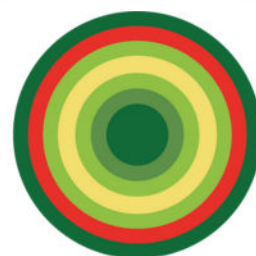


Horizon Europe Project PLANET4B

THREE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDELINES TAILORED FOR ENABLING PLAYERS: CIVIL SOCIETY, POLICYMAKERS AND BUSINESSES



BETTER DECISIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND PEOPLE



PLANET4B



**Funded by
the European Union**

PLANET4B receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101082212.



**UK Research
and Innovation**

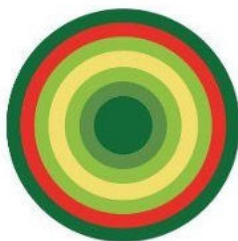
This project is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

This work has received funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).

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PLANET4B

BETTER DECISIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND PEOPLE

Key deliverable information

Project acronym PLANET4B

Project title	understanding Plural values, intersectionality, Leverage points, Attitudes, Norms, behaviour and social Learning in Transformation for Biodiversity decision making
Starting date	01 st November 2022
Duration	36 months
Website	https://planet4b.eu/
Project coordination and scientific lead team	Ilkhom Soliev; Alex Franklin; Agnes Zolyomi; Torsten Wähler

Deliverable number D5.8

Deliverable title	Three comprehensive guidelines tailored for enabling players: civil society, policymakers and businesses
Task leader	Coventry University (CU)
Dissemination level	Public
Status	Final

Deliverable description

Three practical guidelines for each target group (civil society, policymakers and businesses) provide detail on potential transformative pathways, intersectionality context, behaviour and creative methods and communication tips on biodiversity.

Version	Status	Date	Authors/Reviewers
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0.2	Draft	10/11/2025	Reviewer: PLANET4B Consortium
0.3	Draft	11/11/2025	Authors: Agnes Zolyomi (MLU); Alex Franklin (CU)
0.4	Draft	11/11/2025	Reviewer: Lindy Binder (CU)
1.0	Final	18/11/2025	Reviewer: Edit Hunyadi (MLU)

Recommended citation

Zolyomi, A., Franklin, A., Binder, L., Karner, S., Kelemen, E., Booth, C., Aas-Hanssen, A. E., Abell, J., Aoki Inoue, C., Aspøy, H., Barton, D., Bazrafshan, M., Beaufoy, G., Benegiamo, M., Bolsø, R., Bonetti, M., Bredin, Y., Beyer Broch, T., Brown, G., Brunori, G., Bykova, M., Chudy, R. P., Conway, J., Csikai, M., Czett, K., Despot-Belmonte, K., Figari, H., Flach, A., Fletcher, R., Grüner, S., Gundersen, V., Gronda, R., Hval, J., Hunyadi, E., Home, R., Jäger, J., Király, Z., Köhler, B., Kovács, M., Krauser, M., Kühne, T., Leventon, J., Lipka, B., Louckova, B., Ludhra, G., Ludhra, S., Lyons, C., Marchesi, M., Mendes, V., Monhor, V., Motschiunig, A., Navarro Gambín, P., Noor, N. A., Ofori-Amanfo, P., Pataki, G., Pletea, A.-C., Podlaszewska, A., Sabir, G., Santer, K., Saydaliev, Z., Schleiffer, M., Seliger, C., Shorin, D., Simsek, E. T., Smith, B., Soliev, I., Steinwender, D., Syverhuset, A. O., Tennhardt, L., Thaler, A., Tóth, G. G., Uehara, T., Vergamini, D., Villa, M., Vaño, S., Visseren-Hamakers, I., Wähler, T. (2025). Three comprehensive guidelines tailored for enabling players: civil society, policymakers and businesses. Report No D5.8 of the Horizon Europe Project 101082212 – PLANET4B. Brussels: European Research Executive Agency. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17243432

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Acknowledgements

The PLANET4B team would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of the materials that underpin these three guidelines – including project partners, collaborators, and the many volunteer research participants whose insights, experiences and reflections shaped the work. Their contributions have been vital in grounding the guidelines in lived realities and diverse contexts.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Definition
CAC	The Climate Academy
CG	CzechGlobe – Global Change Research Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences
CGE	Culture Goes Europe
CU	Coventry University
DC	Dadima's CIC.
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
ESSRG	Environmental Social Science Research Group
FiBL	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
FUG	Forum Urban Gardening
GD	GoodIssue nonprofit Ltd.
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IFZ	Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture
MLU	Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg
NINA	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research
OOF	Oslo og Omland Frilfutsråd – Greater Oslo Council for Outdoor Recreation
PLANET4B	understanding Plural values, intersectionality, Leverage points, Attitudes, Norms, behaviour and social IEarning in Transformation for Biodiversity decision making
RU	Radboud University
UNEP-WCMC	UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNIPi	University of Pisa
WP	Work Package

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Executive summary

This report presents three tailored guidelines to support transformative biodiversity action. The guidelines:

- Support CSOs, policymakers and businesses in enabling systemic change.
- Offer practical tools for embedding biodiversity into everyday decisions and routines.
- Emphasise relational, inclusive and context-sensitive approaches to transformation.
- Are designed to be flexible, enabling context-sensitive action and long-term impact.

1 Introduction

The continued loss of biodiversity presents not only an ecological crisis but a societal one – undermining the foundations of well-being, resilience and justice, across communities, economies and ecosystems (IPBES 2022, 2024; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2016). While technical solutions remain essential, they are not sufficient (Soliev et al., 2025). Biodiversity loss is shaped by deeper, less visible forces: social norms, institutional habits, economic logics, and behavioural patterns that influence how nature is understood, valued and acted upon in everyday decisions (Kubiszewski et al., 2023; Leventon et al., 2021).

Responding to this challenge, the PLANET4B project has focused on enabling transformative change – change that addresses both immediate drivers and the deeper systemic conditions that shape biodiversity outcomes. This includes attention to indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, such as cultural narratives, governance routines, and the ways in which people relate to nature, each other, and the future.

Central to PLANET4B's approach has been the recognition that transformation is not the responsibility of one sector or actor alone. It requires the active participation of diverse enabling players – including civil society organisations, policymakers and businesses – who shape decisions, practices and priorities across scales. These actors are not only implementers of change; they are framers of meaning, builders of relationships and enablers of system-level shifts.

To support these enabling players, PLANET4B has developed three audience-specific guidelines, each tailored to the distinct roles, capacities and contexts of civil society, policy and business actors. These guidelines are not generic toolkits. They are grounded in the lived realities of biodiversity decision-making, informed by participatory research across 11 case studies, and shaped by behavioural insights, systems thinking and intersectional analysis.

Each guideline offers practical strategies for making biodiversity matter – not only in policy documents or sustainability reports, but in everyday conversations, decisions and routines. They introduce methods for identifying leverage points, fostering shared care, and embedding biodiversity into organisational and institutional cultures. They also reflect the project's commitment to plural values, inclusive participation and co-created pathways for change.

This report (Deliverable 5.8) presents the guidelines as standalone annexes, accompanied by a synthesis of their shared foundations and development process. It is intended to support both the use and understanding of the guidelines, and to situate them within the broader aims of PLANET4B: to enable transformative biodiversity action through relational, reflexive and system-aware approaches.

2 Methodological approach

The development of the three guidelines was grounded in a multi-layered process that drew on conceptual, methodological and empirical insights generated across PLANET4B's work packages (WP). Rather than producing generic recommendations, the aim was to create audience-specific guidance that is both scientifically robust and practically usable by key enabling players.

To achieve this, the guidelines synthesised outputs from four core strands of the project's work programme:

- **WP1 – Conceptual Foundations:** Reviews of behavioural and social science theories, systems thinking, and intersectionality frameworks provided the theoretical basis for understanding indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and identifying leverage points for change (Deliverable 1.1; Deliverable 1.3; Deliverable 1.7).
- **WP2 – Methods Development:** The guidelines were informed by the full programme of work undertaken to identify, adapt and document detailed protocols for individual methods, as well as by the synthesis of insights on how these methods can be combined effectively in practice (Deliverable 2.4). This included creative, deliberative and behavioural approaches such as framing, nudging, experiential learning and a wide variety of participatory techniques, which underpin the practical tools featured in the guidelines.
- **WP3 – Empirical Case Studies:** Participatory research across 11 case studies generated rich insights into how biodiversity priorities can be advanced in diverse contexts. Workshops combined system mapping, leverage point identification, and narrative co-design, offering evidence of what works in practice (Deliverable 3.2; Deliverable 3.3).
- **WP4 – Policy and Scaling Analysis:** Findings from earlier WPs were connected to EU and global policy processes, highlighting opportunities for institutional anchoring and upscaling beyond project sites (Deliverables 4.1-4.4).

The development of the guidelines was an iterative process of synthesis and co-creation. Insights from the four PLANET4B work packages were reviewed to identify recurring themes and actionable patterns. This process involved:

- **Mapping conceptual foundations to practical needs:** Behavioural and systems-based theories were translated into accessible language and linked to real-world entry points for action.
- **Drawing on tested methods and protocols:** Rather than adapting methods for specific audiences, the guidelines incorporate insights from the extensive work undertaken across project Task 2.2, and more recently Task 5.5, to identify, refine and document detailed protocols for individual methods, as well

as from the synthesis of behavioural and creative approaches compiled in the Catalogue of Methods (Deliverable 2.4) and featured on the [Care-full Courses](#) lighthouse education platform (Deliverable 5.9). These resources provided a tested foundation for practical tools that can be applied across organisational, policy and community contexts.

- **Cross-case learning and synthesis:** Lessons from 11 case studies (Deliverable 3.3) were central to shaping the guidelines. Analysis of these cases highlighted the conditions that enable biodiversity-positive change, including legitimacy signals, experiential connection, demonstrable outcomes, and institutional anchoring. The Transformative Change Stories provided rich, context-specific examples of how these conditions were enacted in practice, offering evidence of what works and why. These insights informed both the thematic framing and the practical recommendations in each guideline.
- **Tailoring for audience specificity:** While the guidelines share common foundations, each was adapted to reflect the distinct roles, capacities and leverage points of civil society organisations, policymakers and businesses.

Throughout this process, three principles have guided the work:

- **Co-creation and Inclusivity:** The guidelines are shaped by participatory insights, ensuring that diverse voices and lived experiences inform both content and framing.
- **Practical Usability:** Recommendations have been designed to be actionable within existing structures and routines, avoiding approaches that require significant new resources or mandates.
- **Alignment with Transformative Change:** Each guideline supports shifts not only in behaviour but in underlying norms, narratives and institutional practices, consistent with PLANET4B's systems-thinking approach.

The result is a set of tools and strategies that combine scientific rigour with practical relevance, enabling key actors to make biodiversity a shared priority in ways that are meaningful, feasible and durable.

3 Guidelines for Key Enabling Players

The annexes to this report present the three comprehensive guidelines developed to support transformative biodiversity action by key enabling players: civil society organisations (CSOs), policymakers and businesses. Each guideline is tailored to the distinct roles and capacities of its intended audience, while sharing the core principles, conceptual frames and methodological approaches described in Section 2 of this report (see above). These foundations provide coherence across the three documents while allowing flexibility for context-specific application.

The following provides as a brief overview of each guideline:

- **Guideline for Civil Society Organisations:** This guideline focuses on how CSOs and community leaders can strengthen belonging, agency and shared care within communities, while influencing governance processes through relational approaches. It introduces practical methods for creating safe and inclusive spaces, building identity and trust, and connecting biodiversity to everyday life through experiential and cultural practices. The document also

addresses strategies for sustaining change without exhaustion, including distributed leadership, shared rhythms, and light-touch evaluation tools that capture learning rather than imposing rigid metrics.

- **Guideline for Policymakers:** This guideline provides tools for integrating biodiversity into policy agendas and decision-making processes without adding unnecessary workload. It emphasises framing biodiversity as a condition for resilience, continuity and public wellbeing, and offers practical entry points for embedding biodiversity into existing templates, coordination mechanisms and planning cycles. Drawing on behavioural insights, it highlights how legitimacy signals, timing and alignment with institutional rhythms can make biodiversity easier to include. The guideline also explores strategies for anchoring progress structurally so that gains endure beyond political cycles or individual champions.
- **Guideline for Businesses:** This document addresses how companies can move biodiversity from compliance to culture. It offers practical entry points for embedding biodiversity into organisational identity, supply chains and ESG commitments, supported by behavioural science and systems thinking. The guideline introduces pathways for change that begin with permission and framing, build through experiential connection and demonstrable outcomes, and culminate in anchoring biodiversity into procurement, reporting and everyday routines. It also provides tools for sustainability leads to protect their own energy and pace, recognising the relational nature of internal change.

Developed for usability, the guidelines offer practical entry points for embedding biodiversity into everyday decisions. They are intended as resources that enabling actors can adapt to their own contexts, starting small and building momentum over time. Users are encouraged to consult the annexes for full details and to explore complementary resources on the PLANET4B Care-full Courses and Resources platform.

