



# Verbund

By our own power.

## Biodiversity Policy

VERBUND aims to become the leader of the energy transition through the Mission V. We are committed to sustainability and to protecting, conserving and promoting biological diversity while ensuring the safety of people, facilities and supply.

A sustainable future requires the preservation of intact ecosystems, consideration of planetary boundaries and adaptation to climate change. This is why we contribute to the protection, conservation and promotion of biodiversity and near-natural habitats as part of our business activities. In doing so, we are guided by the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>1</sup>, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 15 "Life on Land"<sup>2</sup> and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)<sup>3</sup>.



As Austria's leading electricity company and one of the largest producers of electricity from renewable energy sources in Europe, we rely on a wide range of technologies. These primarily include hydropower, photovoltaics, wind power, green hydrogen and additionally gas-fired power plants to ensure security of supply.

The use of these technologies has both direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity. We attach great importance to minimising the negative impact of our business activities on biodiversity. Therefore, biodiversity is at the centre of VERBUND's sustainability agenda.

We are committed to acting responsibly to protect, conserve and enhance near-natural habitats and native species for present and future generations. We aim to continuously improve our measures and strategies across the Group and are also committed to internally defined biodiversity commitments.

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**Biological diversity/biodiversity**  
Diversity of species, genetic diversity and diversity of ecosystems

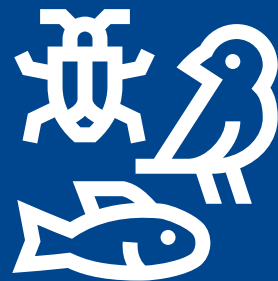
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**Planetary boundaries**  
refer to the ecological limits or the carrying capacity of our planet. There are only so many resources available and only so many negative impacts that the earth can tolerate without long-term damage.

1. [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en)  
2. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15>  
3. <https://www.cbd.int/>

Our strategic approach to sustainable nature conservation is to protect, preserve and enhance high-quality habitats. We are guided by the four-stage mitigation hierarchy - avoidance, minimisation, restoration and compensation – to ensure implementation across all project stages and areas of activity. In addition, we are committed to continuous development, research and knowledge transfer in the construction and operation of power generation and transmission facilities.

The "biodiversity mitigation hierarchy" represents a hierarchy of impact mitigation with the steps of avoidance<sup>1</sup>, minimisation<sup>2</sup>, restoration<sup>3</sup> and compensation<sup>4</sup> of negative impacts of activities on biodiversity.



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#### 1 Avoidance

includes measures that prevent impacts on natural or near-natural ecosystems in the first place.

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#### 2 Minimisation

includes measures to reduce the duration, intensity or extent of impacts that cannot be completely avoided.

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#### 3 Restoration

or ecological enhancement of impaired ecosystems is achieved through targeted measures.

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#### 4 Compensation

means equalisation of the remaining negative effects after implementation of the previous steps of the mitigation hierarchy.

## As a leading electricity company, we take responsibility for the protection, conservation and promotion of biodiversity and are therefore committed to:

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### Avoidance

We analyse the impacts of our projects in advance in order to identify and - where possible and sensible - avoid negative impacts.

We avoid the disturbance and destruction of habitats and sensitive ecosystems by avoiding protected areas wherever possible when selecting sites for our projects and by taking into account sensitive ecosystems rich in species and structures, important breeding areas and migration routes in our planning.

In the operation of our plants, we avoid negative impacts as far as possible by monitoring and reducing emissions.

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### Minimisation

Even before the project starts, we relocate protected animals and plants where necessary. During construction and operation, we minimise negative impacts on flora, fauna and habitats.

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### Restoration

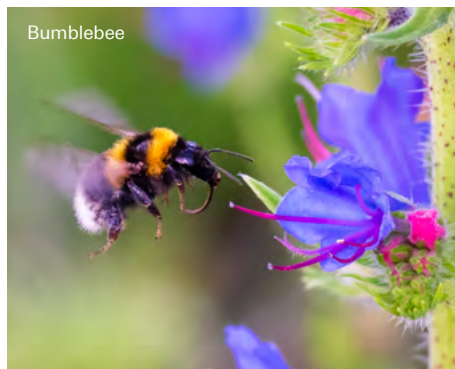
We restore or enhance degraded ecosystems by connecting, reconnecting and enhancing habitats.

Before, during, or after the completion of projects, seeding, planting, and the establishment of habitats take place.

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### Compensation for remaining effects

Unavoidable residual negative impacts on local biodiversity are offset by comprehensive ecological compensation and offset measures or by the creation of new habitats for the same or other species.



In addition to the mitigation hierarchy, VERBUND implements the following measures for biodiversity:



We specifically monitor the environmental impact of our projects, prepare monitoring reports and take action where necessary.

When integrating biodiversity into the planning and implementation of projects, we adopt ecosystem-based approaches and use nature-based solutions wherever possible.

