

10 steps to boosting biodiversity

01.



Apply the mitigation hierarchy

Do everything you can to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only compensate for losses that cannot be avoided as a last resort, and aim to do this in a way that delivers the most benefit for nature conservation (in some cases better gains will be achieved off-site).

Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development that seeks to “leave the environment in a better state than we found it”. Here’s how to make a positive start in boosting biodiversity across your developments and projects.

02.



Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere

Guard against impacts on irreplaceable habitats, as these require bespoke compensation that cannot be included in your net gain calculations.

03.



Be inclusive and equitable

Engage stakeholders (particularly ecologists!) early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to net gain.

04.



Address risk

Habitat risk is addressed in the Defra Biodiversity Metric in terms of time, however it is important to be aware of other risks, for example the availability of local off-site land for habitat creation, or the availability of suitable biodiversity credits for purchase.

05.



Make a measurable net gain contribution

After applying the mitigation hierarchy, make sure you achieve a quantifiable net gain that contributes directly towards nature conservation priorities.

06.



Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity

This starts with obtaining as accurate a baseline as possible (see principle 3 above), to make sure you know exactly what habitats you have on site.

07.



Be ‘additional’

Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations.

Could you create different habitats that deliver greater benefits for nature conservation, or that contribute to conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels?

Will delivery of BNG result in improved connectivity - with onsite habitats providing an important corridor between adjacent habitats off site to allow better movement of wildlife in the landscape?

Can you replace what is lost, like for like?

08.



Create a net gain legacy

This will be achieved through implementation of the requisite 30-year management plan.

09.



Optimise sustainability

Prioritise BNG and, where possible, optimise the wider social and environmental benefits.

10.



Be transparent

Communicate all net gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.