable local awareness of biodiversity issues. However, local people and organisations still seem reluctant to change their behaviour and take positive action. How do I get them to participate and 'do their bit'?

A. People have a number of personal priorities, whether it's family, work or money. It is unlikely that biodiversity issues will ever be top priority for the majority of people. Therefore, it is essential that you make conserving biodiversity relevant and easy to get involved in. Encourage people to 'do their bit' by suggesting action through their daily and weekly routine, by highlighting the things they can do and enjoy which are on their doorstep. Let them know about community organisations they can support or volunteer with.