4 Conclusion and outlook

The three guidelines presented in this report form part of the final synthesis of PLANET4B's outputs, complementing other practical resources developed throughout the project. While audience-specific tailoring was also a feature of Deliverable 5.9 – which created dedicated biodiversity engagement courses for civil society, policy and business audiences – these guidelines consolidate insights from across work packages into concise, actionable strategies for enabling players. They reflect the project's overarching aim: to support diverse actors in working within their own spheres of influence while contributing to a shared goal – making biodiversity (and people) a visible, valued and actionable priority.

The guidelines are not intended as prescriptive frameworks but as adaptable tools that support incremental, context-sensitive progress. They encourage starting small, building momentum through relational and experiential approaches, and embedding biodiversity into everyday decisions and institutional routines. In doing so, they reflect PLANET4B's commitment to systemic thinking, behavioural insight and inclusive engagement.

These guidelines sit within a wider constellation of PLANET4B resources that collectively support transformative biodiversity action (see the [Care-full Courses and](#)

[Resources platform](#) and, for the full set of Deliverable outputs, see the [PLANET4B project website](#). Together, these outputs equip enabling players to connect practical action with deeper system-level change.

Looking ahead, the potential for transformative biodiversity action will depend on continued collaboration across sectors, alignment of incentives, and the integration of ecological considerations into the core of social and economic systems. The guidelines presented here are designed to support that journey – offering practical entry points for change that is meaningful, feasible and enduring.

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Statement on data availability

All Deliverable Reports and associated GDPR-compliant datasets forming the evidence base for the set of three guidelines and this associated Deliverable report are available via the Zenodo repository PLANET4B Community.

Statement on ethics

Ethical approval was granted for all research undertaken within Task 5.5 of PLANET4B by Coventry University on 17.06.23 - ethical approval project reference number: P160041. The material contained in the three guidelines and this associated deliverable report is limited to secondary analysis and synthesis of the outputs arising from WPs 1-5 of PLANET4B, and an accompanying review of relevant academic and grey literature.

**Annex A. Making Change for Biodiversity and People:
Tools and Strategies for Civil Society Organisations and
Community Leaders to Make Biodiversity Matter**



Making Change for Biodiversity and People

Tools and Strategies for Civil Society Organisations
and Community Leaders to Make Biodiversity Matter



PLANET4B

CIVIL SOCIETY &
COMMUNITY LEADERS

Foreword

Do you work for nature and/or for people, and sometimes feel that things are not moving forward fast enough? Have you ever wondered how to turn interest into action and make care for each other and nature part of everyday life? And where to look for effective tools and guidance for this?

If so, and if you are looking for guidance grounded in real practice and lived experience, we warmly invite you to explore this guide.

Biodiversity and Justice Belong Together

Biodiversity is the living richness of the world – forests and rivers, seeds and soils, pollinators and birdsong, coastlines and wetlands, and the relationships that sustain life. When biodiversity is diminished, people lose health, belonging, livelihood, culture, identity and home. Yet, biodiversity loss continues.

At the same time, social inequalities shape who benefits from healthy environments, who is exposed to harm, and who has power over decisions about land, food and futures. To care for nature, we must also care for fairness, dignity and access. *Environmental care and social care are inseparable.*

Sir David Attenborough once said:

“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.”

Care begins in personal experience. It grows when shared in families, gardens and neighbourhoods. It lasts when reflected in our institutions and policies. To reverse biodiversity loss justly, we need change in hearts, in communities and in systems.

About PLANET4B

PLANET4B brought together community groups, educators, civil organisations, researchers and public actors from across Europe to explore how to strengthen society’s priorities for biodiversity in inclusive and creative ways. We worked

in gardens and neighbourhoods, and with youth clubs and classrooms, churches and food networks, municipalities and businesses. We learned that change begins in everyday encounters – and becomes transformative when these experiences influence how decisions are made.

Why This Guidance

This guidance is for civil society organisations and community groups and activists of all kinds – whether your work begins with biodiversity, or with community, or equity or injustice; and whether you work at local, national or international level.

It offers:

- *Simple ways to build meaningful nature–people connections*
- *Tools to foster agency and belonging in communities*
- *Approaches for co-creating shared visions and solutions*
- *Strategies to influence policy, governance and systems*

Because individuals protect what they experience and value.

Communities sustain care through identity and shared practice.

Institutions make care durable when they listen, learn, and adapt.

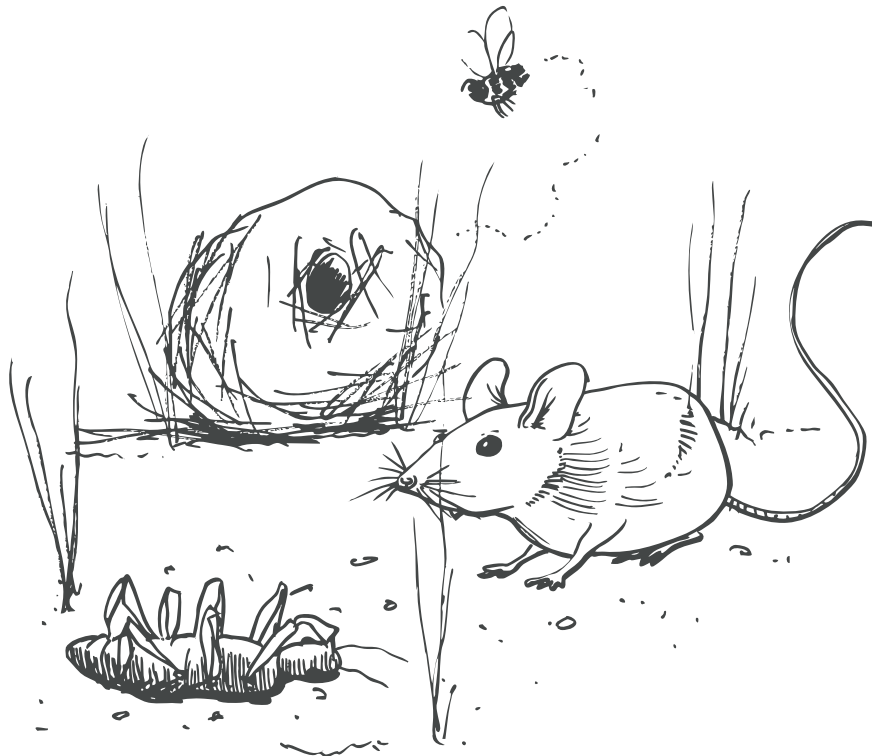
You are not only raising awareness – you are shaping relationships, narratives, and futures. You are not only supporting change – you are enabling transformation.

We hope you find this manual useful for your important work to make this world a better place.

The PLANET4B Coordination Team

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What do we Mean by Transformative Change?

We are living in a time of deep environmental and social change. Species are disappearing, ecosystems are degrading and climate impacts are increasing. At the same time, many people experience insecurity, inequality, displacement and exclusion from decisions that affect their lives.

Many organisations are already doing good work for nature and communities. Yet biodiversity loss continues, and inequalities persist. This shows that information alone does not change behaviour.

The IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) Transformative Change Assessment explains why: Biodiversity loss continues because the underlying views, systems and power structures have not changed. Most of us were raised in societies where nature is seen as separate from people and economic growth comes before care. Value is measured in profit rather than wellbeing, and policy decisions are made far away from everyday life.

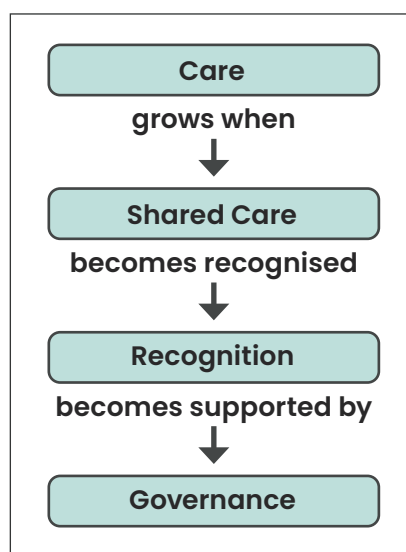
Transformative change means changing these deeper patterns not necessarily by one big reform, but through many small shifts that add up – over time. Transformative change can happen when relationships, norms and meanings change and institutions slowly start to listen, learn and adapt.

Big or Small?

People often think transformation must be huge. But PLANET4B showed that it can start small – in everyday places where people learn, gather, cook, play, move, and imagine together. And these *small shifts* grow into bigger changes when they are shared, recognised, and supported by communities and institutions.

Why these Examples Matter for You

These examples show that transformative change does not necessarily start with new institutions, new funds or new “capacity”, it can start with what people already have: stories, places, care, togetherness. It grows when care becomes shared, when shared care becomes recognised and when recognition becomes supported by governance.



This is exactly where civil society organisations (CSOs) are strong. This is the work that you are already doing. You build the relationships, trust, belonging and shared meaning that can make biodiversity *matter* to people even more.

This guide helps make this more strategic, visible and lasting, by providing the core conditions of transformative change, identifying entry points for change, providing practical methods and examples of engagement, as well as of campaigning and advocacy tools and upscaling actions and impacts.

Table 1: What Transformative Change can look like in practice

 Level	 What It Means in Practice	 PLANET4B Example
Individuals	Someone begins to see themselves as part of nature and believes their actions matter	In Erfurt, Germany, <u>Culture Goes Europe</u> (a German NGO) worked with young people (many with migrant and international backgrounds) through nature walks, experiential games, shared meals and reflection circles. Young people moved from “nature is not for me” to <i>leading</i> biodiversity activities and projects. They gained agency, confidence and ecological curiosity.
Communities	People start acting together (gardening, restoring, planning, storytelling, or organising)	In Hungary, <u>Environmental Social Science Research Group (ESSRG)</u> and <u>Magház</u> (Seed house) worked with gardeners, farmers, cooks and families to revitalise open-pollinated seeds as shared cultural heritage. The “<u>Unknown Delicacies</u>” cookbook and storytelling gatherings honoured seed histories, recipes, memory and place – transforming seeds from “objects” into carriers of identity, care and belonging. This strengthened shared responsibility for agrobiodiversity and grew an even more caring community of seed stewards.
Institutions (schools, municipalities, networks)	Decision-makers begin to listen to lived experience and support what communities already know works	In Graz, Austria, community gardens were initially tolerated by the municipality with limited support. They were often dismissed as “hobby projects”, and the challenges they faced under existing conditions received little attention. New majority ratios have shifted political priorities. The new urban agenda for promoting social and ecological urban development was taken up by the <u>Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Technology Work and Culture (IFZ)</u> and the <u>Forum Urbanes Gärtnern (FUG)</u>. Through active exchange and cooperation with city stakeholders and community groups, collectively managed gardens and community initiatives became an integral part of the city’s local planning and support programmes. This strengthened cultural ties, social well-being, and biodiversity, making change stable and lasting.

The Five Core Conditions for Transformative Change

Transformative change is not a mystery. Across the PLANET4B cases, the same five conditions repeatedly enabled lasting, meaningful action for biodiversity and people. They are simple but powerful and you can cultivate them intentionally.

1. Safe and Welcoming Spaces

What it means:

People take part when they feel **safe, included and respected, and when every voice is heard**. This means emotional safety, practical accessibility, and space where no one fears being judged.

PLANET4B example:

In Erfurt (Germany), youth began to participate more actively when meetings created space for warm welcomes, shared meals and laughter – not just task discussions. When people felt safe and valued, they took initiative.

What CSOs can do now:

- Start every gathering with a simple “check-in” round.
- Agree on shared principles like *listen fully, no interruptions, all experiences are valid*.
- Make sure every voice is heard – especially quiet ones.
- Consider the “intersectionality lens” by asking questions such as:
 - Who is not participating yet?
 - How accessible is our space?
 - What barriers might we unintentionally reproduce?
 - Whose knowledge counts?

2. Shared Experiences and Learning-by-Doing

People connect to biodiversity through **embodied, hands-on experiences**: walking, planting, cooking, observing – not only through discussion.

PLANET4B example:

In Hungary, the seed and cooking sessions made biodiversity *tangible* – people touched seeds, painted plants, cooked together, and shared memories of taste and place.

What CSOs can do now:

- Begin with a shared practical activity.
- Let learning be sensory – smell, touch, listen, taste and see.
- Reflect together on what you notice, experience and feel.

3. Identity, Belonging, and Agency

People act when biodiversity feels **personal**, part of identity, memory, and everyday life, not something distant or “for others”.

PLANET4B example:

In the UK, Dadima's CIC worked with Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities¹ who often felt that nature spaces were not welcoming to them. Through shared walks, stories of place, and intergenerational conversation, participants reconnected with plants, landscapes and seasons as part of their heritage, dignity and identity. People expressed: “*We belong in nature too.*” This shift built confidence, pride and a sense of **rightful presence** in nature.

What CSOs can do now:

- Ask which foods, plants, smells, or landscapes carry memory or cultural meaning.
- Let participants’ cultural knowledge lead the conversation, not external expertise.
- Reinforce belonging: “Nature is ours. We are part of it.”

1. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities or ‘BAME’ is frequently used to group all ethnic minorities. The term can disguise differences in outcomes between ethnic groups. Many ethnic minorities themselves say they do not like the term ‘BAME’, a finding reinforced by recent research commissioned by the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unit (RDU).

4. Collaboration and Shared Leadership

Change becomes stronger when **roles and knowledge are shared**, not held by one expert, facilitator, or organisation.

