

Biodiversity Policy

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The extraction of natural raw materials for building material production can have a significant impact on local biodiversity. HeidelbergCement understands this, which is why we have been promoting practices for many decades to protect biodiversity, both during and after extraction. These practices serve to reduce, neutralize or even over-compensate the impacts of our activities.

The impact of operations on biodiversity is a material topic for HeidelbergCement. Throughout the Group, we actively accommodate a large variety of local flora and fauna in more than 800 quarries worldwide and strive to maintain a leadership position in the enhancement of biodiversity. Overseen by the Managing Board, we significantly contribute to UN SDG15 – Life on Land with the help of specialists employed across the business and global standards and principles in place. HeidelbergCement recognises that, with rates of biodiversity loss at unprecedented levels around the world, preserving biodiversity is a critical global challenge in which the private sector must play a key role in order to halt and reverse the decline and work towards nature-positive outcomes.

Nature-rich quarries in partnership

It is clear that expert knowledge is required to preserve the complexity and geographical uniqueness of natural landscapes. This is why HeidelbergCement works closely with NGOs, especially BirdLife International, to analyse and optimise our existing work and define new activities to more effectively promote the conservation of biodiversity in our extraction sites.

Over the past two decades, it has become increasingly evident that both active and former quarries can be of high ecological value, providing important habitats for protected and endangered plant and animal species. During the active phase, quarries provide pioneer conditions rarely found in the wider landscape, supporting many notable species. Meanwhile, non-operational land provides opportunities for habitat restoration projects. Post-extraction, quarries can offer a long-term land use change in favour of biodiversity as sites are reclaimed for a nature conservation end-use. Building on this knowledge, HeidelbergCement is committed to conserving nature before, during (temporary habitats) and after extraction by making a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation, enhancement and management of habitats.

Actions

1 Mitigation hierarchy

When planning and implementing business activities, we manage our impacts on biodiversity in line with the sequential steps of the mitigation hierarchy i.e. avoid, minimise and mitigate (through habitat creation and offsets where appropriate). This is supported through our regular subscription to and regular usage of the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT).

2 Understanding our impact

HeidelbergCement commits to undertaking a biodiversity net impact assessment at all of our active extraction sites (to be completed by 2025) to fully understand our footprint and work towards nature-positive outcomes.

3 Managing sensitive biodiversity

In order to understand and mitigate our impact, a proximity study will be undertaken every three years. All sites within 1km of high-biodiversity value areas are committed to implementing a biodiversity management plan, with progress reported annually. The biodiversity management plans will be fully embedded in the quarry development plan.

4 Promoting habitat restoration

To support the global restoration agenda, and contribute to the UN Decade of Ecosystem Services, HeidelbergCement will incorporate biodiversity features into all reclamation plans, and annually report the amount of land reclaimed by the Group. Furthermore, we will continue to play an active role in industry associations to share practices around extraction site reclamation.

5 Controlling invasive alien species (IAS)

The raw nature of quarries can provide ideal conditions for invasive plant species. Aware of the significant impact these species can have on native flora and fauna, HeidelbergCement commits to increasing the awareness of its employees and enabling them to control and manage any invasive species that may appear in its extraction sites.

6 Collaborative action to enhance biodiversity knowledge

HeidelbergCement commits to engaging communities on the importance of biodiversity and habitat restoration through programmes like the Quarry Life Award, while supporting research into the ecology of quarries. Furthermore, the company commits to improving knowledge and best practices across its operations through continued partnerships, e.g. with BirdLife International, with targeted on-the-ground projects via local collaborations. To support the engagement of business with the topic of biodiversity HeidelbergCement will continue to actively participate in various business and biodiversity initiatives, facilitating the sharing of best practices.

7 Nature-based solutions

Through our on-site biodiversity management, reclamation work and collaborations through the Quarry Life Award, we have integrated the concept of nature-based solutions into our activities, with a particular focus on the role of nature in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation.

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