Biodiversity & Your Community

2018

Hannah Hamilton

éirewild.ie & BITCI

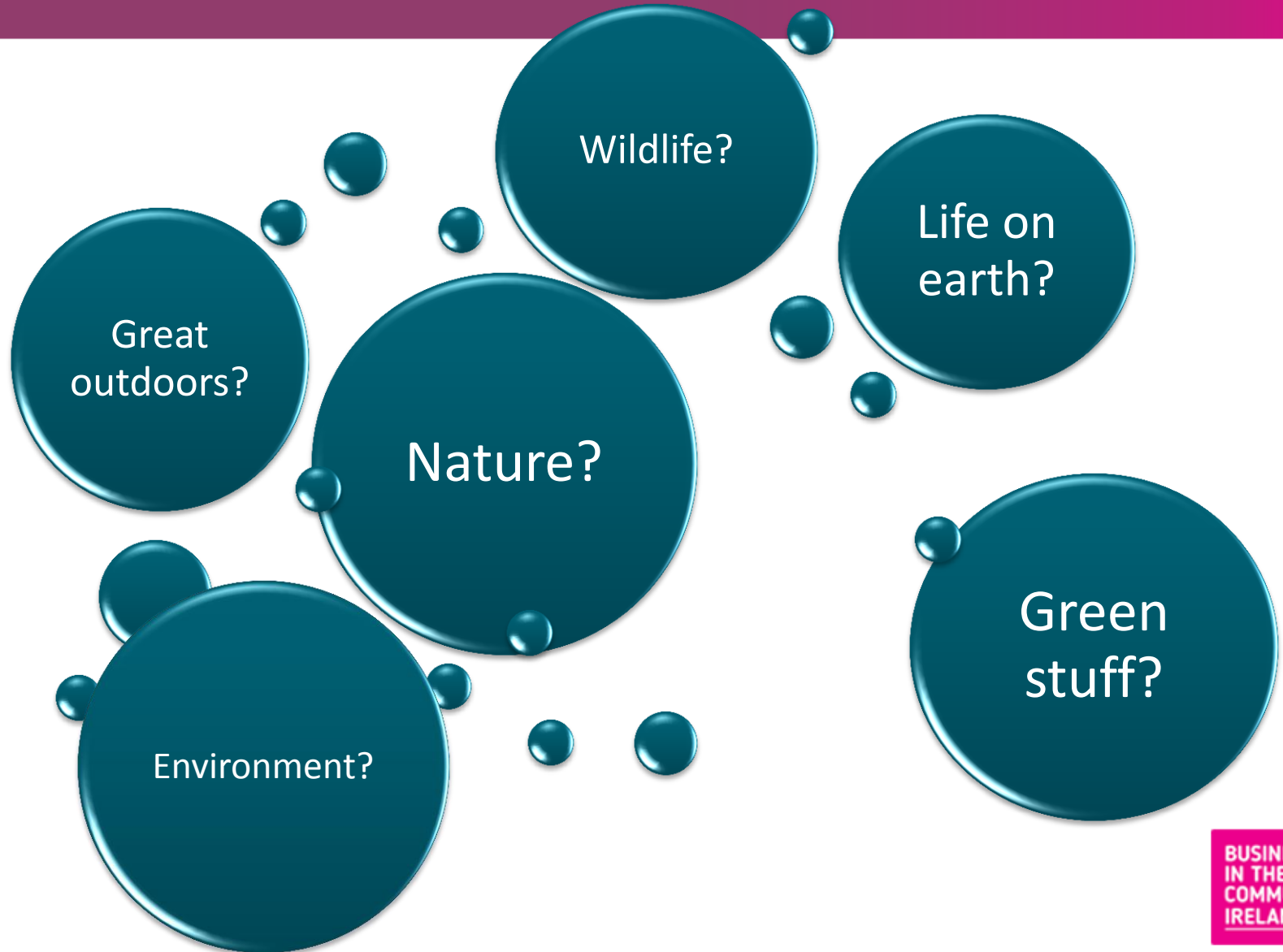hhamilton@bitc.ie

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND

The Network for Responsible Business

What we'll be covering

- What is biodiversity?