PLANET4B example:

In Oslo, researchers participated in outdoor activities organised by others and held workshops with young people with disabilities, parents and NGO representatives. Through these experiences, the team gained a deeper understanding of how accessibility and inclusion can be addressed in concrete ways, by considering routes, pace, resting points and equipment, but also how adaptation and inclusion can go far beyond such practical adjustments. This bottom-up approach showed that inclusion is not only about removing obstacles, but about reimagining participation itself, turning what are often seen as limitations into opportunities for creativity, confidence and shared ownership.

What CSOs can do now:

- Invite participants early – before plans are fixed.
- Rotate small roles to grow leadership gently.
- Value practical, cultural and lived knowledge equally with scientific knowledge.

5. Institutional Anchoring

For change to last, it needs **recognition and support** from institutions and other structures.

PLANET4B example:

In Graz (Austria), community gardens gained stability and longevity once the municipality recognised them as valuable spaces of social inclusion and biodiversity.

What CSOs can do now:

- Document and share stories and outcomes using simple language.
- Actively approach institutions with a concern and its solution and anticipate co-creation.
- Ask for small amounts of support first (water access, shared tools, meeting space).



Hacking the System: How to See Where to Intervene for Biodiversity and People?

When working for biodiversity and justice, it is easy to feel that problems are “too big” or “too complex”.

Change is possible when we understand how things are connected. We need to understand the system around us. A system is simply the network of relationships, habits, values and decisions that shape what happens in a place.

Understanding the system helps us see:

- Why some bad practices continue even when people *want* change
- Why some voices are missing in decision-making
- Where culture, identity, economy, place and power intersect

And importantly,

- Where a small shift can make a big difference

This is where **leverage or entry points** come in.

What are Leverage Points?

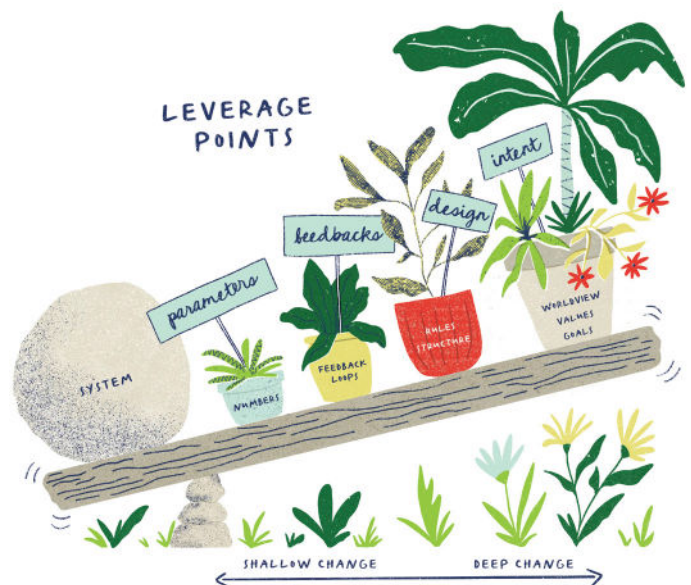
A leverage point is a place in the system where an intervention can lead to a bigger shift. Not everything has the same effect. Some actions are useful but limited. Others can change how people relate, choose, or decide together – and where values and mindsets may change.

In simple terms, a leverage point is the place where your effort can have the strongest long-term impact.

How to Map the System and Entry Points?

Transformative change becomes possible when we understand how things are connected in the place where we want change to happen.

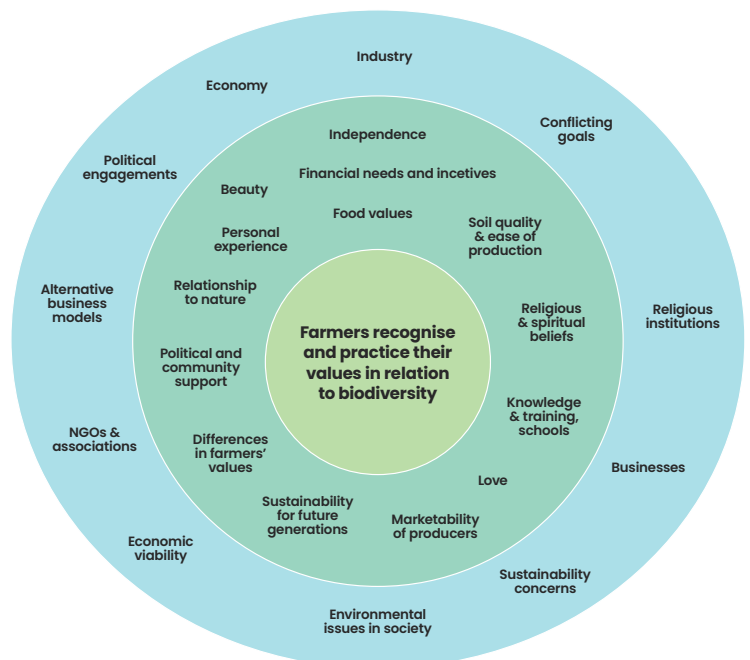
In PLANET4B, we aimed to see the system clearly and identify where a small, thoughtful shift could make a wider difference through a two-step process².



Based on 12 Leverage Points for Intervening in a System (Meadows 1999)

Step 1 - Understanding and Mapping the Systems

To understand a given system you want to intervene in, gather people who may see the situation differently – for example, residents, experts, policymakers, youth, businesses, minority groups – and draw together how things currently work.



The system map of the Swiss Agro-biodiversity and religion case study (Author: FiBL)

You can draw on a big sheet of paper:

- Who is involved?
- Who is affected?
- Who makes decisions?

² To find more step-by-step instructions on how to do this, check out this PLANET4B Methodology Guide for Task 3.2, page 90. <https://planet4b.eu/project-documents/report-on-the-system-mapping-and-leverage-points-for-each-case>

- What everyday habits shape how nature is treated?
- What is helping?
- What is blocking or limiting care?

The drawing does not need to be tidy or correct. The purpose is to see the situation together and notice patterns that nobody can see alone. Shared understanding opens space for shared action.

Step 2 – Identify Leverage Points (Where to Intervene)

Once the map is on the table, look at it together and ask:

- Where is something stuck?
- Where is there potential, interest or existing care?
- Where could a small, realistic change open up space for biodiversity and fairness?

A leverage point is a place in the system where a small shift could have a bigger ripple effect.

Choosing a leverage point to address does not mean solving everything. It means choosing a place to begin that has real potential to grow. We map to see clearly. We identify leverage points to act wisely.

Why These Leverage Points Work

They are:

- Small – easy to try without major funding
- Relational – they change how people *feel* and *interact*
- Cultural – they shift meaning, not just tasks
- Strengthening – they increase confidence, belonging and shared ownership

These are the kinds of changes that grow, because they make care visible, shared, recognised and embedded in everyday life.

Table 2: Examples of Leverage Points and Interventions Identified Through System Mapping

Case / Context	What the System Map Showed	Leverage Point Identified	Intervention Chosen	Why This Can Have a Bigger Impact
<u>Erfurt, Germany</u> <u>Youth & Nature</u> <u>Belonging</u>	Young people, especially with migrant backgrounds, felt that <i>nature spaces were “not for us”</i> due to past exclusion and cultural distance.	Belonging and identity in nature (not knowledge)	Shared food, group walks, and reflection circles, followed by introduction of biodiversity messages.	Builds <i>confidence and emotional safety</i> , making nature feel <i>accessible and relevant</i> , which in turn reinforces engagement and encourages a sense of belonging.
<u>Hungarian School Garden</u>	School gardening depended on one motivated teacher and was seen as an <i>extra activity</i> , not part of learning. If the teacher left, the garden would collapse.	Embedding care into everyday school routines	Regular garden time added into the weekly schedule, instead of relying on volunteer motivation.	Makes biodiversity <i>part of the school’s identity and rhythm</i> , ensuring continuity and shared responsibility.
<u>GAIA Gartenberg Women’s Garden, Graz, Austria</u>	Green spaces are not equally accessible. Many women, especially with low income, migration experience or limited German, are excluded from urban environmental activities and related decision-making. Biodiversity and gardening opportunities were not accessible.	Creating safe, women-led spaces	Establishment of the GAIA Gartenberg women’s garden accompanied by a series of co-creative workshops linking gardening, storytelling, and intercultural dialogue about biodiversity and everyday life.	Enables participants to build confidence, skills, and ecological awareness. Sharing experiences publicly and connecting with municipal actors, influences local discussions on green-space governance and inclusive participation.

Practical Methods you can Use to Support Transformative Change for Biodiversity and People

The following methods help create the **conditions** we described earlier:

- safety
- shared experience
- belonging
- shared leadership
- lasting anchoring

Think of these as gentle starting points, which are easy to try, low in effort, high in meaning, and adaptable to your context.



Method 1 — Story Circle

Purpose:

Build trust, belonging and emotional safety.

When to use:

At the beginning of a new group, before planning, or when reconnecting after breaks.

How to do it (simple):

Invite everyone to share a short personal story about a place, plant, food, or memory connected to nature. Use a talking object (a seed, leaf, stone) that is passed around.

One person speaks at a time. Others listen.

Reflection prompts:

- How did it feel to listen?
- What did you learn that surprised you?
- What connects us in what we shared?



Method 2 — Shared Walk

Purpose:

Create embodied connection and gentle presence in nature (supporting shared experience).

When to use:

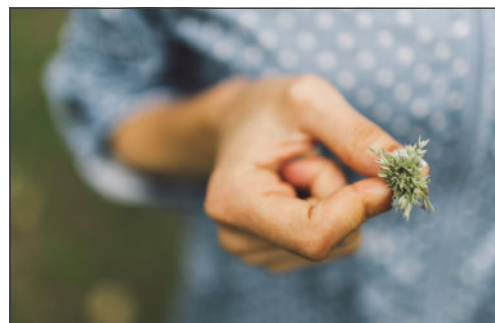
Before discussion, planning, or decision-making – to ground the group.

How to do it (simple):

Go for a slow walk together. Notice what is growing, changing, decaying, surviving. Pause to look, feel, smell and listen. Keep talking light and optional.

Reflection prompts:

- What changed in how the place felt?
- Where did you feel calmness, curiosity or care?
- Did anything remind you of home or a memory?



Method 3 — Food/Seed/Memory Sharing

Purpose:

Connect biodiversity to identity, culture and everyday life (supporting belonging).

When to use:

When people say “Nature is not about me” or “This is too abstract”.

How to do it (simple):

Invite participants to bring a food, seed, recipe, or photo from their life. Encourage sharing of the stories behind them, not just the objects.

Reflection prompts:

- What values, memories, or relationships live in this food or seed?
- How is biodiversity carried in culture?
- What does this say about who we are?



Method 4 — Co-Visioning Small Future Changes

Purpose:

Create agency and direction, but without needing a “big plan” (supporting leadership).

When to use:

After trust or belonging has begun.

How to do it (simple):

Ask: “What small change would make this place more caring for people and nature?”

List ideas. Choose one that is simple, possible and meaningful.

Reflection prompts:

- What feels doable now?
- Who else do we need to involve?
- How will we know it is working?



Method 5 — Small Action Prototyping

Purpose:

Move from ideas to **doing**, without pressure (supporting anchoring).

When to use:

After co-visioning.

How to do it (simple):

Try one small action for 1–4 weeks.

Keep it light, experimental and shared.

Examples:

- starting a weekly tea-and-garden gathering
- hosting a seed swap table in the library
- co-creating a shared herb bed in a courtyard

Reflection prompts:

- What changed in the group?
- What felt natural? What felt forced?
- Do we want to grow this, adjust it, or close it with gratitude?

For detailed facilitation instructions, variations, accessibility considerations and timing, please refer to the [Community Based Social Marketing \(CBSM\)](#) method – one of the Care-full Resources produced in PLANET4B.

This manual is your **map**. The searchable directory of [Care-full Resources](#) is your **toolbox**.

After completing a method, consider whether it might be appropriate to celebrate and appreciate what has been achieved. This could include sharing results with others.

Influencing Systems: From Community Action to Governance and Public Narratives

Transformative change grows from relationships – but it becomes lasting when it is also reflected in how decisions are made, how groups organise, and how issues are talked about publicly.

This section offers three pathways CSOs and community organisations can use, depending on context, capacity and opportunity.

Pathway 1 – Working with Local Institutions (Schools, Municipalities, Cultural and Community Centres, Churches)

Local institutions shape everyday life. Changing how they recognise, support, and value biodiversity, can make change durable.

How to begin

- Start with listening sessions (not persuasion)
- Share stories and lived experience, not reports
- Ask for small, concrete support first (e.g., space, access to water or tools, symbolic recognition)

These small recognitions are often the first step to long-term change. When institutions listen, practices become anchored and do not disappear when individuals change.

Pathway 2 – Building Community Networks and Coalitions

No single organisation can transform a system alone. Networks make change resilient and less personal.

How to build a network

- Invite organisations to connect through shared practice (e.g., gardening days, seed festival, storytelling circle) not just meetings.
- Map who is already doing something within the neighbourhood or community; avoid duplication.
- Rotate hosting to prevent exhaustion.
- Share credit and responsibility, not just workload.

The goal is not to unify everyone. The goal is to support each other while celebrating different organisational identities. Networks expand agency and reduce the risk of burnout.

Pathway 3 – Shaping Public Narrative (Campaigns, Culture, Media, Messaging)

Societal change does not only come from “more awareness,” but rather from changing how issues are understood and felt.

