



**RED ELÉCTRICA**  
DE ESPAÑA

## **Biodiversity strategy**

22 may 2014



## INTRODUCTION

### Definition

Biological diversity or biodiversity is the term used to refer to the broad variety of animals and plants, habitats and genes found on the Earth, along with their associated natural processes.

The biological diversity we see today is the fruit of millions of years of evolution, shaped both by natural processes and, increasingly, by the influence of human activities. This diversity makes up the vital network of which we are an integral part and on which we depend. The ecosystem supplies the products and services required to allow the planet to support life.

It is this combination of different life forms and their mutual interaction with the rest of their environment that has made the Earth unique and habitable for human beings.

“We depend on the richness of life on this planet for our food, shelter and fresh air. We form part of this diversity and cannot live without it.” Professor Jacqueline McGlade, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency.

### Background

Spain is one of the countries with the greatest biological diversity in the European Union, due, among other things, to factors such as its geographical position, its geological diversity, its highly varied climate, its orographic and edaphic diversity, its paleobiogeographic history and its inclusion of island territories.

Spanish Natural Heritage and Biodiversity law (42/2007, 13 December 2007) set out a basic legal framework for the conservation, sustainable use, improvement and restoration of the country's natural heritage and biodiversity. The principles that inspired the law centre around the maintenance of essential ecological processes and basic life systems, the preservation of biological and genetic diversity, the preservation of populations and species, the variety, singularity and beauty of natural ecosystems, geological diversity and the diversity of the landscape.

The conservation of biodiversity is key not only to preserving our natural heritage but also to guaranteeing sustainable development both now and in the future.

Red Eléctrica, as a responsible company that is committed to sustainable development, wants to formalise its commitment to the conservation of biodiversity, defining its biodiversity strategy and establishing an action plan in this area.

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to formalise the strategy to be followed by the company on issues of biodiversity, setting out the main areas to be worked on and establishing the need for an Action Plan that sets out the targets to be met.



## Scope

This will extend to all of REE's activities, both as the sole transmission company and as the operator of the electricity system.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

Approving and promoting the company's biodiversity strategy.

### ENVIRONMENT AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER

Leading and encouraging implementation of this strategy.

Ensuring that the necessary actions and best practices are followed in order to implement the principles defined.

### CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY STEERING COMMITTEE

Developing and providing support for implementation of the undertakings acquired in relation to biodiversity strategy.

Approving the Biodiversity Action Plan and monitoring its implementation.

### GENERAL DEPARTMENTS, RED ELÉCTRICA DE ESPAÑA DEPARTMENTS

Supporting the principles contained in this strategy during the performance of their duties and responsibilities at the company, and creating awareness among all employees.

Promoting implementation of the principles and guidelines contained in this strategy within their individual areas of action.

### GROUP EMPLOYEES

Accepting the company's commitment in relation to biodiversity issues and collaborating in the development and consolidation of its policy in the individual areas in which they work.



## PRINCIPLES

The basic principles that define REE's working strategy on biodiversity issues are as follows:

1. Integrating the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the development of the transmission network.
2. Establishing mechanisms that ensure the protection and conservation of environmental values in the activities engaged in by the Company, especially in sensitive natural environments.
3. Contributing to and promoting the development of research projects designed to integrate the transmission network into the environment.
4. Encouraging a framework of communication and cooperation with stakeholders, increasing the visibility of the company's commitment to the conservation of biodiversity. Líneas de trabajo.

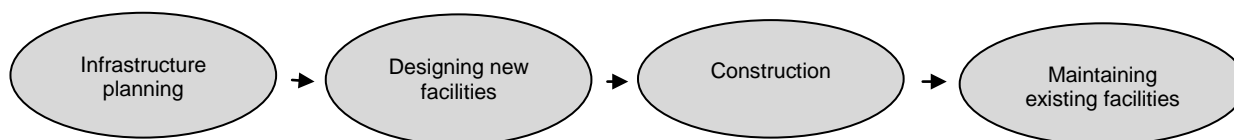
## Lines of action

The company's commitment to biodiversity is based on three working areas:

- A. Development of the transmission network: Work relating to REE's business activities (as manager of transmission grid and system operator).
- B. Protecting biodiversity: searching for solutions to make REE's business activities compatible with biodiversity and taking part in conservation projects.
- C. Communicating and spreading the actions carried out in the area of biodiversity among stakeholders.