- What does it do?

- What can businesses do?

- Community focus

What is biodiversity?

What is biodiversity?

Wildlife?

Life on earth?

Great outdoors?

Nature?

Green stuff?

Environment?

BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY
IRELAND

What is biodiversity?

BIODIVERSITY

IS THE VARIETY OF LIFE ON EARTH
at three levels: genes, species and ecosystems

Together with air, minerals, soil and water,
biodiversity provides ecosystem services
that benefit people and businesses:

food, fuel & fibre — clean water & air — peace & beauty — flood protection — recreation — carbon storage

Technical Definition

- The definition in the <u>Convention on Biodiversity</u> is the most well-used:

  ➢ *"Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia (among other things), terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and within ecosystems"*

- But what does that mean in practice?

Think of New York City…

- Cultures
- Skills and talents
- Languages
- Foods
- Fashions
- Music and art
- All interacting with each other to make new things

In biodiversity terms… NYC is:

- **A wildflower meadow**

- Lots of different types of plant, insect, mammal, bird, fungi… all interacting with each other

Now think of Craggy Island

- Not much cultural, linguistic or social diversity!

In biodiversity terms, Craggy Island is:

- **Your front lawn**
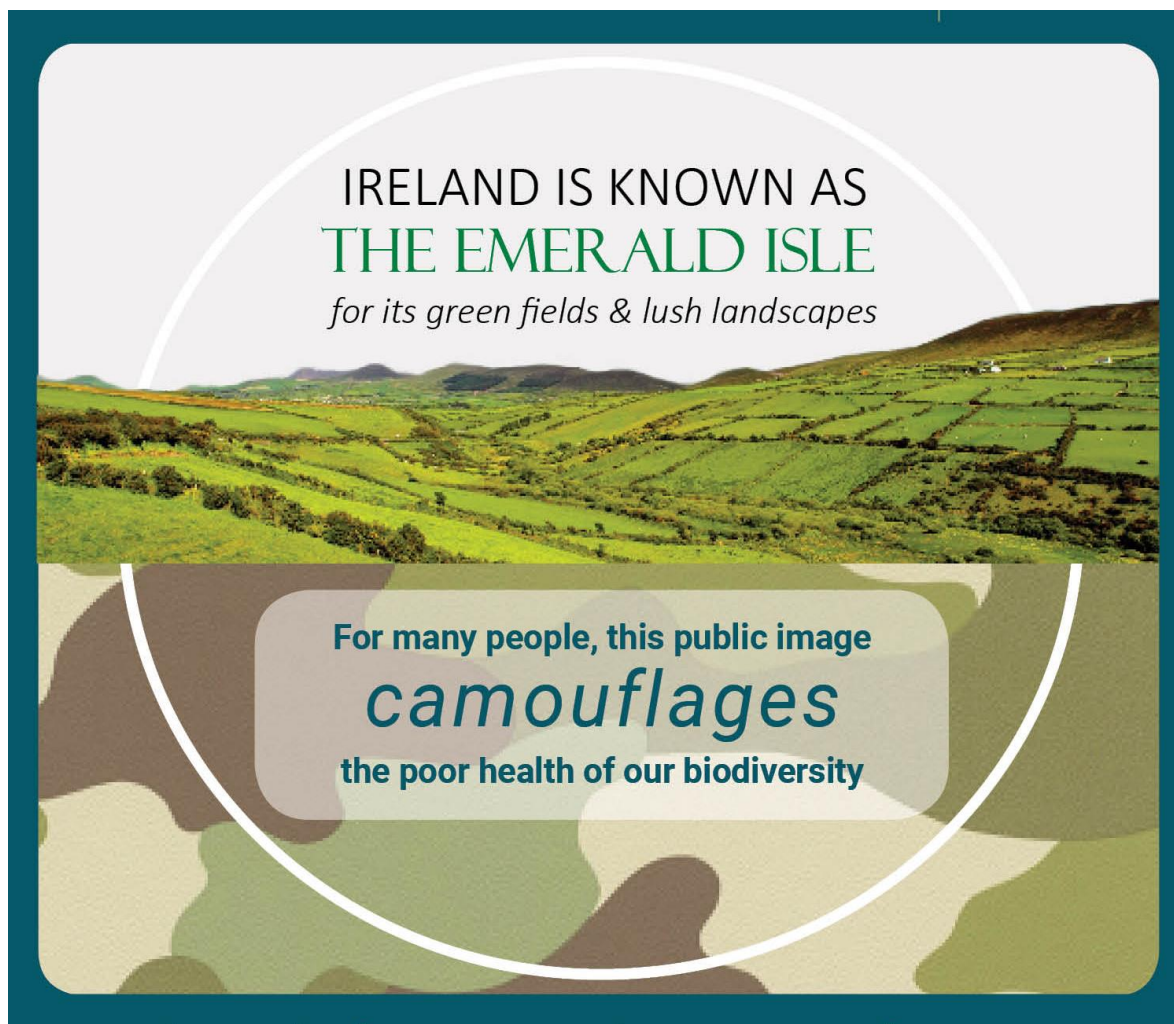- Very few species – no variety
- Not much 'life'