Effective biodiversity narratives come from:

- Care, not crisis
- Belonging, not alienation
- Possibility, not fear
- People’s stories, not only universal facts and numbers

In practice

- Use local voices, faces, foods, memories, landscapes.
- Begin with *what people already care for*, not what they “should” care about.
- Work with local media, community radio, schools, faith spaces, libraries, festivals, cultural events.

Narratives change when biodiversity becomes part of identity and everyday meaning.

How to Talk about Biodiversity in Ways that Inspire Care

Our research on how biodiversity is spoken about in public, news media and everyday conversations shows a clear pattern:

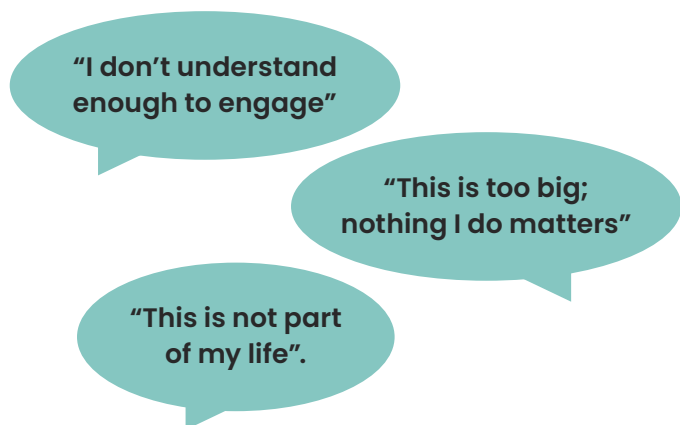
Most people *care* about nature but the way biodiversity is usually talked about can accidentally create distance, guilt or helplessness.

What often Goes Wrong in Biodiversity Communication

We found that biodiversity is frequently:

- Presented as technical or scientific
- Framed mainly as crisis and decline
- Talked about as something “out there”, separate from everyday life

This can leave people feeling:



So even when people agree that biodiversity is important, this does not necessarily translate into care or action.

What Works Better

Our findings show that people respond more strongly when biodiversity is presented as being about relationships, everyday life and identity. People act to protect what they feel close to – not what they are told is important.

This means that the goal of communication is not to inform, but to connect.

Table 3: Framing that Inspires Action for Biodiversity

Framing that inspires connection	Why it works
Biodiversity as relationships (between people, land, food, memory, seasons)	People recognise themselves and their lived experience.
Biodiversity as everyday life	Makes it familiar, not abstract.
Biodiversity as belonging, identity and shared care	Builds pride, connectivity and responsibility, not guilt.

Based on this, below are simple, resonant phrases you can use in campaigns, events and conversations.

Table 4: Examples of Concrete Messaging CSOs and Communities can use

Instead of...	Try...	This shifts...
"Biodiversity loss is a global crisis."	"Biodiversity begins at home – in the choices we make, the spaces we care for and the nature we protect"	From overwhelm → agency
"People must learn to care for nature."	"People already care – we create space to share and act together."	From instruction → recognition
"Nature must be protected from humans."	"We are part of nature – caring for biodiversity means caring for ourselves and each other."	From separation → belonging
"We need behaviour change."	"How do we want to live well together with nature?"	From compliance → shared possibility

Use good foods, local plants and animals, local landscapes, and known faces wherever possible. People connect to biodiversity through what feels familiar – not abstract.

How This Supports Governance and Advocacy

Changing how we talk about biodiversity is not just communication work, it is systemic work.

When biodiversity becomes:

- familiar → people may care more
- shared → communities may act more
- recognised → institutions may support it more

In turn, small acts of care can turn into durable change.

Table 5: How These Three Pathways Reinforce Each Other

If you...	It supports...
Build belonging & shared practice	Individuals feel agency and care grows
Connect groups into networks	Effort is shared and stronger
Engage institutions slowly & relationally	Care becomes recognised and stable
Highlight biodiversity more in public storytelling	Care becomes visible and valued

Transformation is not one big action. It is small with aligned shifts reinforcing each other.

Growing and Sustaining Change (Without Exhaustion)

Our findings show that change becomes *durable* when certain enabling conditions are present:

- **Belonging and identity** – people feel that the work is *for* and *about* them.
- **Relational trust** – people feel welcomed, listened to and respected.
- **Shared spaces and rhythms** – there are regular moments and places to meet, do, and reflect together.
- **Distributed leadership** – responsibility is shared, not carried by one “champion”.
- **Experiential learning** – people learn through doing, not only through instruction.
- **Recognition and light institutional support** – what communities do is *seen* and *valued*.
- **Time and continuity** – the work unfolds slowly and steadily, not as a short-term project.

These are not abstract principles. They are *practical* ingredients that make change sustainable.

This section focuses on how CSOs and community groups can support these conditions, while also protecting themselves from overload and enabling change to grow in healthy ways.

Share the Work (So No One Has to Carry Everything)

Many initiatives begin with one or two motivated people. But change commonly becomes durable only when others begin to shape it too.

How to share responsibility gently:

- Build skills and capacities
- Rotate roles (hosting, coordination, facilitation, care work).
- Let different people lead different parts (cooking, planting, storytelling, outreach).
- Welcome small contributions – not everyone needs to “commit”.

Care grows when it is shared.

Create Rhythms and Habits – Not Projects

Projects have end dates and reporting cycles. Rhythms and habits continue.

A rhythm can be:

- weekly gardening time
- seasonal seed exchange
- a Sunday walk open to anyone

The rhythm can be small – what matters is repeatability. If it happens regularly, it becomes part of life.

Seek Recognition, Not Permission

Sustained change does not require big funding or formal approval. But it *does* benefit when institutions see and acknowledge what communities are already doing.

Forms of recognition include:

- space (a room, a shed, a table, online)
- small shared resources (tools, water, printing)
- invitations to present or host
- consistent commitments
- public mention in a school or council newsletter

What is recognised is more likely to continue.

Move at the Pace of Trust

Change accelerates when communities lead – especially when they are supported not forced.

Signs you are moving at a healthy pace:

- You still enjoy the work.
- There is time to listen.
- People feel they can say “not now”.

If things feel heavy, return to:

- a walk,
- quiet care for plants,
- shared laughter.

Slow is not weak. Slow is sustainable.

Celebrate and Close Well

Not every initiative must continue forever. Some things are right for a season. Completing something with gratitude prevents exhaustion and makes space for what is next.

Endings can be:

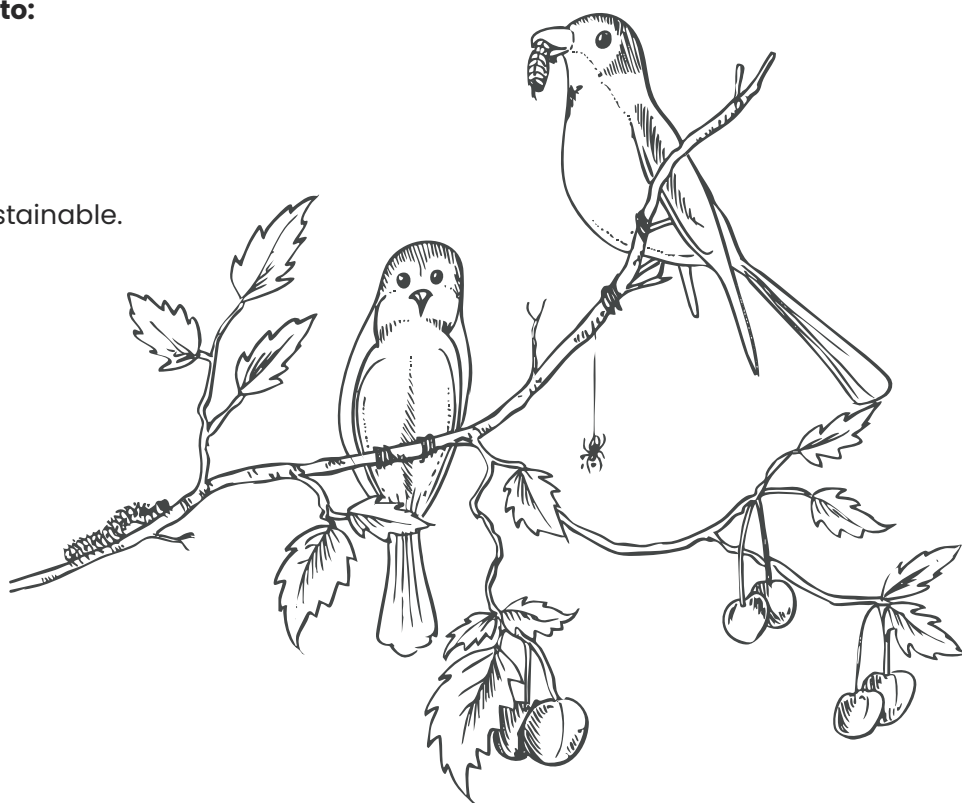
- a shared meal
- a small ritual (lighting a candle, planting a tree, exchanging seeds)
- a thank-you round

Closing with care strengthens future beginnings.

Reflection Prompts for Groups

Use these lightly – for example, every few weeks or months:

- Who else could share a small part of this work?
- What rhythm is emerging naturally?
- Where is environmental care already happening that we can support or recognise?
- How do we know we are moving at the right pace?



Evaluation and Learning

Transformative change grows slowly, through relationships, rhythms and shared meaning.

This means that standard evaluation tools (indicators, KPIs, output counts) often miss what matters most. Instead of measuring “impact” too early, we observe learning.

Evaluation becomes:

- a way to notice what is changing,
- celebrate progress,
- adjust gently,
- and keep direction clear, without pressure.

This section offers light, reflective tools that groups can use in gatherings, gardens, classrooms, kitchens, meetings, or walks.

What We Pay Attention To

We look for shifts in many areas of change – these small signs are the seeds of transformation.

Table 6: Area of change and signs to look for

Area of Change	Signs to Look For (Small is Enough)
Belonging	New people stay. Someone returns for a second or third time. Someone says “I feel welcome here”.
Confidence and Agency	Someone offers an idea or takes initiative; everyone feels safe to speak.
Shared Responsibility	Tasks start being distributed naturally; it is not always the same person leading.
Meaning and Identity	People speak about nature, seeds, land, or community in terms of <i>care</i> and <i>connection</i> .
Recognition	A school, municipality, cultural group, colleague, neighbour or family member acknowledges the work.

A Simple Reflection Rhythm

Reserve time to sit together regularly and ask:

- 1. What changed since last time?**
(Feelings, relationships, routines, participation)
- 2. What felt alive or meaningful?**
(Moments of connection, pride, joy, peace)
- 3. What felt heavy or tiring?**
(And does it need to be simplified, shared, or paused?)
- 4. What is one small thing we want to try next?**
(Remember: one, not five)

Write down only what feels important. Keep it light and truthful.

Check-In and Check-Out Prompts (for workshops, meetings, or gatherings)

Check-In (arriving)

- *One word for how you are arriving today.*
- *A place, taste, or memory of nature that feels close to you right now.*
- *What are you bringing with you today?*

Check-Out (leaving)

- *One thing I’m taking with me.*
- *One thing I appreciated in this group.*
- *One small step I’d like to try next.*

These prompts build reflection into everyday practice, not as an add-on, but as a way of being together.

Continuing Connecting Nature and People

The stories, practices and methods shared in this guide remind us that transformative change is already happening in gardens and kitchens, in classrooms and community rooms, in seed libraries and walking paths, and in the small, steady acts of people caring for each other and for the living world.

Change does not begin with perfect plans or large campaigns. It begins with relationships, with listening, noticing, cooking, planting, walking, remembering, and imagining together. It begins when people feel connected to nature, when their knowledge is valued, when their stories matter.

From there, change grows in shared rhythms, in emerging leadership, in new forms of recognition, and in the confidence that *we can shape our futures together*.

No organisation carries this alone. You are part of a wider movement of people across Europe and beyond who are restoring connections, strengthening communities, reviving heritage, and opening new possibilities for living well with biodiversity.

Your work matters.

Every shared meal.

Every seed saved.

Every one invited to plant.

Every reflection on biodiversity.

Every conversation that changes how someone sees “nature.”

These are **not small acts**.

They are **seeds of transformation**.

For Further Inspiration

You are warmly invited to continue exploring, learning, and contributing:

The PLANET4B Catalogue of Methods

Practical, co-created tools for building belonging, agency, and shared care.

PLANET4B Care-full course on biodiversity engagement methods for civil society

A flexible, open-access course offering creative, tested methods to support inclusive biodiversity action across communities.

PLANET4B Care-full Resources

A searchable directory of **engagement methods** and **transformative change stories** – real examples of communities, youth groups, schools, gardens and movements reshaping their relationships with biodiversity.

Sister projects and networks working on transformation, care, values, and biodiversity:

[BioAgora](#) | [BioNext](#) | [BIOTRAILS](#) | [BioTraCes](#) | [COEVOLVERS](#) | [DAISY](#) | [GoDigiBios](#) | [NATURESCAPES](#)

[PRO-COAST](#) | [TRANS-Lighthouses](#) | [TRANSPATH](#)

Partners

Partnership based on diversity and strong collaboration.



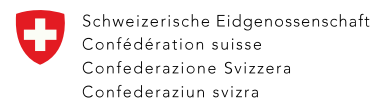
Funders



PLANET4B receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101082212.