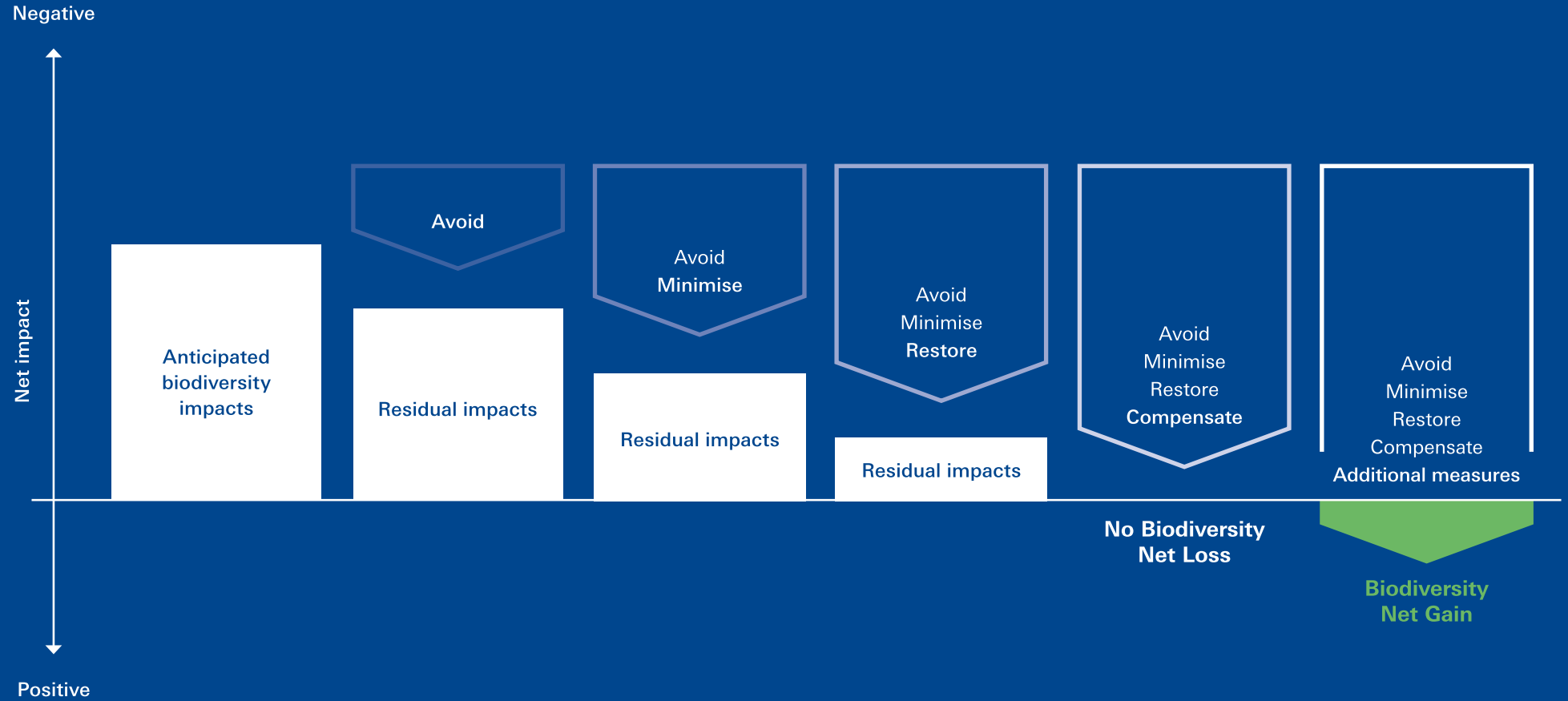
We are expanding our renewable energy capacity in line with our strategic objectives, taking a responsible approach to all aspects of sustainability.

We actively involve stakeholders and their interests in our projects. Collaboration with the local population and representatives is essential for us to jointly develop solutions for the protection, conservation, and promotion of biodiversity.

We develop and implement biodiversity concepts integrated for terrestrial and aquatic areas. We optimise the implementation of our biodiversity-promoting measures by incorporating current scientific knowledge.

We promote application-oriented research and maintain close contact with experts in science and research.

# Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy



## Exemplary measures for implementing the mitigation hierarchy:



### Hydropower

#### **Avoid**

Avoid environmental impacts by modernising and revitalising existing power plants.

#### **Minimise**

Careful management of the areas with longer mowing intervals and mowing times adapted to the vegetation cycle.

#### **Restore**

The construction of fish bypasses re-connects aquatic habitats and facilitates continuous migration in rivers.

#### **Compensate**

Measures to increase biodiversity such as the creation of near-natural structures such as gravel banks and stone piles.



### Wind power

#### **Avoid**

Important bird migration routes are avoided when selecting sites.

#### **Minimise**

Wind turbines are temporarily switched off when bird migration is high.

#### **Restore**

Creation of native habitats in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive.

#### **Compensate**

Use of special seed mixes on compensation areas to provide food and cover for small mammals and small game, and subsequently to serve as feeding areas for birds of prey.



### Photovoltaics

#### **Avoid**

Particularly species-rich and valuable ecosystems are excluded from site selection.

#### **Minimise**

Adaptation of mowing to the needs of native birds and insects.

#### **Restore**

Planting native, site-appropriate shrubs and trees around facilities.

#### **Compensate**

Establishment of flowering areas with endangered plants.



### Thermal power

#### **Avoid**

No use of pesticides on green areas.

#### **Minimise**

Natural development of open spaces and habitats through minimal intervention.

#### **Restore**

Dismantling of plants and greening of areas.

#### **Compensate**

Neophyte management on the greened areas.

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