Meadow   vs   lawn

- One major thing in common…

- **They both exist because of people**

- We can manage land *for* biodiversity - it's just a different set of decisions

How healthy is Ireland's biodiversity?

IRELAND IS KNOWN AS
THE EMERALD ISLE
for its green fields & lush landscapes

For many people, this public image
camouflages
the poor health of our biodiversity

BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY
IRELAND

Our most precious habitats

- 91% of Ireland's **protected** habitats are 'bad' or 'inadequate'… and it's getting worse (**NPWS**, 2013)

Favourable | Inadequate | Bad

Figure 1   The Overall assessment results for habitats
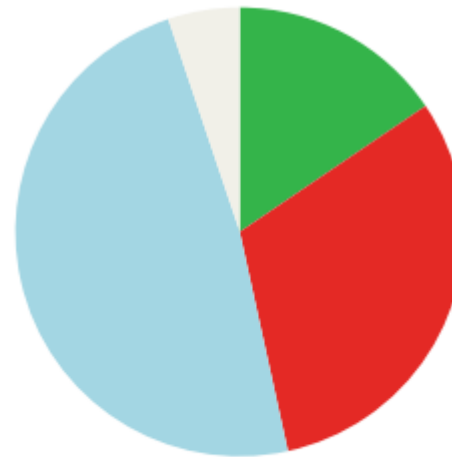
Improving | Declining | No change | Unknown

Figure 3   Trends in assessment results for habitats

NPWS (2013). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.

Our most precious species

- 48% of **protected** species are 'unfavourable', 'bad' or unknown… and it's not getting much better (NPWS, 2012)

Legend (left): Favourable · Inadequate · Bad · Unknown

Figure 6   The Overall assessment results for species

Legend (right): Improving · Declining · No change · Unknown
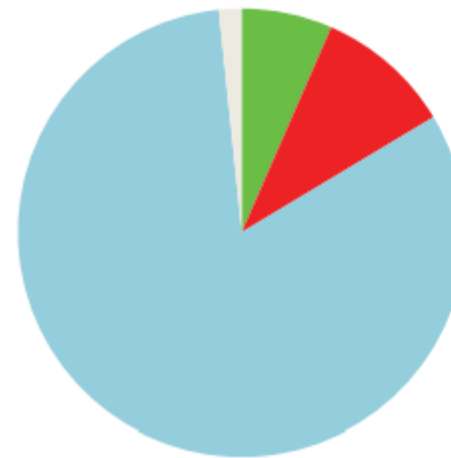
Figure 8   Trends in assessment results for species

NPWS (2013). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.

IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND
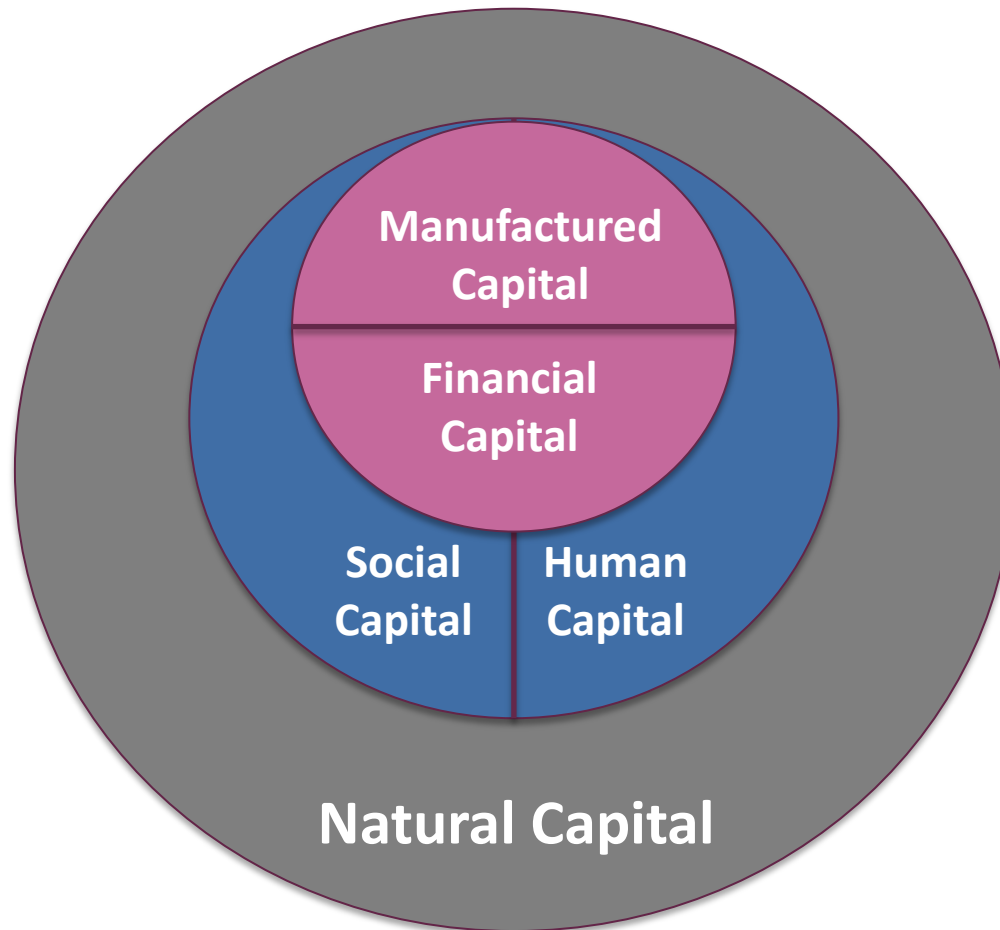
What's causing biodiversity loss?