This project is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee.



This project receives funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).



PLANET4B

Annex B. Making Change in Policy: Tools and Strategies for Policymakers to Make Biodiversity a Shared Priority



Making Change in Policy

Tools and Strategies for Policymakers to
Make Biodiversity a Shared Priority



PLANET4B

POLICYMAKERS

Foreword

Biodiversity is increasingly referenced in strategies and commitments. Yet this recognition does not automatically translate into everyday policy practice. In many institutions, biodiversity is still associated mainly with conservation or compliance, and is not yet seen as relevant to finance, planning, infrastructure, economic development or health. As a result, it may be acknowledged at the strategic level, but not fully considered in the day-to-day decisions that shape regulation.

Across ministries, agencies and governance levels, biodiversity also carries different meanings. For some it relates to nature protection; for others to rural livelihoods, climate adaptation or cultural identity. These understandings are all valid – but when they remain unconnected, coordination and shared action become difficult.

The challenge is therefore twofold: to strengthen shared understanding, and to make biodiversity actionable within existing roles, priorities and policy processes.

This guide is for policymakers working to ensure that biodiversity is not only acknowledged, but actively integrated into agenda-setting, everyday decisions and resource allocation. It draws on insights from [PLANET4B](#), which worked with public institutions, communities and businesses to understand how biodiversity can be prioritised in decision-making.

This guide offers tools for:

- Framing biodiversity in ways that build shared language and relevance across sectors
- Aligning biodiversity with existing policy priorities, rather than creating new ones
- Introducing small, feasible steps that demonstrate value
- Anchoring progress structurally, so it endures beyond individual champions or project cycles

The aim is to support realistic, steady and durable progress – starting from where things already are and adjusting the conditions for biodiversity to grow into a shared and actionable policy priority.

We hope you find this guide useful in your work to shape policies that sustain the well-being of people and the living world we depend on.

The PLANET4B Coordination Team

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What Policymakers Identify as Key Barriers to Prioritising Biodiversity

Across consultations undertaken during the PLANET4B project, policymakers noted that biodiversity often struggles to gain practical traction not only because of structural factors, but also because political commitment can be limited or uneven. In some contexts, biodiversity is seen as a secondary concern, a compliance matter, or an issue that can be deferred. This means that both systemic conditions (such as mandates, workloads and procedures) and political priorities (what is seen as urgent, visible or advantageous) shape what becomes possible in practice.

Several consistent themes emerged:

- Biodiversity is understood and spoken about differently across sectors, which makes shared action more complex.
- Policy agendas often focus on issues that appear more immediate or easier to measure and justify.

- Workloads and administrative procedures make it difficult to consider biodiversity unless it can be connected to existing tasks.
- Progress frequently relies on individual champions, which makes biodiversity gains vulnerable to turnover or shifting priorities.

These barriers can be addressed through shared language, alignment of priorities, small strategic steps, and structural anchoring – all of which this guide supports.

This landscape means that progress requires both strategic communication and framing to build commitment and shared understanding. It also requires practical policy entry points that make biodiversity easier to act on within existing roles, processes and constraints.

The next section focuses on how to communicate biodiversity inside government in ways that strengthen commitment, create alignment and make collaboration possible.

Table 1: Barriers Policymakers Highlighted during PLANET4B Consultations

 Barrier	 What This Looks Like in Practice	 Impact on Biodiversity Action
Uneven political commitments	Biodiversity is treated as optional, symbolic, or secondary to economic or crisis agendas.	Limited prioritisation, weak mandates, and little support for implementation.
Different understandings of biodiversity across sectors	Ministries and agencies use different terms, framings and assumptions.	Coordination becomes slow; misunderstandings and duplication occur.
Competing policy priorities and crisis agendas	Economic stability, energy, health and climate often dominate attention.	Biodiversity becomes secondary, postponed or reframed as “later” work.
Limited administrative capacity and time	Staff manage high workloads; new tasks feel unmanageable.	Biodiversity integration is perceived as “additional work”, not built-in.
Fragmented mandates and unclear responsibility	Several departments share responsibility without a single lead.	Progress depends on personal initiative and can stall without coordination.
Short policy cycles and leadership turnover	Political and staffing changes reset priorities and direction.	Gains are fragile unless they are structurally embedded.

Table 1: (continued)

 Barrier	 What This Looks Like in Practice	 Impact on Biodiversity Action
Few visible, feasible examples	Proposals can appear abstract, complex or large-scale.	Decision-makers hesitate to commit without proven precedents.
Biodiversity often framed as cost rather than value	Economic and performance narratives override ecosystem considerations.	Biodiversity is deprioritised unless linked to resilience, efficiency or opportunity.
Uncertainty around measurement, indicator mismatch, unclear reporting requirements	Biodiversity benefits are often local, long-term or qualitative, while available indicators and reporting expectations are unclear or mismatched.	Action slows when reporting requirements are unclear.

Current Frames of Biodiversity Inside Policy

Because biodiversity is understood differently across sectors, how it is communicated inside institutions matters. Communication in this context is rather about creating shared understanding so that different departments and policy domains can work together more easily.

Biodiversity Holds Different Meanings Across Policy Areas

Research in PLANET4B shows that biodiversity is understood in multiple ways depending on policy context, professional background and institutional roles. Across the project's 11 case studies, interviews and discourse analysis, biodiversity appeared differently.

Biodiversity is not one concept with one meaning. Rather, it carries different significance depending on sectoral priorities and institutional mandates. These meanings are not wrong – but often they are fragmented and if they remain unconnected, shared action is difficult.

The communication task, therefore, is not to unify the meaning, but to make the different interpretations visible and connectable.

Table 2: Meanings of Biodiversity in Different Policy Areas

Policy Domain / Actor Group	How Biodiversity Appears to be Commonly Understood
Environment / Conservation	As the protection and recovery of species, habitats and ecological processes.
Agriculture & Rural Development	Biodiversity as part of the conditions that sustain productive and liveable rural environments, including continuity of landscapes, livelihoods and knowledge traditions.
Water, Infrastructure & Spatial Planning	As part of how landscapes function, influencing flood risk, erosion, and the organisation of space, influencing how environments support everyday life.
Climate & Adaptation Policy	As a resource that supports stability and resilience in the face of climate change.
Culture & Education	As heritage, identity and belonging to place.
Finance & Economic Policy	Biodiversity as connected to financial long-term stability and risk, though often under-recognised due to reporting gaps and cognitive biases.

Moving Biodiversity Across Policy Silos and Decision Processes

Biodiversity is not yet widely recognised as a practical policy concern in many institutions. In numerous ministries, agencies and local authorities, biodiversity remains associated primarily with nature conservation or environmental compliance, and is not yet seen as relevant to finance, planning, agriculture, economic development, health or infrastructure work.

Awareness and concern are therefore uneven, and biodiversity often appears less urgent, less measurable, or less politically visible than other priorities. Even where interest exists, biodiversity does not map neatly onto existing mandates, planning cycles, justification language or performance indicators.

The task is therefore twofold:

1. Build shared understanding of how biodiversity relates to policy areas beyond nature conservation.

2. Translate biodiversity into the decision processes and justification logics that institutions already use.
- This section provides practical guidance on actions that policy actors can take, to help turn abstract biodiversity-related challenges in tangible actions, so biodiversity can become actionable rather than symbolic.

Framing Biodiversity in the Language of Mandates

Biodiversity gains practical traction when it is presented as strengthening goals that policymakers are already responsible for, rather than as an additional or competing priority. Make biodiversity relevant by showing how it enhances what other sectors already protect, manage or justify.

Table 3: How to Frame Biodiversity to Align with Sectoral Mandates

When speaking with...	Emphasise how biodiversity supports...	Because...
Finance & Economic Policy Units	Stability over long-term risk and uncertainty	Decision processes are shaped by budget cycles and risk horizons.
Agriculture & Rural Development	Continuity of rural futures and viable landscapes	Biodiversity is embedded in practices of care, heritage, production and stewardship.
Spatial / Regional Planning	Quality, identity and functionality of places	Planning determines how landscapes are lived, experienced and valued.
Climate & Adaptation Teams	Resilience and flexibility under changing conditions	Biodiversity strengthens the system’s capacity to respond over time.
Trade & External Relations	Fair, stable and legitimate cooperation	Biodiversity underpins long-term credibility and shared benefit in partnerships.
Education / Cultural Institutions	Belonging, shared responsibility and meaningful learning	Values and identities shift through cultural engagement and collective experience.

Inserting Biodiversity into Existing Decision Mechanisms

Integration does not necessarily require new procedures. Rather, it requires positioning biodiversity where decision-making processes are already operating.

Table 4: Fitting Biodiversity into Existing Mechanisms

Policy Mechanism	How Biodiversity Fits	Applies to
Impact assessments / strategic reviews	Treat biodiversity as a dependency and risk factor , not only an outcome.	National ministries, EC DGs, regional and local authorities
Budget / programme justification text	Frame biodiversity as future cost avoidance and stability in implementation .	Ministries, municipalities, budget processes
Inter-ministerial / inter-service coordination	Use biodiversity to demonstrate alignment of policy goals across sectors.	All levels of government
Regional development & cohesion funding	Link biodiversity to territorial resilience and durable investment value.	Regions, cohesion agencies, planning authorities
Land-use / spatial planning processes	Position biodiversity as part of how places function and support well-being .	Local and regional planning bodies

Choose the Framing Based on the Decision Context

Different decision settings use different evaluation logics. Framing biodiversity as an *opportunity* can help build alliances, while *stability / resilience* framing may be more effective in formal decision procedures.

Table 5: Fitting Biodiversity into Existing Decision Contexts

Setting	Effective Framing	Why
Strategic planning, cooperation, partnership building	Opportunity, continuity, viable futures	Builds alignment and shared purpose.
Legislative drafting, budget justification, regulatory evaluations	Risk reduction, stability, resilience, cost avoidance	Matches the formal language of approval and justification.

When Encountering Resistance

Capacity constraints are an important factor with high workloads, tight planning cycles and crowded policy agendas. When a colleague says “We do not have capacity for this”, it does not automatically mean:

- they are opposed to biodiversity, or
- they believe it is unimportant.

More often, it means:

- it is not yet clear where biodiversity fits in their existing responsibilities, or
- they cannot yet see how it would be implemented without adding work.

Repeating the case for biodiversity rarely shifts this. What does help is shifting the conversation from why to where.

☹️ Instead of asking:

“Could you please include biodiversity in your process?”

😊 it is worth asking:

“At which step in your workflow is environmental or risk information already reviewed?”

“Is there a template, form, or justification note where this could be added without creating a new task?”

“Which decisions in your process have longer-term consequences where resilience or continuity is already discussed?”

“Would it help if we provided language, examples or text you could adapt rather than having to develop it?”

These questions do three things at once:

- They respect the colleague’s constraints – this avoids defensiveness or perceived pressure
- They locate integration within existing work – this makes biodiversity *practical* and *feasible*
- They invite collaboration rather than delegation – this builds internal ownership instead of transferring responsibility.

Table 6: Examples of What “Fit” Can Look Like in Practice

Context	What this looks like	Result
Finance Ministry / Treasury	Adding one sentence on biodiversity risk to existing budget justification templates	No new process <i>and</i> biodiversity becomes part of fiscal rationale
Agriculture Ministry / CAP Unit	Referencing biodiversity under “continuity of land use and rural livelihoods” in guidance notes	Biodiversity is seen as part of sustaining agricultural futures
Spatial Planning Department	Adding biodiversity criteria to existing checklists	Biodiversity becomes part of evaluating “quality of place”
European Commission DGs	Adding biodiversity as a dependency and risk variable in an Impact Assessment problem definition	Biodiversity enters the decision logic before proposals are finalised
Local Authority	Referencing biodiversity under “long-term maintenance and public amenity value” in park and infrastructure planning	Biodiversity aligns with public services and community well-being

The Shift in One Sentence

Instead of asking for *more work*, help colleagues identify where biodiversity already belongs in the work they are doing. This is where progress becomes possible – even in constrained institutional settings.

Why This May Work

The approaches outlined here can be effective because they match how institutions and individuals actually make decisions, and how systems-level conditions can be addressed.

Our research shows that people and organisations act when biodiversity is:

- Relevant to goals they already hold
- Feasible within existing processes and time constraints
- Legitimate because others are also doing it
- Supported structurally, not dependent on individual advocacy.

The behavioural and decision-making theories below help explain why these patterns emerge and how they can be supported in practice.

