

IMPROVING BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE QUARRY LIFE AWARD

HeidelbergCement Group

Global



OBJECTIVE

The Quarry Life Award was developed to further improve HeidelbergCement's biodiversity management and to raise awareness of the important link between quarries and nature by engaging students, researchers and NGOs.

CONTEXT

Sustainability is at the core of HeidelbergCement's business strategy, with biodiversity being a key component. Through quarrying activities a wide variety of habitats can develop, providing unique living conditions for many creatures including rare and threatened species. HeidelbergCement is dedicated to protecting and enhancing nature but with over 1000 quarries worldwide supporting many types of habitats and associated species we realised that we cannot do this alone. Furthermore, while gaining momentum in certain parts of the world, it was also clear that there was a lack of scientific knowledge related to the biodiversity value of quarrying activities, both during and post extraction. To assist in filling this research void and to find innovative ways of enhancing nature in our extraction sites,

while also raising the awareness of the importance of biodiversity and enabling a greater connection with our stakeholders, in 2011 HeidelbergCement initiated the Quarry Life Award.

SOLUTIONS

The Quarry Life Award (QLA) is a regularly held competition for external stakeholders which happens simultaneously at national and international level. For six months participants are able to access our sites to undertake research and implement ideas, supported by our operational staff. Having continually evolved since it began in 2011, the competition includes six main focus areas which reflect important topics for HeidelbergCement. On the research side, these include 'habitat and species research' (improving the knowledge of what is living in our sites), 'biodiversity management' (innovative techniques to improve species populations) and 'beyond quarry borders' (to understand and improve the connection between quarries and the wider environment). To widen the engagement of the QLA, on the community side projects are encouraged to focus 'biodiversity and education' and 'connecting quarries and local communities'. Lastly there is special focus areas of the competition awarded at the International level which specifically encourages and acknowledges projects that have been undertaken by students below the age of 18.

RESULT

Over the past 4 editions the QLA has been implemented across 30 countries with more than 1400 project proposals submitted, out of which more than 370 were selected to take part in the competition. Projects varied widely, for example: undertaking species inventories; testing reclamation success; designing constructed wetlands; developing school curriculum about biodiversity in quarries; setting up nature trails etc... The Award has enabled 1000s of people into our quarries to experience first-hand not only the extraction process, but also how nature and industry can beneficially co-exist, a story that they have shared far and wide. A wealth of information has been generated which is being incorporated into HeidelbergCement's biodiversity management practices at both local and international level. Numerous tools have been developed including comics, books, games, videos, and even honey (!), which will continue to engage the wider public



about biodiversity. The prize money awarded to winning projects has enabled further research through the funding of PhDs, development of specific habitats, and acquisition of new equipment by way of example. The QLA has also had impact on local policy, with evidence presented by respective universities enabling changes in the legislative process in Czech Republic and Russia for the benefit of biodiversity.



PARTNER

Research establishments, local nature organisations, local communities, schools.

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