## A. Development of the transmission network and the conservation of biodiversity



### **Infrastructure planning**

Although the planning of infrastructure in the Electricity system is the responsibility of the national government, REE collaborates in the planning process and prepares the infrastructure proposal that is to be included in the plan.

In order to prepare its proposal, REE studies the various planning options in a way that minimises the construction of new infrastructure. Before proposing the inclusion of a new facility, an environmental viability analysis is first carried out, and any solution that is not compatible with the natural values of the location in question is rejected.

The environmental characteristics of the sites that could be affected by new infrastructure are highly varied, due to Spain's ecological diversity. Given that there is a wide range of environmental values that may be affected, the company uses the Natura 2000 Network, which imposes the most restrictive parameters, as a reference.

Infrastructure planning is accompanied by a study, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the aim of which is to combine all environmental criteria to allow for sustainable planning.

### **Designing new facilities**

Once the infrastructure planning process has been approved, the company analyses the environmental viability of each of the facilities included in the plans.

The entire process for evaluating the plans for a new facility is characterised by its transparency in providing all interested members of the public with information on the project, particularly as regards the environmental analysis.

This transparency is further strengthened through the creation of channels of communication with environmental mediators (the authorities, associations, individuals, etc.) at a local, autonomous community and/or national level, with the aim of obtaining the most comprehensive information available regarding the biological diversity found in the area.

In order to identify the power line routes and substation sites that will be compatible with the biological richness of the area, all the environmental conditioning factors present within the scope of the study are analysed, together with the information received from environmental stakeholders.



Once the geographical location of the facility has been identified, the effects on biodiversity are defined and the measures designed to prevent them are finalised and applied.

In the event that species of flora and/or fauna of high ecological value are identified during the study and there is insufficient information available, a study is carried out on the biology and distribution of the species in question in order to obtain further information. These studies are carried out in conjunction with organisations with a known reputation in the field.

### **Constructing facilities**

Construction works on power lines and substations (and the modification of existing facilities) are carried out by third parties, and it is therefore essential to include environmental requirements among their contractual conditions (preventive and corrective measures and best practice in the performance of their duties), as well as informing them of the most significant environmental aspects relating to the project and ensuring strict supervision of the performance of all activities.

To ensure compliance with all the requirements arising from the environmental assessment of the project (whether required by law or voluntary), the relevant environmental monitoring programmes are put in place.

The environmental technician in charge of each working site verifies the operation of all the measures implemented, proposing solutions to any problems that may arise during the course of the works and identifying other environmental improvement measures that may be introduced, measures that result from Red Eléctrica's continuous contacts with the various local agents.

To ensure the efficacy of the measures implemented, these environmental monitoring programmes also extend to the first years in which a facility is in operation.

### **Maintaining existing facilities**

The company's assets are distributed throughout the whole of Spain, and a large proportion of them are located in rural and/or forested areas. These assets require on-site maintenance that will ensure the facility's proper operation, and maintenance activities must therefore be constantly adapted to be compatible with the natural values of the environment.



## **B. Conservation of biodiversity**

The facilities used to transmit electricity (power lines and substations) can be found in all kinds of environments, natural or adapted, giving rise to interaction with all the elements found in the surrounding area, which include flora and fauna.

### Combatting and preventing forest fires

Preventing and combatting forest fires is a priority for Red Eléctrica. We have a Forest Management Guide which sets out the company's working criteria in this area and the targets to be achieved in the coming years.