Table 7: Approaches and their Implication for Policy, based on Relevant Theories

Approach	Relevant Insight / Theory	Implication for Policy Practice
Align biodiversity with existing mandates and priorities	Ajzen – Theory of Planned Behaviour: People are more likely to act when the behaviour feels meaningful, socially supported, and doable for them.	Position biodiversity as strengthening goals already held (stability, continuity, resilience), not as a new or competing agenda.
Fit biodiversity into current planning and decision procedures	Michie – COM-B: Change is easier when capability, opportunity and motivation are already present.	Integration is most effective when biodiversity is inserted into existing templates, coordination steps, and review stages , rather than creating parallel processes.
Use visible examples to make biodiversity seem shared and expected	Cialdini – Social Norms: People take cues from what others in similar roles are doing.	Small internal precedents and peer examples are more influential than general awareness campaigns.
Anchor progress in routines, roles and institutional rules	Ostrom – Institutional Governance: Stable change depends on shared rules, not individual initiative alone.	Embedding biodiversity into checklists, justification notes, design standards and budgeting logic sustains action through turnover and election cycles.
Support confidence and reduce perceived risk	Bandura – Self-Efficacy: People act when they believe they can do so.	Start with low-risk, feasible steps that demonstrate success and build confidence.
Sustain motivation over time	Deci & Ryan – Self-Determination Theory: Motivation is maintained when people feel autonomy, competence and shared purpose.	Use collaborative and invitational framing , not obligation-based demands.
Match framing to the evaluation logic of the decision setting	Kahneman & Tversky – Prospect Theory: How a proposal is framed shapes how it is perceived in approval processes.	Use opportunity and shared benefit framing in collaboration settings; use stability, cost avoidance and resilience framing in formal decision reviews (e.g., funding, programme justification).

What this means in practice:

- People commit when biodiversity supports goals they already work for.
- Action begins when the first step feels manageable and safe to try.
- Legitimacy spreads when examples are visible and shared.
- Progress lasts when it is written into systems, not held by individuals.

Shift in how Biodiversity is Positioned:

- “Environmental add-on” → Condition for stable, resilient policy outcomes
- Competing priority → Cross-cutting enabling factor
- Project-based effort → Routine institutional practice
- Individual advocacy → Shared ownership
- “Not my responsibility” → Shared responsibility

Biodiversity becomes actionable when it feels relevant, doable, shared and embedded.

Practical Tools for Advancing Biodiversity in Policy Work

The tools below help introduce biodiversity without increasing workloads, shifting discussions from *why* biodiversity matters to *where* it fits in everyday policy work.

These steps correspond to the five change pathways identified in PLANET4B: Legitimacy → People → Relevance → Visible Wins → Anchoring.

Legitimacy Signals (Permission & Framing)

These phrases help position biodiversity as a valid and shared policy concern, rather than an environmental add-on.

Useful messages for meetings or documents

“Let’s consider biodiversity alongside climate and development resilience.”

“This is not new work – it strengthens outcomes we are already responsible for.”

“We already manage landscapes, water, public space and food systems – biodiversity influences all of these.”

Where to use

- Agenda-setting for inter-service meetings
- Strategy introductions / communication notes
- Cabinet briefings and justification texts

Effect: Opens institutional space to act by signalling permission and mandate alignment.

Identify and Connect Internal Allies (People Who Care)

Progress does not require everyone to agree. It begins when a small cross-unit cluster coordinates informally.

Useful phrasing:

“Who else in your unit works on landscape, resilience or community well-being?”

“Shall we keep each other updated on when biodiversity might fit into our upcoming work?”

Where to use

- Informal follow-up conversations
- Coordination chats between departments

Effect: Creates a practical network of ownership, not a new committee.

Make Biodiversity Relevant to Their Mandate (Experiential Connection)

Instead of *explaining biodiversity*, focus on what it does in the context of the colleague's own goals. This is about showing that biodiversity already exists inside the problems they are trying to solve.

If they work on Land or infrastructure planning

"Biodiversity affects how places function – this is about landscape performance."

If they work on Agriculture / food / rural development

"This supports the continuity of viable land use and cultural landscapes."

If they work on Budgeting or programme evaluation

"This reduces long-term implementation risk and future maintenance burden."

If they work on Social or health policy

"This shapes everyday well-being and access to quality public space."

Effect: Moves biodiversity from "extra work" → relevant and useful.

Start Small, Make It Visible (Visible Wins)

One small precedent has more impact than a large, planned reform.

Concrete actions:

- Add one sentence on biodiversity to a planning rationale or funding justification.
- Include biodiversity as one criterion in an existing checklist.
- Begin with one pilot site, neighbourhood or policy file, not policy-wide integration.

Useful sentence for documents:

"This strengthens continuity and resilience of the system conditions on which implementation depends."

Effect: Demonstrates feasibility → builds trust → others copy.

Anchor Gradually in Systems (Anchoring in Systems)

When something has been tried and accepted, write it into routine structures.

Add biodiversity to:

- Inter-service coordination agendas (standing discussion point)
- Planning and procurement templates
- Monitoring and reporting guidance
- Role descriptions when positions are updated.

Gradual is essential: anchoring too early feels imposed; anchoring too late risks losses when staff or priorities shift.

Overall, start small, speak in sector language, demonstrate one visible success, then embed it into existing routines.

Practice Example from PLANET4B:

Bio-/Diverse Edible City Graz – How Municipal Buy-In Developed for More (Inclusive) Green Spaces

In Graz, Austria, several community garden and food initiatives existed, but they were unconnected and involved mostly socially advantaged groups. Biodiversity appeared indirectly in some city strategies (green space, recreation and quality of life), while social inclusion and food justice were acknowledged separately in policy discussions. These agendas, however, were not linked in practice, and cross-departmental cooperation to connect biodiversity, good food and inclusive green space development only occurred in a few project-based cases.

The PLANET4B case Bio-/Diverse Edible City Graz addressed this gap through two Learning Communities:

- A Policy Learning Community with municipal staff from environment, parks, social affairs, and spatial planning, alongside different NGOs, activists and experts.
- A Citizen Learning Community of women experiencing social and economic precarity who co-designed a new edible community garden (GAIA Gartenberg).

What follows shows how municipal buy-in developed step-by-step, aligned with the five pathways in this guide.

1) Legitimacy: Biodiversity Framed as Linked to Existing Responsibilities

Instead of presenting biodiversity as an “environmental” issue, the Learning Communities highlighted how a biodiverse edible garden would contribute to social inclusion, climate adaptation, and neighbourhood liveability – all of which were already on the agenda for different municipal departments.

This made biodiversity feel legitimate to discuss – rather than a new agenda that needed new justification with the momentum from Graz’s developing biodiversity strategy reinforcing this.

2) Small Coalition of Allies: A Cross-Department Team Formed

The Policy Learning Community created a practical discussion space for municipal staff and other actors. These conversations helped staff see connections between themes and roles, and identify synergies without the need for a new task force – building and supporting relationships.

This informal, trust-based group:

- Enabled staff from different departments and fields to understand each other’s perspectives.
- Identified where procedures were unintentionally blocking participation of less privileged groups
- Established a shared sense of purpose.

3) Make Biodiversity Relevant to Mandates

Each department saw its *own interest* in the initiative. Biodiversity became meaningful because it supported goals for which they were already accountable.

Table 8: Actors’ interest and their Alignment to Biodiversity

Actor	What mattered to them	How biodiversity aligned
Green Space / Parks	Maintaining attractive, resilient green spaces	Diverse plantings = lower maintenance + higher ecological value
Social Affairs	Inclusion and well-being of marginalised groups	Shared gardening created safe, supportive community spaces
Planning	Improving neighbourhood quality and public space use	Edible and biodiverse spaces enhanced identity + liveability

4) Visible Small Win: One Pilot Site Becoming a Demonstration

The GAIA Gartenberg Garden was small, local and tangible. It allowed municipal staff to see results directly, including:

- Strong community ownership
- Improved access to nature for women previously excluded from green spaces
- A biodiverse landscape that felt *lived in*, not symbolic.

The pilot reduced perceived risk by showing that citizens could manage and care for green spaces effectively. It also demonstrated that integrating biodiversity was both feasible and beneficial. As a result, additional follow-up initiatives were launched, and the site became a testbed also for climate change adaptation.

5) Institutional Anchoring: Alignment Turned into Procedural Support

Once trust and confidence were established, the municipality made decisive adjustments:

- The Green Space Department provided materials and practical maintenance support
- Coordination pathways between social affairs and parks staff were regularised
- The edible community park model was referenced in ongoing urban development considerations (integrated into the City Development Plan and the Sectoral Plan for Green Spaces).

No new department. No major restructuring.

Just relatively small shifts in how routine responsibilities were carried out – the exact form of institutional anchoring this guide recommends.

Key Takeaway

Municipal buy-in emerged because senior departmental leadership was engaged early on, saw biodiversity connected to their own mandates, witnessed a small visible success, and could then anchor it through small procedural shifts. The change did not start with a biodiversity argument but rather finding the common ground. Early conversations created recognition of relevance, reduced barriers for staff participation, and ensured that the work entered into institutional consciousness from the start. External recognition (EU project affiliation) further reinforced legitimacy and shared pride.

Embedding Biodiversity into Structures and Cycles (Ensuring Continuity)

Even when promising initiatives begin, biodiversity integration often remains vulnerable to turnover, shifting priorities and project-based funding. PLANET4B showed that progress is most at risk when it depends on single champions, temporary political goodwill, or standalone commitments.

To ensure durability, biodiversity needs to become part of the ordinary way institutions work – not a special effort.

Why Continuity Is Challenging

Policymakers pointed to several structural factors that interrupt momentum:

- Short political cycles reshape priorities before initiatives mature.
- Staff rotations and reorganisation dissolve informal alliances.
- Project-based funding encourages pilots rather than stable practice.
- Siloed mandates make shared responsibility uncertain.

These conditions are normal in public institutions. The task is not to be blocked by them, but to design biodiversity integration that can withstand them.

What Helps Biodiversity Endure Over Time

Across our findings, three stabilisers consistently supported continuity:

1. Routine Embedding

Biodiversity becomes part of *existing* procedures – procurement guidance, planning checklists, programme justification notes, evaluation criteria.

2. Shared Ownership

Progress lasts when it is held by more than one unit. Cross-department micro-teams, even small ones, provide continuity when staff or political leadership change.

3. Narrative Alignment

Biodiversity remains actionable when it is linked to core institutional priorities such as resilience, public well-being, rural livelihood, regional identity or risk reduction – essentially, priorities that persist across electoral or administrative cycles.

Practical Moves to Embed Biodiversity

These steps ensure continuity without requiring large-scale reform:

- Add biodiversity as a standard consideration in templates used across units (planning notes, justification memos, funding calls).
- Include biodiversity as a standing agenda point in inter-service coordination meetings.
- Introduce lightweight shared responsibility, e.g., two units co-own a workstream rather than one.
- When pilots or small initiatives work, integrate their tasks into routine roles, not new projects.
- Use multi-year framework agreements rather than single-year grants to sustain local actors.

These are small, system-facing adjustments – the kind that make progress hold.

Keeping Momentum When Contexts Change

Progress is rarely linear. But preserving small advances, verbally or in writing, matters.

When leadership changes:

“Maintaining biodiversity strengthens continuity and resilience under changing conditions.”

When leadership changes:

“This approach is now built into our standard process. It continues while priorities are reviewed.”

When budgets tighten:

“Low-cost biodiversity measures reduce long-term maintenance and vulnerability costs.”

Continuity does not rely on constant advocacy, but rather on making biodiversity the *path of least resistance* in everyday work.

Working with Institutional Rhythms and Timing

We found that biodiversity integration is often not blocked by disagreement – but by timing. If biodiversity enters the discussion after priorities, budgets or wording are already fixed, it is difficult to include without appearing disruptive or costly.

This section focuses on where biodiversity can be introduced with the greatest ease and legitimacy – upstream, where meaning is shaped.

Where Integration can be Most Effective

The most effective moments are the early framing stages, such as:

- Concept notes
- Agenda-setting conversations
- Issue papers / briefing notes
- Inter-service scoping discussions
- Initial budget envelope planning
- Terms of reference for expert groups or consultations

These are points where language is forming, and biodiversity can be included without requiring new procedures.

Light, Strategic Insertions

Instead of advocating for biodiversity, the shift is made through small, well-timed sentences, which are neutral, planning-aligned questions:

“Before we specify measures, should we consider whether this affects the ecological conditions that implementation depends on?”

“Could biodiversity be included here as part of resilience / continuity / quality of place?”

“Does this align with our existing biodiversity commitments, or should we reference them?”

Using Momentum

Policy systems move in cycles. The goal is not to introduce biodiversity everywhere all the time, but to use already-moving processes to carry it forward. Integration best succeeds when biodiversity enters lightly, and in the language of shared goals.

Examples of moments where this can work:

- Strategy renewals
- Climate adaptation plans
- Regional development programmes
- Procurement or investment framework updates
- New funding frameworks.

Looking Forward: Designing Policies that Enable Biodiversity (and People)

Over the past decade, biodiversity has gained visibility in strategies, funding frameworks and international commitments. Yet, we see that policy ambition does not automatically translate into positive outcomes when other policies create incentives that undermine ecological and social resilience.

Across cases and interviews, policymakers emphasised that:

- Conservation policy alone cannot compensate for pressures created elsewhere (e.g., agricultural intensification, infrastructure expansion, market pressures).
- Biodiversity outcomes depend on the everyday decisions of sectors whose core mandates are not explicitly environmental.
- Transformation requires alignment, not parallel policies.

This means that the future of biodiversity policy is not only a question of strengthening biodiversity regulations, but of ensuring that other policy domains do not systematically counteract ecological goals.

Beyond Silos

Biodiversity is not a single sector. It is a condition that underpins all sectors – food, water, climate adaptation, public health, spatial planning, cultural identity, and economic resilience.

Policies therefore need to be:

- Cross-cutting in design, not only in implementation.
- Co-owned across ministries, not held by one department.
- Based on shared responsibilities, not delegated expertise.