- **Habitat destruction, fragmentation, degradation** - removing, breaking up or reducing the quality of places where wildlife eats, lives and procreates (44% of the problem)

- **Overexploitation** – using too much (37% of the problem)

- **Invasive alien species** – disrupting the local balance (5%)

- **Pollution** – exceeding or diminishing the carrying capacity of an ecosystem and affecting its ability to function (4%)

- **Climate change** – loading the dice with natural disasters and shifting seasons, plus all of the above (7% of the problem – but much bigger in the coming years)

Monasterky, *Nature* (2014)
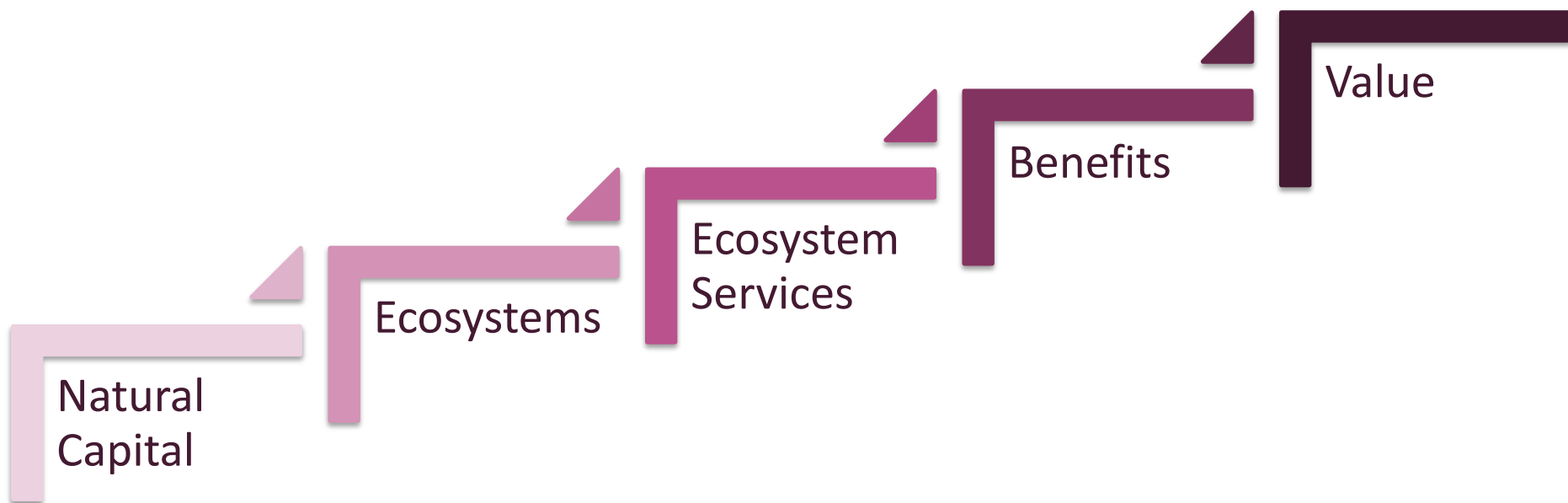
What does biodiversity do?

We need nature more than it needs us!