#### *Predictive actions*

We design the safety corridors for all our new facilities in a way that complies with the safety distances between the facility in question and any surrounding vegetation, as set out in law.

#### *Preventive actions*

We regularly carry out forestry works at all our facilities to ensure compliance with safety distances, reducing the risk of fire to a minimum.

### Protecting fauna

The facilities used to transmit electricity (power lines and substations) can be found in all kinds of environments, natural or adapted, giving rise to interaction with all the elements found in the surrounding area, which include fauna and, in particular, birds.

The most common interaction between birds and power lines involves the risk of birds colliding with the grounding wires (which protect the power lines from electrical charges during storms), because these wires are smaller in diameter and, therefore, less visible.

It should be pointed out that it is practically impossible for birds to be accidentally electrocuted, because the distances between the power lines and the metal structures carrying them are greater than the size of any bird found in Spain.

The positive side of this interaction is found in the fact that power lines and electrical substations are used as perches by many different species of birds in places that lack alternative resting places. They are also used by hunting birds as observation points or as places to dismember their prey, and as places where birds can rest overnight, nest and raise their young, or as shelters.

However, this kind of interaction can also interfere with operation and maintenance and activities, as they involve the build-up of nesting materials on some power line supports and substation structures.



As a consequence, for some years now Red Eléctrica has been adopting preventive measures designed specifically to minimise the effects of power transmission facilities on birdlife and encourage their compatible use by means of continuous research activities, the results of which are applied to the company's facilities.

### Conservation projects

Red Eléctrica's commitment to biodiversity goes beyond the effects resulting from its activities.

It therefore runs or actively participates in a number of projects aimed at the conservation of biodiversity. Its work is directed towards projects involving the conservation of birdlife, the protection of vegetation and combatting fires.

It collaborates in a number of projects related to the protection of the environment and the conservation of biodiversity, working in conjunction with environmental organisations (research institutes, universities, foundations, NGOs, etc.) in the geographical territories in which its facilities are located.

The details of these joint projects are established in signed collaborative agreements.

## **C. Communications and the provision of information**

Red Eléctrica has established channels of communication to provide information on its commitment to the conservation of biodiversity and receive contributions from special interest groups in this area.

### Internal channels

Red Eléctrica's internal website includes an exclusive space designed to provide information on the company's activities in relation to the environment, including a section devoted to biodiversity.

It is a communications support tool that encourages active participation by employees and offers the opportunity to provide information in the form of news stories and reports on the most important recent work carried out by the company in the area of biodiversity.

### External channels

Red Eléctrica's **external website** includes an exclusive space designed to provide information on the company's activities in relation to the environment, including a section devoted to biodiversity. It has a mailbox that is offered as a tool to facilitate involvement from special interest groups via the submission of suggestions, enquiries, etc.





Active presence on **social networks** (Twitter and Facebook).

On-line and paper publication of the quarterly magazine **Entrelíneas**, which in addition to energy-related content deals with environmental and cultural issues. The on-line edition offers additional benefits such as interactivity with readers, greater immediacy and the possibility of sharing content via email, Facebook or Twitter.

There are also **other communications media**: The issue of annual publications that detail the progress made during the course of the year with regard to biodiversity, in addition to developments in other areas relating to the environment and social issues (Environmental Declaration and Corporate Responsibility Report). Release of brochures and other publications illustrating the development of key projects. Collaboration with and sponsorship of publications directed towards the scientific community. Presence in the local printed media at a local, autonomous community and national level.

Discussion and consultation forums with environmental mediators, some organised by Red Eléctrica, and the continuous organisation of participative forums with experts in biodiversity with the Balearic and Canary Islands Sustainability Council.

## **ACTION PLAN**

The Action Plan includes the targets to be achieved with regard to biodiversity issues and the specific action to be implemented.

The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

In addition, the targets and goals to be achieved are included in the Company's Environmental Programme, Forestry Policy and Corporate Responsibility Programme.

Its progress is monitored and assessed using the indicators shown in the Corporate Responsibility scorecard.