Aligning Incentives

The most substantial barriers identified by policymakers across PLANET4B were not conceptual but economic and institutional:

- Subsidies and budget lines that reward practices harmful to biodiversity.

- Performance indicators that privilege short-term output over long-term resilience.
- Accountability systems that evaluate individual sectors independently.

To move forward:

Policies must ensure that public funding does not create ecological harm, and that biodiversity-positive practices become the easiest practices to maintain.

Making Biodiversity a Foundation, Not an Add-On

The implication is that biodiversity policy cannot remain a parallel track.

It needs to function as:

- A guiding principle in agricultural, trade, finance, spatial and social policy.
- A normative anchor for how value is defined.
- A criterion of legitimacy in public decision-making.

This means future policies should prioritise:

Priority	What this means in practice
Breaking perverse incentives	Review subsidy, trade, and procurement rules that unintentionally encourage biodiversity loss.
Integrating biodiversity into sectoral policy logics	Not “adding nature on top”, but shaping what resilience, productivity, fairness and public benefit mean.
Supporting long-term transitions and transformation	Multi-year, stable funding for practices that sustain ecological and social well-being.
Strengthening public participation and co-governance	Valuing lived experience and local care as essential to ensuring legitimacy and sustained engagement

The Direction of Travel

The future of biodiversity governance is not about more technical precision or stricter compliance alone. It is about aligning the values, incentives and practices that shape land, food, materials, places and public life.

Biodiversity can only thrive when the systems that shape it – economic, cultural, political –

are oriented toward sustaining life rather than eroding it.

This requires collaboration across sectors, shared ownership of outcomes, and policies that make biodiversity the more realistic, resilient and rewarding choice.

Closing Reflection

The work of integrating biodiversity into policy is gradual, relational and continuous. It evolves through conversations, shared practice, and the patient adjustment of routines and responsibilities. It does not depend on perfect consensus or rapid transformation, but on steady alignment and sustained attention to how decisions shape the conditions of life over time.

As more institutions recognise biodiversity as part of what makes economies, places and communities resilient, the space for meaningful action will continue to expand. Change rarely happens all at once, but it does happen – through small steps that become

normal, and through relationships that become commitments.

Your work in this process is both paramount and crucial. The judgment, sensitivity and forward-looking decisions made by policymakers shape the environments in which people live, grow and belong.

The path forward is not only possible – it is already underway. Each step that makes biodiversity easier to consider, easier to support, and easier to sustain contributes to a future in which policy not only protects nature but helps societies live well within it.

For Further Inspiration

You are warmly invited to continue exploring, learning, and contributing:

PLANET4B Policy Briefs

The PLANET4B Catalogue of Methods

Practical, co-created tools for building belonging, agency and shared care.

PLANET4B Care-full Courses with behaviour insights or for engaging communities

Flexible, open-access courses offering creative, tested methods to support inclusive biodiversity action across policy processes.

PLANET4B Care-full Resources

A searchable directory of engagement methods and transformative change stories – real examples of communities and movements reshaping their relationships with biodiversity.

Sister projects and networks working on transformation, care, values, and biodiversity:

[BioAgora](#) | [BioNext](#) | [BIOTRAILS](#) | [BioTraCes](#) | [COEVOLVERS](#) | [DAISY](#) | [GoDigiBios](#) | [NATURESCAPES](#) | [PRO-COAST](#) | [TRANS-Lighthouses](#) | [TRANSPATH](#)

Partners

Partnership based on diversity and strong collaboration.



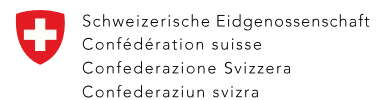
Funders



PLANET4B receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101082212.



This project is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee.

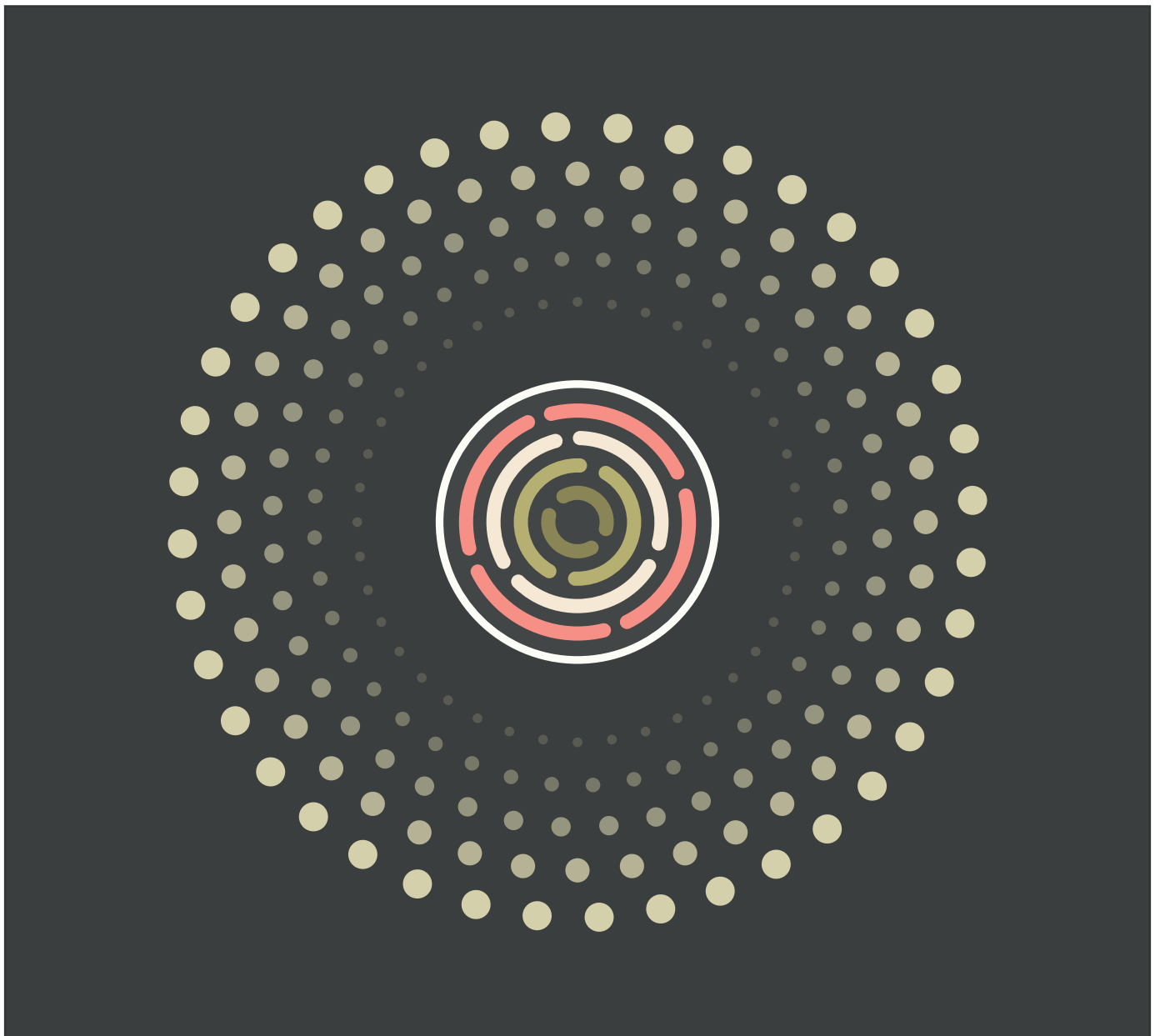


This project receives funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).



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Annex C. Making Change at Work: Tools and Strategies for Businesses to Make Biodiversity Matter



Making Change at Work

Tools and Strategies for Businesses
to Make Biodiversity Matter



PLANET4B

BUSINESS

Foreword

Working on sustainability from inside a company can feel both energising and exhausting. There are moments of progress – a conversation shifts, a colleague gets curious, a pilot takes off – and there are moments where everything seems to pause, stall, or slip back into business-as-usual.

This guide is written for those doing this work from the inside – sustainability and ESG leads, impact strategists, environmental managers, and others – who are trying to move biodiversity from “something that is often not yet part of the everyday conversation” to “something we can recognise, value and begin working for together”.

We see different starting points across organisations about how biodiversity is considered. In some companies, biodiversity is emerging as the next step after climate – there is momentum, but it needs direction and shared meaning. In others, there is support – people care, but action is limited. In some, biodiversity sits mainly in reports and frameworks – understood as compliance rather than culture. And in many, biodiversity has no starting point at all – there is simply no shared language for it yet.

All of these starting positions are valid and workable, places from which meaningful change can grow. This guide does not offer a new reporting framework, or a compliance checklist. Instead, it offers something more practical – **a set of tools to help you move from awareness to care, from care to visible action and long-term anchoring.**

If you are looking for ways to make biodiversity real, shared, and part of your organisational identity, **you are already a change-maker**, and this guide is designed for you.

These guidelines draw on insights from the international research project – [PLANET4B](#) – where research institutions and businesses worked together to understand how biodiversity can be prioritised in decision-making. Here, we share the key learnings, approaches, and practical tools to help you make biodiversity matter even more in your organisation.

The PLANET4B Coordination Team

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Why Biodiversity Matters in Business

Biodiversity is the living fabric that supports economies, supply chains and daily life. It provides raw materials, water and soil systems, climate regulation, pollination, cultural identity and well-being – often the very foundations businesses depend on. Yet in many organisations, biodiversity is not yet visible in everyday decisions. As a term, it has not necessarily been discussed, connected to processes or to the work people do.

In our work with businesses¹, we found that biodiversity is often described:

- As something to manage or avoid risk
- As part of sustainability and ESG commitments
- As a source of innovation and new business models
- As something connected to purpose, place and identity.

These framings are all valid. However, when biodiversity is spoken about mainly in terms of risk and reporting, it tends to feel important but distant – *something to account for, rather than something to care about or act upon*.

To make biodiversity actionable, it needs to become:

- Relevant to the work people already do
- Visible in places, materials and decisions
- Connected to meaning, identity or shared purpose.

When this happens, biodiversity shifts from abstract concept to shared organisational practice.

How to Forge Change in Business – the Five Pathways of Change

In our work with businesses, we found that meaningful biodiversity action rarely starts with strategies, targets or detailed plans. Instead, it begins in smaller ways – through moments of experience, visibility and reinforcement. These are not stages to move through, rather conditions that reinforce each other to make change possible.

Why these Pathways Matter

These pathways align with how people in organisations learn, decide and act. They also address the cognitive patterns that often limit biodiversity action:

- 1. Permission** counters status quo bias
- 2. People who care** counter diffusion of responsibility
- 3. Experiential connection** counters abstraction and distance
- 4. Visible wins** counter overconfidence and invisibility
- 5. Anchoring** counters short-termism and fallback to old habits.

Transformation becomes possible not by “raising awareness”, but by creating the conditions in which new practices feel natural, supported and meaningful.

1. PLANET4B (2023) Report on biodiversity and related concept perceptions.
<https://planet4b.eu/project-documents/report-on-biodiversity-and-related-concepts-perceptions>

Table 1: The Five Pathways

 Pathway	 What it Means	 Why it Matters	 How it is in Practice
1. Permission & Framing	Leadership signals that biodiversity is legitimate to consider and work on.	Without permission, action stays informal or invisible.	"It's okay to spend time on this."
2. People Who Care	Motivated individuals hold the thread and model what is possible.	Change spreads through relationships, not job titles.	"I see others like me doing this."
3. Experiential Connection	Biodiversity becomes real through place, memory, culture, or direct encounter.	Experience shifts motivation more than information.	"I <i>felt</i> something – this matters."
4. Visible Wins & Stories	Small actions become seen, shared, recognised and talked about.	Visibility turns effort into identity and pride.	"We are a company where this happens."
5. Anchoring in Systems	Processes, workflows, procurement and routines adapt to support the new practice.	This makes change durable, so it continues even when people shift roles.	"This is just how we work now."

How Sustainability Leads can use these Pathways

Think of these pathways as levers rather than tasks. You do not need to activate all of them at once. Start where there is already openness or movement.

Once you have identified your entry points, there are a number of methods that can be used to initiate action. We introduce ways to identify entry points and find suitable methods in the next section.

Table 2: Levers and methods to trigger change

If you currently have...	Lean into...	Use methods like...
Leadership openness, but low engagement	Experiential Connection	Corporate Volunteering, Priming, Storytelling
Enthusiastic individuals, but little visibility	Visible Wins & Stories	Internal Messaging, Gamification, Social Modelling
Pilot projects, but no wider adoption	Anchoring in Systems	COM-B, Habit Stacking, CBSM, Goal-Setting
No starting point at all	Permission & People Who Care	Foot-in-the-Door, But-You-Are-Free, Values Framing

Where to Start: Practical Entry Points Inside Organisations

Every organisation is different. Structures, priorities, language, timelines and cultures vary. But across contexts, there are recurring places where biodiversity work can begin without needing to convince everyone or change everything at once.

These are entry points – small but strategic spaces where new practices can take hold.



1. Leadership Signals

Why it Works: A small visible indication that *biodiversity matters here* creates legitimacy to act.

What it Looks Like in Practice:

A short statement of support, a slide in a company meeting, space given in planning conversations, including biodiversity in a team priority list.



2. Existing Sustainability Work

Why it Works: Biodiversity can build naturally on climate, circularity or well-being programmes.