Biodiversity is the basis of everything

Natural Capital

Ecosystems

Ecosystem Services

Benefits

Value

Biodiversity matters for the economy

Natural Capital

Natural resources and ecosystems

Ecosystem goods and services

Economic Activity

Production & consumption of goods & services

Impacts on

Adapted from www.sustainableprosperity.ca
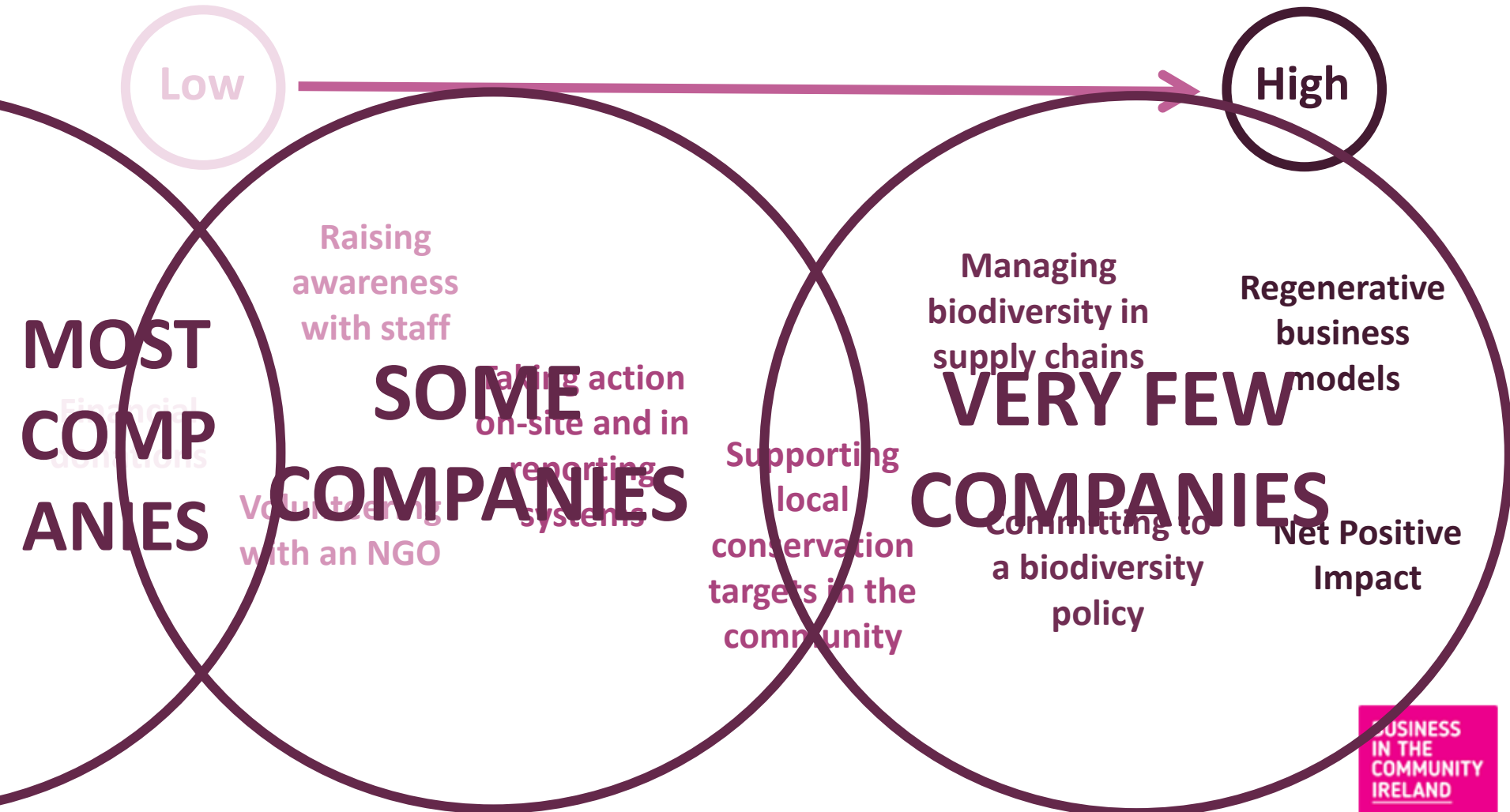
BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND
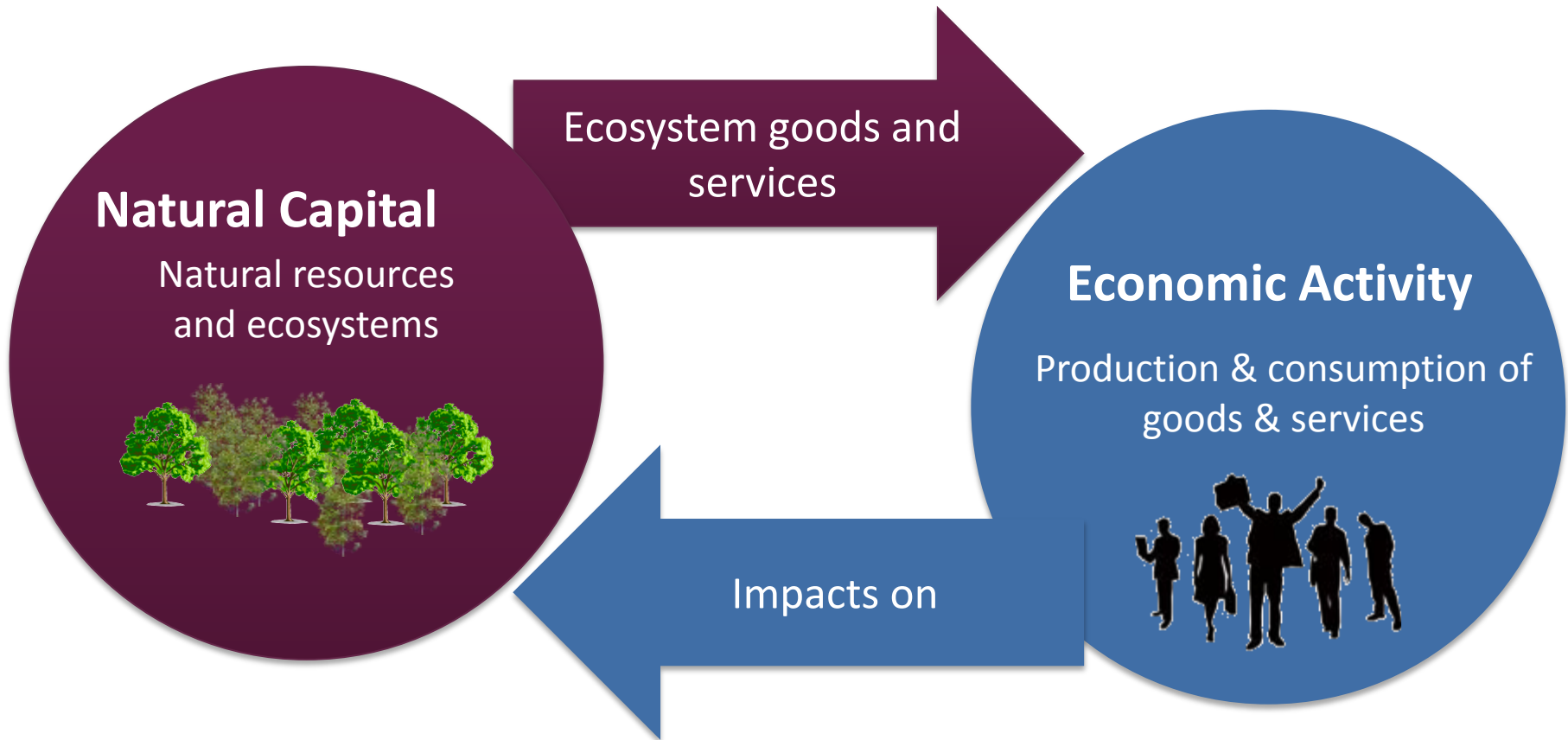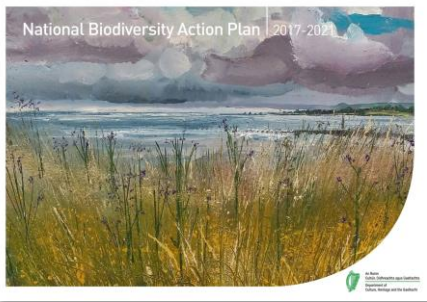
What can businesses do?