What it Looks Like in Practice:

Adding biodiversity thinking to existing projects, supplier work, community engagement, innovation labs.



3. Places, Materials and Products

Why it Works: Biodiversity becomes tangible through what people see, touch, produce or manage.

What it Looks Like in Practice:

Sourcing discussions, packaging decisions, ingredients, land use, office or site landscaping.



4. Everyday Culture & Shared Moments

Why it Works: Small rituals and shared experiences shape identity.

What it Looks Like in Practice:

Team volunteering days, storytelling moments, internal challenges, small visible wins.

How to Identify Your Entry Points

A simple way to begin is to ask:

- Where is there already openness or curiosity?
- Who is already informally interested or supportive?
- Which teams talk about purpose, well-being, supply chains, nature or place?
- Where does biodiversity show up physically – in products, landscapes, materials, or sourcing?

You do not need to map the whole organisation. You only need to find one or two openings where work can start *without forcing it*. Work with the parts of the organisation where traction is possible, so that others can join when they are ready.

Once You Find an Entry Point

Start with something small, relational and doable, such as:

- Bringing biodiversity into an existing meeting conversation
- Suggesting a tiny pilot (not a programme)
- Inviting 2–3 interested colleagues to explore something together
- Asking a supplier or partner a curiosity-driven question
- Proposing a *trial*, not a commitment.

Small beginnings are not just practical – they are strategically powerful:

- They reduce perceived risk
- They avoid triggering organisational defensiveness
- They create early wins that generate momentum.

Avoid steps that ask for significant staff time or funding, and do not frame biodiversity as an additional task or obligation. These can immediately create pushback.

Instead:

- Join what is already happening
- Add a small invitation to discuss or try something new
- Make it easy to say yes (make it a win-win).

Transition to the Toolbox

Once you have an entry point – a place where curiosity, relevance or possibility exists – you can use specific methods to move from:

- *openness* → *conversation*
- *conversation* → *shared experience*
- *shared experience* → *visible action*.

These methods do not require high budget, senior mandate or large time investment. They are light-touch behavioural scaffolds that help biodiversity become:

- visible
- relatable
- meaningful
- repeatable.

This is where we go next.

Tools for Making Biodiversity Actionable in Companies

Not every method fits every moment. Different methods work best at different stages of internal readiness. Think of the methods as levers to use when a certain condition is present, not as tasks to complete.

Why these Methods Work

These tools draw on well-established behavioural and decision-making research.

People form intentions based on their beliefs, social expectations and sense of control (*Ajzen – Theory of Planned Behaviour*). This is why small voluntary commitments and clear relevance matter more than persuasive arguments.

A behaviour only continues when people have the capability, opportunity and motivation to perform it (*Michie – COM-B*). This is why we focus on small, repeatable actions that fit into existing workflows rather than adding new burdens.

Decisions are shaped by cognitive shortcuts and how outcomes are framed (*Kahneman & Tversky – Prospect Theory*). This is why framing biodiversity as opportunity (innovation, resilience,

identity) works better than threat or obligation to sustain action (although loss-framing works well to get attention).

People take cues from what others around them are doing (*Cialdini – Social Norms & Influence*). This is why visible champions, peer examples, and shared small wins are more effective than awareness campaigns.

For change to last, it needs to become part of everyday routines, rules and shared expectations (*Ostrom – Institutional Governance*). This is why pilots need to be refined and then embedded into existing processes and decision points.

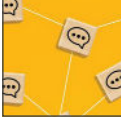
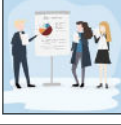
And motivation grows when people feel autonomy, competence and belonging (*Deci – Self-Determination Theory*). This is why we use invitational methods, not pressure or mandate.

The practical methods below translate these insights into everyday organisational practice. In short, people act when something feels meaningful, possible and shared – and continues when it becomes the *easiest* behaviour supported by the system.

Conversation Starter Methods

Use these when biodiversity is not yet part of everyday conversation. They reduce pressure, lower resistance, and create the first small voluntary “yes.”

Table 3: Conversation Starter Methods

Method	What It Does	Why It Works (theory link)	Example in practice
 Foot-in-the-Door	Starts with a very small, low-effort request.	People are more likely to continue something they voluntarily started.	“Can we add one biodiversity check to our next sourcing call?”
 But-You-Are-Free	Makes participation truly voluntary.	Autonomy increases motivation.	“This is optional – you’re free to say no.”
 Framing Through Values	Connects biodiversity to something the company already cares about.	How something is framed influences its perceived value.	Links biodiversity to resilience, innovation, well-being, identity.
 Priming & Micro-Messaging	Introduces biodiversity as a recurring presence in internal communication.	Repeated exposure normalises topics.	Short internal messages, visuals, stories, monthly notes.
 Internal Digital Messaging	Quietly introduces new language and reference points.	Normalisation via repetition.	Monthly intranet post / Slack / Teams thread.
 Nudging (Choice Architecture)	Makes biodiversity-positive options easier by default.	Defaults shape behaviour.	Include biodiversity-friendly suppliers in preferred vendor list.

Outcome: Biodiversity becomes *mentionable, recognised and legitimate*.

Behavioural Change Methods: Enhancing Action, Meaning and Connection

Use these when there is already interest or early small wins. They build shared meaning, belonging, identity and pride.

Table 4: Behavioural Change Methods

Method	What It Does	Why It Works (theory link)	Example in practice
 Visible Champions / Social Modelling	Shows “someone like me” is already acting.	People follow peer behaviour more than instruction.	Highlight small internal examples in meetings or channels.
 Positive Deviance	Find where biodiversity-positive action is <i>already</i> happening.	Existing behaviour strengthens perceived control + possibility.	“We saw this team already doing X – let’s learn from them.”

Table 4 (continued)

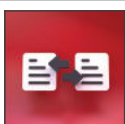
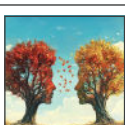
Method	What It Does	Why It Works (theory link)	Example in practice
 Storytelling / Meaning Mapping	Creates emotional resonance and shared memory.	People remember stories, not data.	A 20-minute story sharing about “nature spaces that shaped us.”
 Corporate Volunteering / Field Visits	Makes biodiversity <i>felt and real</i> .	Experience influences motivation.	Visiting a local site, supplier farm, restoration project.
 Participatory Intervention (Co-Creation Labs)	Moves from <i>telling</i> to <i>designing together</i> .	Identity is built through shared action.	Workshop to co-design one biodiversity-positive purchasing rule.
 Gamification	Adds play, challenge and curiosity.	Engagement increases when participation feels light and social.	Team biodiversity “micro-wins” challenge over four weeks.

Outcome: Biodiversity becomes *shared, meaningful and actively supported*.

Anchoring Methods

Use these to stabilise behaviour and integrate it into routine practice.

Table 5: Anchoring Methods

Method	What It Does	Why It Works (theory link)	Example in practice
 COM-B Behaviour Diagnosis	Identifies what truly blocks a behaviour.	Change requires capability, opportunity, motivation.	Use a 10-minute COM-B check when a pilot stalls.
 Habit Stacking	Adds a new behaviour to an existing routine.	<i>Habit formation principles:</i> Piggybacking reduces effort.	Add a biodiversity check to supplier reviews already happening.
 Comparative Feedback	Makes small progress visible over time.	People respond to progress + social comparison.	Monthly: “Here is what moved this quarter.”
 CBSM (Pilot → Refine → Embed)	Tests in one unit → improves → expands → integrates.	Stable change requires shared rules and reinforcement.	Trial in one site / team → expand → add to procedures / template.
 Green Leadership / Role-Modelling in Teams	Makes leaders visible stewards of the shift.	Norms solidify through what leaders <i>do</i> , not say.	Managers reinforce biodiversity questions in meeting agendas.

Outcome: Biodiversity becomes *normal practice*.

Sustaining Yourself as a Change-Maker

Working on sustainability from inside an organisation can often mean holding both vision and constraint at the same time. You may see what needs to change long before others do. You may carry responsibility without formal authority. You may be asked to “make progress” while navigating limited time, budget and attention.

This section is about how to protect your energy and pace, so the work *remains possible* – for you, and for your organisation.



You Do Not Need Everyone – You Need “The Few.”

Change does not scale by convincing everyone. It spreads through a small number of early partners.

Think:

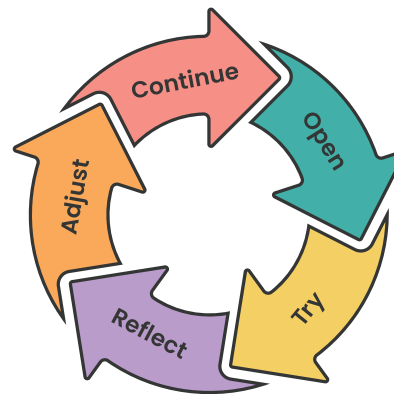
- 3–8 curious people
- in one or two teams
- who are willing to try something small together.

Focus on:

- those who show interest or spark, not resistance
- where there is already a starting point, not where approval is difficult
- those that are in a position to implement the most significant change (and are approachable).

Work in Cycles, Not Constant Effort

Change moves through repeating phases. Follow a cyclical process to trialling and learning from different actions and approaches:



It can look like:

1. Opening: Invite, seed curiosity, stimulate conversation
2. Doing: Try something small together
3. Reflection: What worked? What did not work? Why? What was easy? What felt good?
4. Pause / Reset: Integrate learning, prepare next step.

This rhythm:

- protects energy
- avoids burnout
- builds momentum without pressure.

Use the Smallest Possible Version of Everything

Instead of:

“We need a biodiversity programme.”

Try:

“Let’s try a shared reflection on biodiversity’s importance for us in our next team meeting.”

Instead of:

 "We must redesign procurement."

Try:

 "Let's add one question to the existing supplier review checklist."

Instead of:

 "We need leadership endorsement"

Try:

 "Let's ask one manager to *visibly* support one small pilot."

Small can mean doable. Doable may mean repeatable. Repeatable can become cultural.

Keep Sight of Your Progress

Because organisational change is slow, you need your own way of seeing movement.

Every four-six weeks, reflect on:

- Who is now open to change that was not before?
- What language is appearing that was not there before?
- What small, pro-biodiversity practice is now normal?
- Where did people show care, not compliance?

Write it down to prevent discouragement and provide you with motivation.

Don't Carry this Alone

Internal sustainability work is relational.

Create:

- A buddy inside the organisation (co-conspirator, peer ally)
- A small learning circle across departments
- A check-in with 1–2 external peers doing similar work (15 minutes monthly is enough)

This:

- spreads responsibility
- protects motivation
- makes the work feel collective, not personal.

When You Feel Stuck — Shift, Don't Push

If:

- meetings stall
- interest fades
- a team resists
- the organisation is overwhelmed.

Do not push harder.

Instead:

- try with a different team
- return to behavioural change methods
- create another small visible win somewhere else

Momentum is found, not forced.

Closing Orientation

Your job is not to carry the whole company but to enable the conditions where biodiversity can matter – and to do it in a way that is *sustainable for you*.

Small steps, shared meaning, repeatable routines – *that* is what changes organisations. And you do not need to do it alone.

Change Grows Through What We Do Together

Biodiversity will not become part of business because of a single report, strategy or training. It becomes real when people begin to see it, speak it, try it and recognise it.

You do not need to transform the entire organisation at once. Change begins when a few people take small steps, in visible ways, that others can see and join.

- A conversation that shifts tone
- A procurement question asked differently
- A site visit that leaves an impression
- A pilot that becomes a routine
- A story that changes how someone thinks about and values nature.

These are not minor. They are how systems move.

Because organisations change through:

- what feels meaningful and beneficial
- what becomes shared
- and what becomes easy to repeat.

Your role is not to convince everyone, but to enable conditions where biodiversity can take root – and to support others as they step in.

Small moves can reshape culture when they are:

- visible
- social
- repeatable.

That is how biodiversity shifts from:

- something we sometimes talk about, into
- something we care about, and then
- something we do as part of who we are.

A final thought

The work you are doing is not just operational. It is cultural, relational and future-shaping. It matters.

And you are not doing this alone – many others in many other organisations are making the same shift, step-by-step. Each small action contributes to a shared movement of change.

This is how transformation travels – through networks of people who choose to act with care and courage.

Thank you for being one of them.

For Further Inspiration

The PLANET4B Catalogue of Methods

Practical, co-created tools for building belonging, agency, and shared care.

PLANET4B Care–full course on biodiversity engagement methods for business

A flexible, open-access course offering creative, tested methods to support inclusive biodiversity action across communities.

PLANET4B Care–full Resources

A searchable directory of **biodiversity engagement methods** and **transformative change stories**, which include [recommendations](#) on how biodiversity can be better prioritised in ESG and finance decision-making.

Sister projects and networks working on transformation, care, values, and biodiversity:

[BioAgora](#) | [BioNext](#) | [BIOTRAILS](#) | [BioTraCes](#) | [COEVOLVERS](#) | [DAISY](#) | [GoDigiBios](#) | [NATURESCAPES](#) | [PRO-COAST](#) | [TRANS-Lighthouses](#) | [TRANSPATH](#)

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Funders



**Funded by
the European Union**

PLANET4B receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101082212.



**UK Research
and Innovation**

This project is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee.



**Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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This project receives funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).



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