It depends!

- Rented offices or own buildings?

- Urban or rural?

- Outdoor space or none?

- Direct biodiversity impact or not?

- Material business relevance or not?

- Supportive senior management or not?

BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY
IRELAND

Continuum of Voluntary Action

Low → High

MOST COMPANIES

Financial donations

SOME COMPANIES

Raising awareness with staff

Taking action on-site and in reporting systems

Volunteering with an NGO

Supporting local conservation targets in the community

VERY FEW COMPANIES

Managing biodiversity in supply chains

Regenerative business models

Committing to a biodiversity policy

Net Positive Impact

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND

Irish initiatives

National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021

Businesses: actions to help pollinators
All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020

BUSINESS WORKING RESPONSIBLY
Collective Mark

- The 3rd National Biodiversity Action Plan
- The All Ireland Pollinator Plan
- The Business Working Responsibly Mark
  - "The existence of **policies to manage and continually improve** biodiversity;
  - **practices that establish objectives and responsibility** in this area;
  - the **identification of important ecosystem services** at local and internal levels;
  - **activities to reduce and offset** potential adverse impacts;
  - staff, board, customer and supplier **awareness-raising** activities;
  - the **assessment, impact or success** of these policies and practices and how this information is fed back into policies and practices;
  - how management **demonstrates commitment and leadership** in all these areas."

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND

The Biodiversity Framework

What is the Framework?

It is:

- **A thinking tool** to help a company get started
- **Applicable** to any company, any sector, any location – there's something for everyone
- **Aligned** to existing CSR objectives, in CSR 'language'
- **Mapped** to the Business Working Responsibly Mark
- **Integrated** with ISO 14001

It isn't:

- **A standard or certification**
- **A unit** – a company can pick and choose what works best for it
- **An end-goal -** but it can help a company figure out what its end-goal is
- **The only option** – there is an emerging continuum of action on biodiversity and natural capital in the private sector

What are the business benefits?

- Improved engagement, morale, productivity, health/wellbeing, staff retention, internal comms

- Be seen as leaders in your industry (e.g. give advice to others), keep up with best practice

- Better trust and relationships with community and local groups, reduced pressure from NGOs

- Better risk mgmt, improved internal processes, regulatory compliance, prep for future legislation

- Boost competitive advantage by improving product/service differentiation and winning contracts or clients

Community Focus

Biodiversity in the community

COMMUNITY

Review local biodiversity

Volunteer and do citizen science

Demonstrate local leadership

C1

C2

C3

Step 1: Review local biodiversity

- What protected areas and biodiverse habitats are in your locality?
  - SAC / SPA / NHA => check the maps!
  - Who manages them? Who can give you info?
    - *Heritage Officers, NPWS Rangers...*
  - Is there a local Biodiversity Action Plan? Are there other conservation targets you can support?
  - Are there local NGOs/conservation groups in the area?
    - *Are any of your staff involved in these groups?*
    - *What do they need?*
  - Are local schools doing the Biodiversity Green Flag?
- Maintain a record of biodiversity-related activities and identify opportunities for engagement

Step 2: Volunteer and do citizen science

- Use your review to determine where and how you can have the most impact
- NB: Fundraising is great, but don't let that be all you do!
- Explore volunteering and prof skills/pro bono opportunities
  - Ensure to build biodiversity education into all volunteering programmes
- Citizen science initiatives can have huge impact – Ireland is very data-poor
  - Can be paired with Lunch & Learn sessions for training
  - Opportunity for enthusiasts on staff to shine

Step 3: Demonstrate local leadership

- Establishing strong community connections will deepen impact
- Co-lead a strategic project to respond to a major biodiversity challenge or opportunity in the locality
  - Focus on protecting a certain species, creating a new habitat, improving the status of an existing habitat, running a public awareness campaign
  - Establish a Steering Group and link in with businesses, community organisations, local authorities, NGOs, etc
  - Facilitate meetings, training or workshops/events at your offices
  - Use your voice to engage the public and media, etc.

Want some help?

- Speak to your account manager or contact me directly for a free 1:1 session

- This scoping session can help you figure out the best approach to biodiversity for your organisation

- Hannah Hamilton
  - hhamilton@bitc.ie

Thank You

hhamilton@bitc.ie

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND